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SPAIN GOURMETOUR

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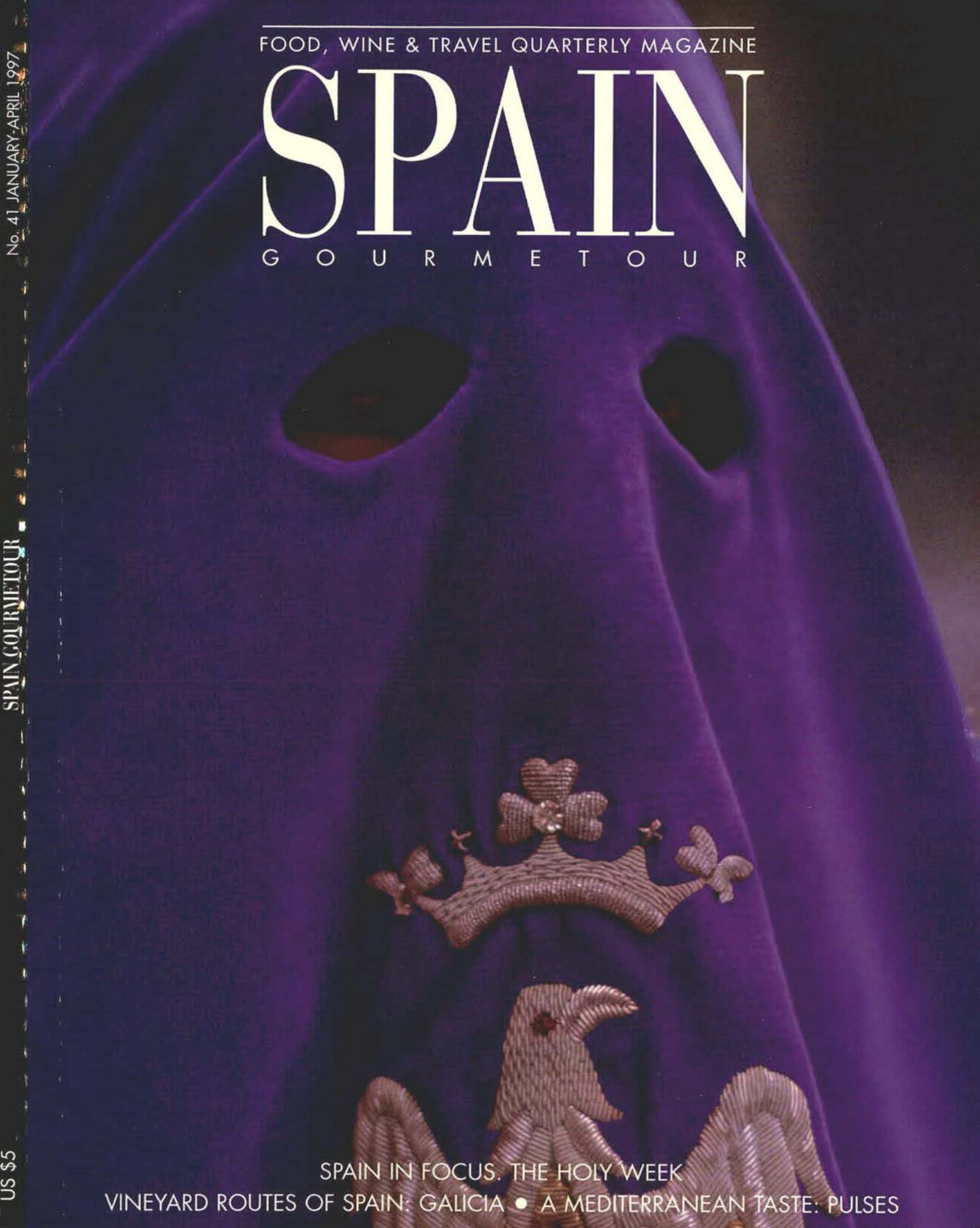
FOOD, WINE & TRAVEL QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

SPAIN

GOURMETOUR



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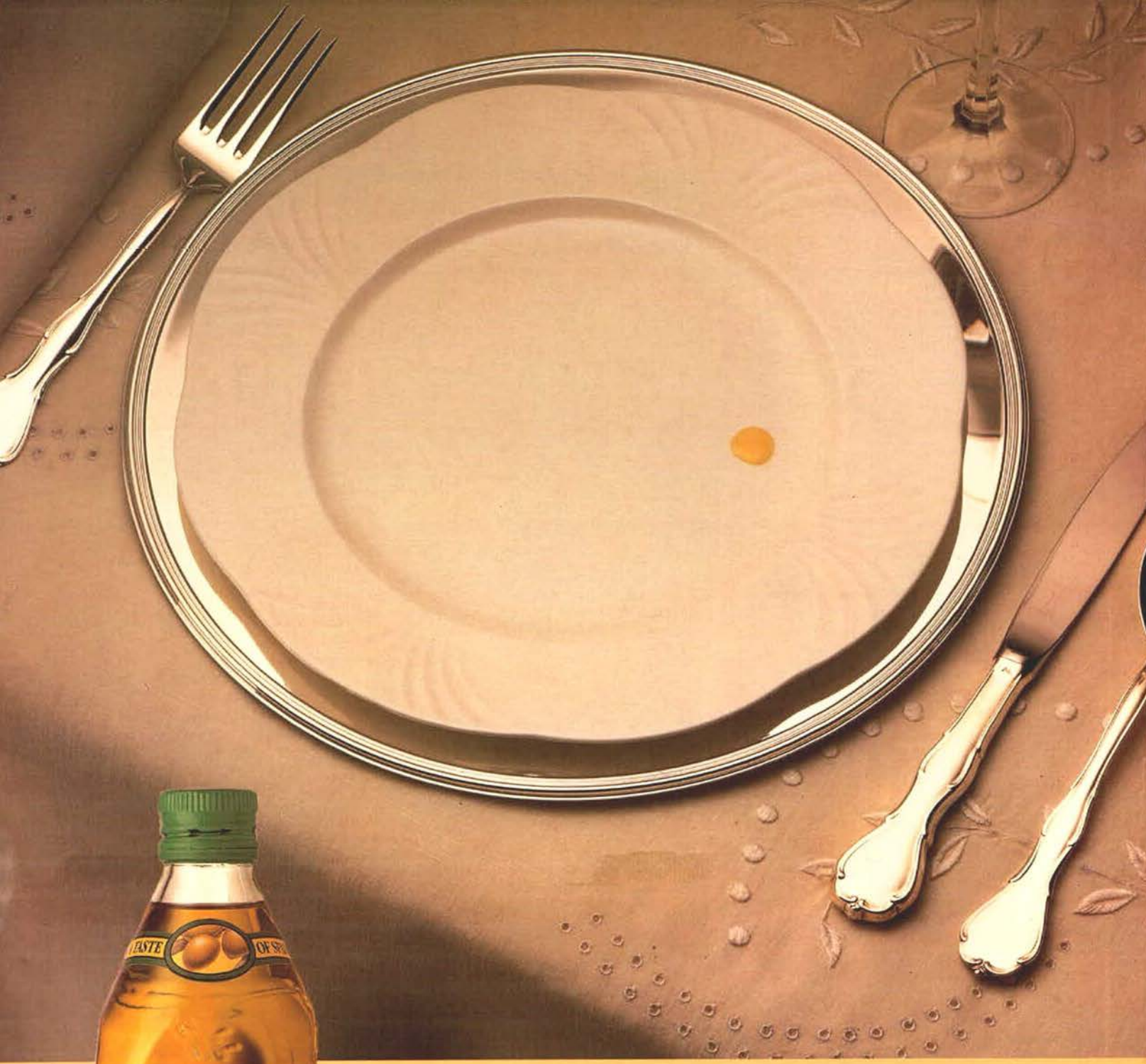

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January-April 1997

Spain Gourmetour
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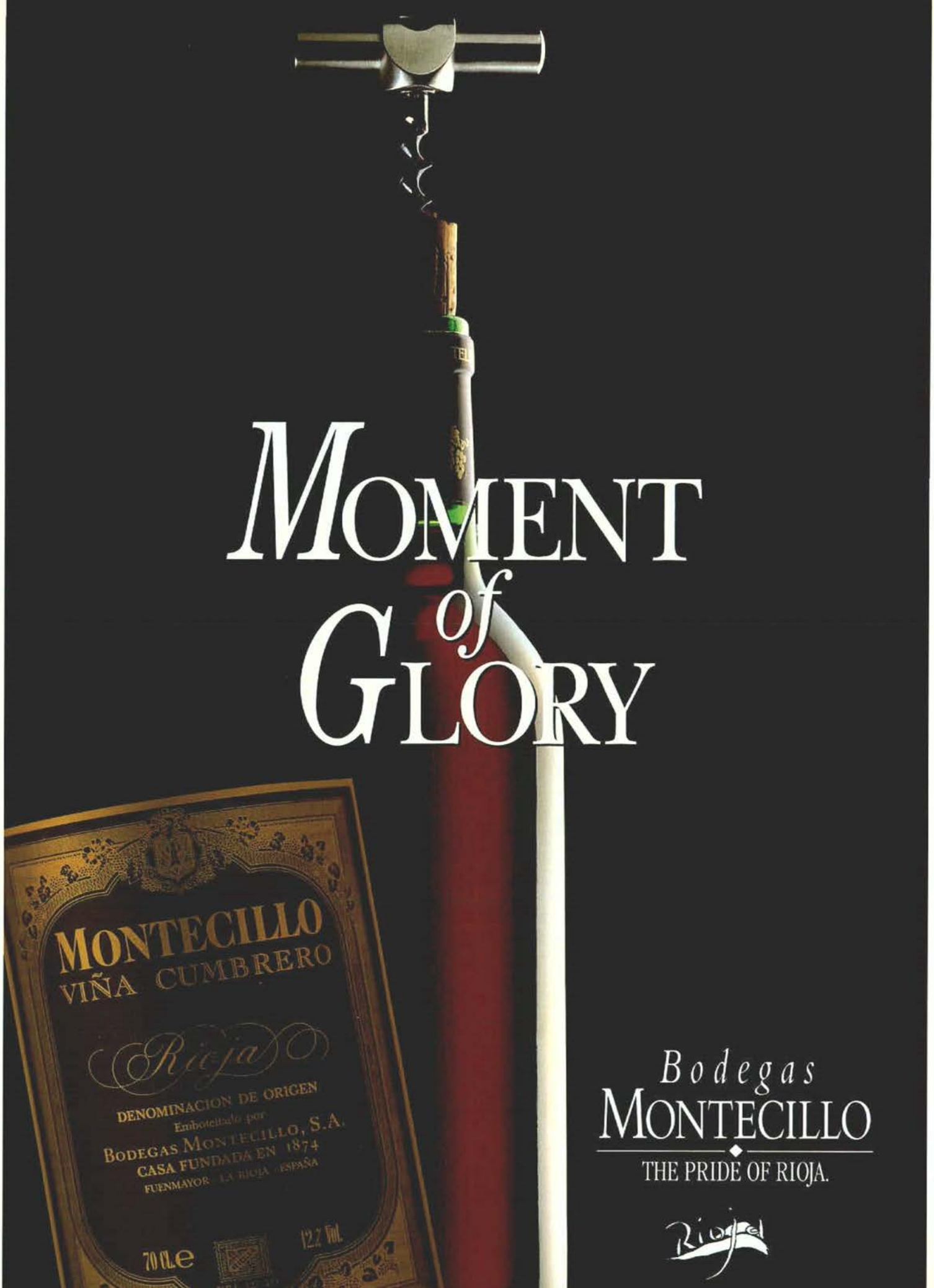
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Dear readers,

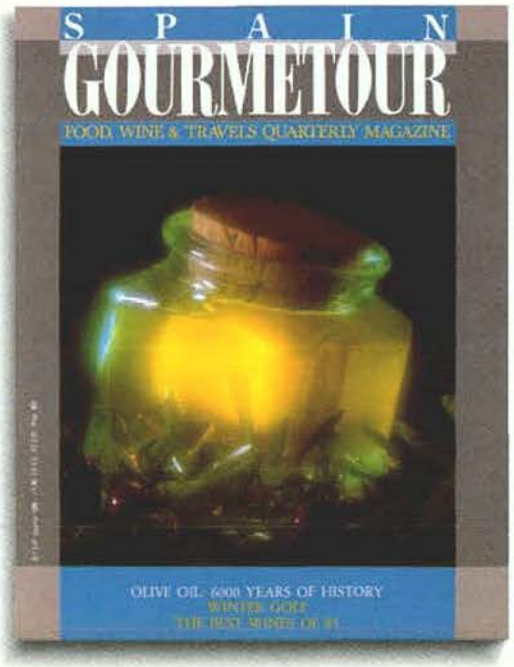
Ten years have already slipped by since the launch of the English language edition of *Spain Gourmetour*. As the survey we carried out at the end of 1995 revealed, *Spain Gourmetour* has played its part in enhancing Spain's image abroad. Right from the word go, our aim in this unique venture has been to present a picture of the Spain that stands on the threshold of the 21st century. A country whose deep-rooted traditions stretch back more than a thousand years, it is true, but one that has a lot more to offer than just oranges, sun-kissed sand and the clicking of whirling castanets. It certainly looks like our gamble has paid off.

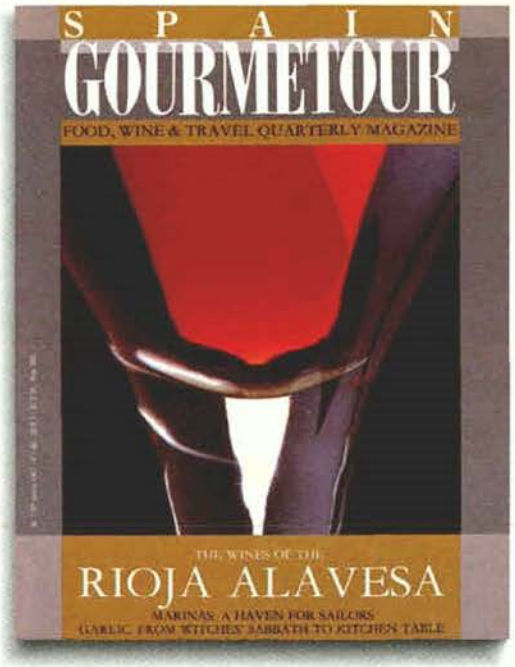
Spain's gastronomy and its most select food products have come a long way since then. To mark that achievement, this issue features a brief overview of the evolution of Spain's product range and looks at the new products that have found their way into foreign markets since 1986, the year Spain became part of the European Economic Community, today's European Union.

Wine and grape varieties have always held pride of place but this year they will be signposted on a tourist trail designed to bring to the fore a number of specific Denominations of Origin -Galicia, in this particular issue. Here, as elsewhere, young blood is taking over in the world of wine and we would like to reveal to you the faces of those people in the sector who have not yet turned forty but who have definitely got something to say.

At a time when Europe is indulging in some serious soul-searching on the topic of intensive livestock farming techniques, quality meat from several regions in Spain will not find itself short of keen professional buyers and consumers. And if France can lay claim to 300 different cheeses, Spain is not that very far behind. Even if you can't find them on every cheese counter abroad, we can help you to discover them right here.

We have also lined up for you - under the heading of Tourism and Culture - in this and the next two issues, a really different experience. First up is Holy Week, followed by Flamenco and Bullfighting. You may think you've seen it all before. The great pity is that these topics are all too often presented in an unfavourable light or, at the very least, distorted. We have set ourselves the task of showing you what lies at the very heart of them.





TEN POSITIVE YEARS

Spain Gourmetour's first ten years of existence have coincided more or less with the decade since Spain's adhesion to the European Union, during which period we have become a fully integrated member of it. In this time, Spain's agroalimentary industry which, for the most part, came into being and evolved in a highly protectionist environment, has achieved a giant feat of thoroughgoing modernization, enabling it to compete effectively, in an open economy, with companies in principle more experienced and more appropriately scaled than our own.

Text: **Santiago Botas**
Translation: **Hawys Pritchard**

Our traditionally surplus agroalimentary trade balance moved into the red as a consequence of the removal of tariff barriers initiated by Spain's integration into the E.U. in 1985, and its equilibrium was not restored until 1996, achieved by slowly but constantly increasing exports. Many traditional products have expanded sales, increased their added value and found their way into new markets, while others which had formerly never ventured beyond Spain have begun their advance on foreign markets with very promising results. This pattern of development in agroalimentary exports is not unrelated to a huge increase in spending on promotional activities by the sector's companies and associative bodies. The resulting promotional thrust has contributed to strengthening the image of Spain abroad, strategically a vital factor given the importance of country of origin in decision-making when buying food products.

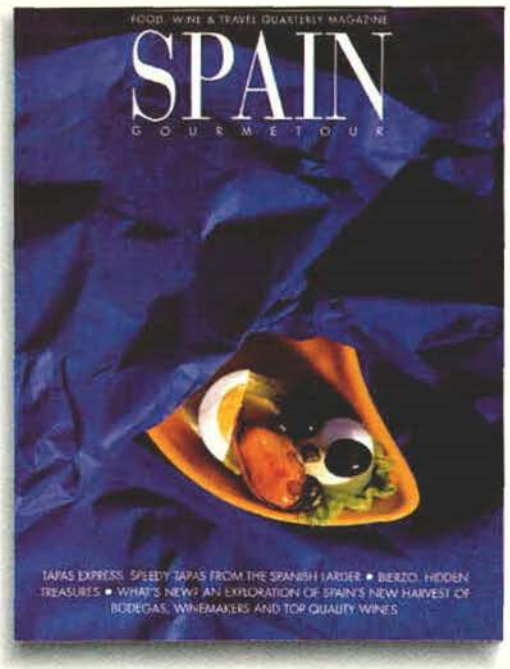
More and better fruit

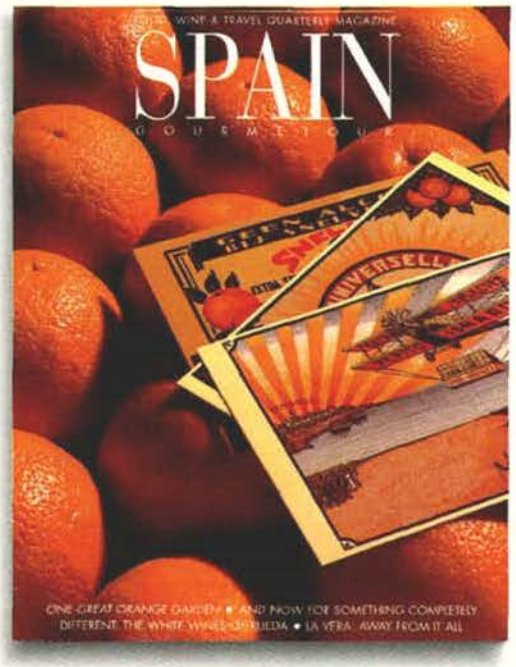
Citrus fruits, which have played a key role in the evolution of the Spanish economy, are still one of its star products even though their relative importance in overall agroalimentary exports has gone down. From its inception, the citrus fruit sector has always been firmly export-oriented, and it is on the strength of this that Spain has become the world's leading exporter of fresh citrus fruits despite not being the leading producer. In quantitative terms, progress in citrus exports has been very positive, showing a 50 percent increase to three million tons. But other qualitative aspects of this sector's progress over the last ten years are also significant. Intensive scientific research focused on developing new varieties, the introduction of new natural treatments of the fruit while still on the tree, along with improved approaches to cultivation, storage, and transport, have made it possible to extend the period during which our citrus fruits are in the marketplace and to widen our export range beyond the traditional E.C. market. To give an example, Navelina variety oranges begin their season in September instead of November, while the season for Navelate and Valencia Late now lasts from February to July. Meanwhile, Spanish oranges are sold today in Eastern European countries such as Poland and the Czech Republic, and as far afield as Australia and Singapore.

The development of the market for clementines, a hybrid of the orange and the classic mandarin, has been particularly exciting: Spain has become the biggest producer and exporter of these in the world. The volume of foreign sales increased from 400,000 tons ten years ago to 1,200,000 tons in 1996, this figure accounting for more than a third of the total volume of Spain's citrus exports. Though the markets of the E.U. are still their principal destination, important new ones have opened up, including some as challenging in terms of logistics and health requirements as the U.S. market. There, sales of Spanish clementines have tripled, reaching 16,000 tons in 1995. Promotional campaigns have been particularly important in that market, where clementines were formerly a completely unknown product.

Spain's protagonism in the international citrus trade has been highlighted by the creation in Valencia (capital of the principal producing region) of the first Citric Products Futures Market, an instrument for price variation risk management which will streamline this sector's progress in the coming century.

Exports of other Spanish fruits and vegetables have also evolved favorably over the past decade, though their geographical distribution shows less variation. Sales have increased by 200 percent, reaching 4,186,849 tons, while expanding their markets into Eastern Europe. Spain's varied climate and soil conditions, in combination with this sector's traditional orientation towards export, have favored the growing of crops chosen with an eye to foreign markets. Straw-





berry growing in Huelva is a good example: there, the selection of appropriate varieties and the application of modern growing methods have, in just over a decade, turned a traditional product into an impressive export industry. Huelva strawberries currently dominate the European market with sales topping 100,000 tons, placing Spain as the world's leading producer and exporter of strawberries.

Olive Oil and Serrano Ham: Two Gourmet Products

Exports of olive oil, that most veteran of processed products, have seen significant qualitative changes. Scientific research in the field of nutrition carried out in the U.S. during the 1980s, discovered olive oil to be one of the healthiest edible fats. This new perception of the product created new market opportunities which Spanish exporters were not slow to capitalize on. Foreign sales of packaged olive oil (a product with much higher added value than traditional bulk exports) increased during the period 1986-1995 by nearly 95 percent to reach a figure of 44,862 tons, with sales of extra virgin olive oil—pure "olive juice"—growing by 231 percent to a total of 9,303 tons. Spanish olive oil is exported to more than 100 countries. Spanish brands are up among the leaders in traditional markets which now qualify as established, such as Australia and Saudi Arabia, and are present in new markets with excellent growth potential, such as Japan and Taiwan. In parallel, promotional spending by the olive oil sector, merely token ten years ago, has grown gradually to reach a figure of 1,000 million pesetas (7.5 million U.S. dollars) in 1996. Promotional campaigns carried out in recent years by the *Fondo de Promoción del Aceite de Oliva Español* (Spanish Olive Oil Promotion Fund) have been aimed at making known the quality and diversity of Spain's oils and the olive varieties from which they derive.

Thanks to a determined and sustained battle by Spain's health authorities to eradicate African swine fever, in 1989 the E.C. authorized the export of pork-derived products.

Cured ham, of which Spain is the biggest producer and consumer in the world, is the pork product which saw the biggest increase in export, exceeding 6,000 tons in 1996. The E.U. countries were the main destination, though new markets have opened up in Latin America and sales in the U.S. have been authorized. The *Consorcio del Jamón Serrano Español* (Spanish Serrano Ham Consortium), made up of the leading producing companies, was created in 1990 with the aim of creating a profile for a high quality ham cured for a minimum of nine months. This body has its own inspection and control mechanisms which guarantee that established quality standards are strictly applied. Consortium-approved serrano ham (easily identifiable by its hot-branded mark) accounts for 35 percent of total ham exports and is competing in the top quality segment with other hams which have been present on the international market for over 30 years. December 1994, the last vestiges of African swine fever having been definitively eradicated, saw the liberalization of exports of products derived from Iberian pork. The Iberian pig, a species native to Spain, is extensively reared and charcuterie derived from it is one of Spain's top gastronomic products. The recently formed *Consorcio de Productos del Cerdo Ibérico* (Iberian Pork Products Consortium) will be responsible for product definition and quality control, and for the promotion on foreign markets of hams and other products derived from this unique species, taking on competition from world-class top gourmet products.

Wine: From Plonk to Posh

One noteworthy feature of the winegrowing sector's export scenario is the increase in sales of wines bearing Denomination of Origin: these have gone up from an average of 1,745,000 hectoliters in the period 1986/1987 to 2,525,000 hectoliters in 1994/1995. Our main customers were the E.U. countries, though Spanish wines are also present in markets such as the U.S., Canada, Switzerland, Australia, and Japan. Sales of D.O. Rioja wines, Spain's most internationally famous D.O., have increased by over 100 percent. The figure for 1995 was 592,183 hectoliters, of which over half represented better quality and higher priced *crianza* (aged) wines.

Other Spanish D.O.s, virtually unknown a decade ago, have achieved recognition by the experts and are making headway in the competitive international wine market. Of these, D.O. Ribera del Duero deserves special mention, its sales having multiplied six-fold between 1986 and 1995 to reach 12,000 hectoliters (with twice as many being *crianza* wines as young wines). Its main foreign market is among the E.U. countries, especially the U.K. and Germany, but it also sells to markets as distant as Russia and Australia.

Galician white wines from the D.O. Rías Baixas are another success story. Though production is very limited, the elegance and freshness of these wines has attracted the attention of discerning palates in the principal markets. While foreign sales were negligible in 1988, the D.O.'s early days, by 1996 they had reached 3,139 hectoliters. D.O. Rías Baixas wines sell to nearly all the E.U. countries, to much of Latin America and the U.S., and to Japan.

The limited space allowed to this brief summary prevents my mentioning the positive progress made by many other agroalimentary products on foreign markets. Suffice it to say that the dynamism and ready adaptability shown by this sector's exporters mean that we can look towards the 21st century with optimism.

Santiago Botas *is an international marketing consultant specializing in agroalimentary products.*

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

SONIA ORTEGA

• As usual at the beginning of the year, there is a stream of new guides coming out one after the other giving all the best information on restaurants, hotels, places of interest, etc. The amount of information increases year by year but, being designed for use by motorists, the books fortunately still fit in the glove compartment. Most of them are sponsored by automobile companies or the like. **Gourmetour**, the most veteran and the most polished, is the one that gives most gastronomic information, covering not only restaurants but also the best shops for local specialities and even cultural activities. The **Cepsa** guide, like the previous one, is also arranged according to provinces but it places greater emphasis on traditional aspects of tourism. It includes full maps of Spain and clear plans of the main towns. The **Mondial Assistance** and **Shell** guides are arranged in alphabetical order of towns. In the former the information is short and sweet; the latter gives more extensive information on both, tourism and gastronomy.

• For armchair travellers, wine guides have become an essential tool for finding one's way through the wealth of wines on offer. Here are two classic guides that have just brought out their 1997 editions: the **Guía de Vinos Gourmets** and the **Guía Peñín de los vinos de España.** The former arranges the information according to the autonomous communities with the local Denominations of Origin, listing many of the bodegas attached to them and giving comments on their main wines. It also includes such interesting aspects as the wine festivals held in each area and a new feature in this edition, the restaurants with the best wine cellars. The veteran wine writer, José Peñín, this time assesses 1,800 wines. In the section called "El podio" (The podium), he groups those wines that he considers deserve a special mention, and in the section entitled "Los mejores de cada zona" gives a brief overview of the best wines in each area. This author has also produced another book, **Los mejores vinos y destilados**, which makes a selection of the wines receiving the highest grades in the main guide and has a section on distilled drinks, including Jerez brandy.

• Now for some new contributions to two subjects that are very much in the limelight in the world of gastronomic publications - Mediterranean cuisine and olive oil. Firstly, **The Olive Oil Companion** which, although it starts with an introduction to the world of oil - production, processing, types of oil, etc., is basically a list of the world's leading single-estate and best-known branded olive oils. Well-designed and with fairly thorough information on over 100 oils - including, as well as their organoleptic characteristics, a brief history of the firms and their founders - it also gives interesting recipes provided by the producers themselves. **Mediterranean Cooking with Olive Oil** is the most recent contribution from the International Olive Oil Council for the promotion of olive oil consumption worldwide. After an introduction in which doctors, nutritionists and food writers from countries as different as Japan, Canada or Italy extoll the virtues of olive oil, there is a selection of recipes from the whole of the Mediterranean basin. The Spanish writer, Lourdes March, drew up the selection which goes from aperitifs to desserts and includes rice, pasta, fish dishes, etc. - all authentic and tempting, and based on the common ingredient of olive oil. Finally, **Nueva Cocina Mediterránea** retrieves and updates gastronomy from this part of the world. Its versatile and enthusiastic author, Josep María Fló - whose activities include those of chef, publicist and journalist and who, since childhood, has been collecting forgotten recipes - wanted to go a step further and after much research now offers new dishes that take their inspiration from time-honoured cooking practices. The total of 400 recipes clearly goes beyond the average recipe book and brings together traditional Mediterranean products with others that come from the four corners of the earth. There are clear explanations and step-by-step instructions, with photos, for recipes that are as inspiring as their author.

• **The Essential Saffron Companion**, to take a common phrase made famous by Woody Allen, tells "all you ever wanted to know about saffron but never dared to ask". The former British graphic designer and photographer, John Humphries, who has now turned his attention to the food and wine trade and is himself a restaurateur, one day noticed that this age-old, even mythical spice was little known and wrongly used. So he wrote this book about it. He tells what it is, how and where it is grown, discusses quality, how to use it in cooking, the use of saffron worldwide and gives some of the most representative recipes - from Cornish saffron cake (saffron was grown in Cornwall until the turn of the century) to India, Italy, and Spain, the home of the world's best-quality saffron.

• **To the Heart of Spain. Food and Wine Adventures beyond the Pyrenees.** This is an interesting and pleasant way of finding out about Spain, a combination of regular travel book, wine guide and compendium of good Spanish recipes. The Walkers - a husband and wife team, she being a chef and both of them writers on food, wine and travel - have travelled all round Spain trying things out for themselves. Not their first book on Spain, they clearly enjoyed the background research for it. This is a good introduction for travellers who like to appreciate not just the artistic wealth of a country but also its gastronomic offerings.

• Anyone travelling in Spain has heard of the Paradores. This State-owned chain which has converted some of Spain's ancient monuments - castles, convents, palaces - into beautiful, welcoming hotels, has always insisted that their restaurants offer the traditional local cuisine. In collaboration with the El País-Aguilar publishing house, it has now published a collection named **Cocina tradicional en Paradores** which, region by region, gives the most traditional local recipes and recommends a wine to accompany them.

• Finally, two new journals from the Spanish wine scene. **Vinos de España** comes out every two months and aims to give clear information on wine to aficionados in language that is easy to understand but serious. To judge from the readers' response, it looks as if it is on the right track. On sale at newspaper stands or by subscription. **Mi vino** is given free to the customers of restaurants that care about their wine list, the idea being that readers should receive "recommendations from the world's greatest experts".

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Erratum:
In our section Stop Press on page 9 of Spain Gourmetour Nº 40 the note about Spanish citrus fruits should read: The Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade (ICEX) is putting up 60% with the remaining 40% coming from the companies.

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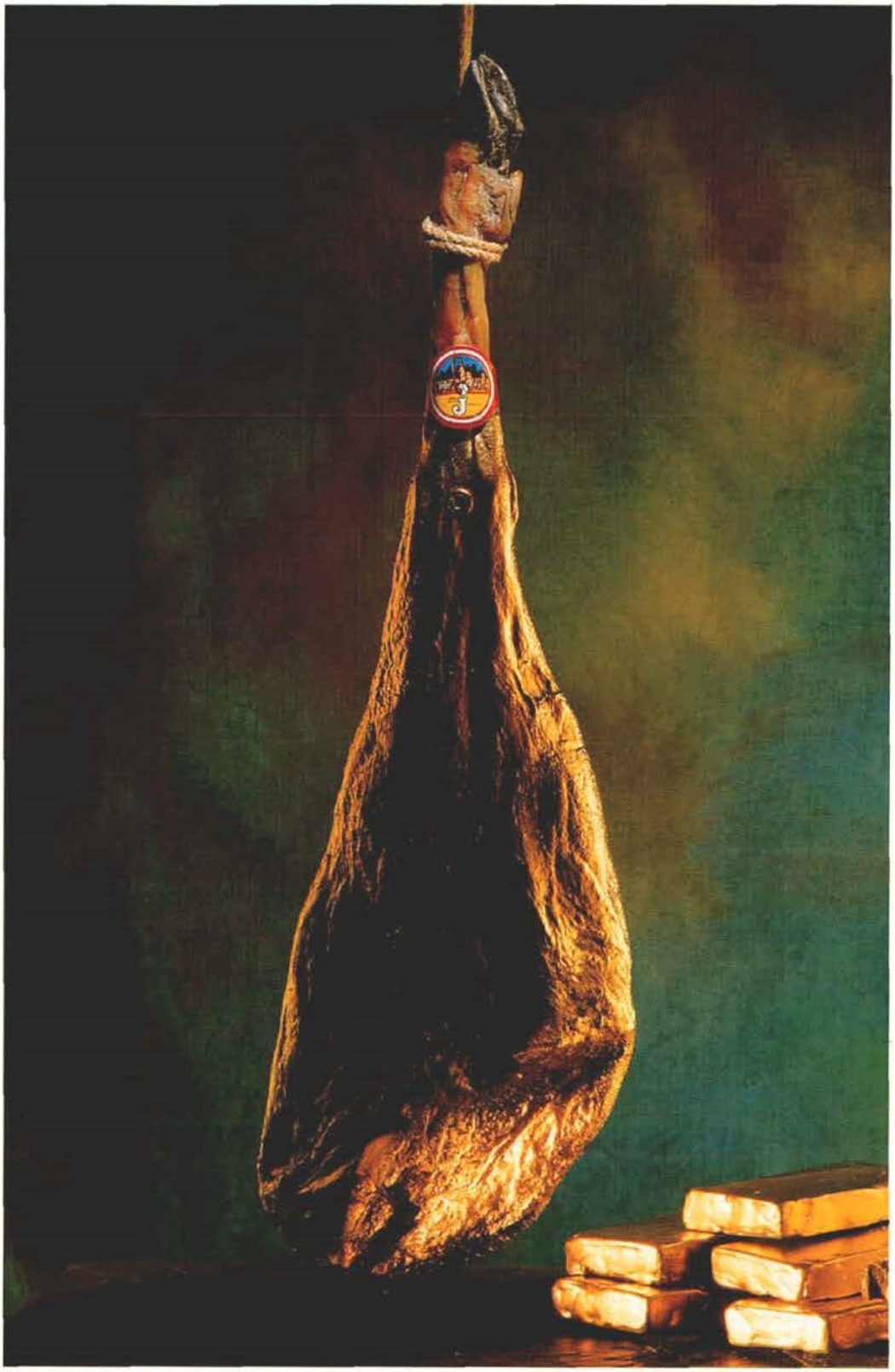

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AD INDEX

S P A I N IN FOCUS (I)

A FEW YEARS AGO, WE FEATURED A SERIES OF ARTICLES UNDER THE TITLE "SPAIN THROUGH FOREIGN EYES" WRITTEN BY FOREIGN VISITORS TO SPAIN–SOME HISTORICAL, SOME MODERN–RECORDING THEIR IMPRESSIONS OF THE EXPERIENCE. ON MANY OF THEM, CERTAIN QUINTESSENTIAL SPANISH EXPRESSIONS OF FOLK CULTURE HAD LEFT A PROFOUND IMPRESSION OF ONE SORT OR ANOTHER. BULLFIGHTS, FLAMENCO SINGING AND DANCING, HOLY WEEK PROCESSIONS, ALL SPRING TO MIND AS PARTICULAR TO SPAIN. THIS PARTICULARITY IS NOT SOMETHING THAT SHOULD BE UNDERPLAYED, BUT NOR SHOULD IT BE EXAGGERATED AS IT OFTEN HAS BEEN, FORGING A CARICATURE IMAGE OF SPAIN AS THE LAND OF CASTANETS AND HIGH TRAGEDY. THAT SAID, ALTHOUGH IN MANY RESPECTS CONTEMPORARY SPAIN IS RADICALLY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT IT WAS JUST A FEW DECADES AGO, THOSE "TYPICALLY SPANISH" HAPPENINGS ARE STILL VERY MUCH ALIVE. EVEN ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE 21ST CENTURY, THEIR CONTINUING HOLD IS UNQUESTIONABLE. THIS IS WHY WE ARE DEVOTING THIS SERIES TO THEM, KNOWING THAT THEY ARE NOT TO EVERYONE'S TASTE, NOR PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD BY EVERYONE. OVER THE COMING YEAR, WE SHALL BE LOOKING AT CERTAIN ASPECTS OF SPAIN'S FOLK CULTURE THROUGH THE FOCUS OF PEOPLE WHO KNOW IT AT CLOSE QUARTERS. IT IS WITH THE HOLY WEEK THAT WE START OUR SERIES.

HOLY WEEK IN SPAIN

Text: **María Ángeles Sánchez**
Translation: **Hawys Pritchard**
Photos: **Cristina García Rodero**

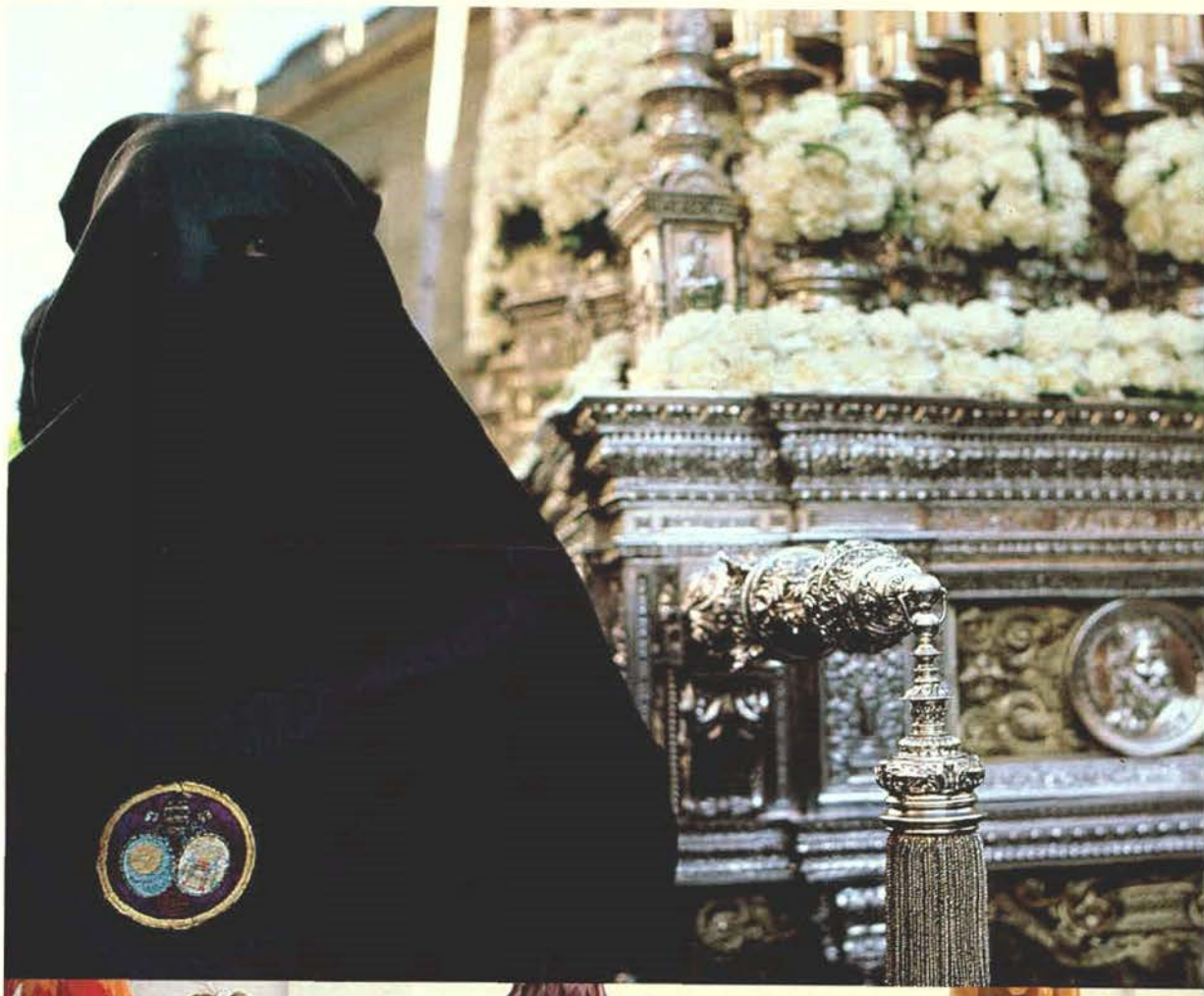
IN ALL CHRISTIAN COUNTRIES, HOLY WEEK COMMEMORATES THE DAYS WHEN, ACCORDING TO THE GOSPELS, CHRIST SUFFERED, WAS CRUCIFIED, AND ROSE AGAIN ON THE THIRD DAY. FRAMED BY TWO JOYOUS EVENTS–THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM ON PALM SUNDAY, AND THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST ON EASTER DAY–THE COURSE OF HOLY WEEK IN SPAIN EMBRACES PAIN AND SPECTACLE, DRAMA AND DELIGHT, BODILY SUFFERING AND PURE SENSUOUS PLEASURE. NO ONE FINDS THESE EXTREMES AT ALL INCONGRUOUS, NOR DOES IT OCCUR TO ANY OF THOSE TAKING PART THAT POPULAR TRADITION HAS TURNED PARADOX INTO HISTORY. VIEWED FROM OUTSIDE SPAIN, THESE CAN BE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND, EVEN FOR PEOPLE OF THE SAME RELIGIOUS PERSUASION.

UNTIL QUITE RECENTLY, THE IMPRESSIVE FLOATS WERE CARRIED BY CARGO LOADERS FROM THE DOCKS. NOWADAYS, THOUGH, THERE ARE MORE AND MORE VOLUNTEERS WHO CONSIDER IT AN HONOR TO BEAR THEM.

PROCESSIONS ARE THE MOST WIDESPREAD TRADITIONAL HOLY WEEK EVENT. BASICALLY, THEY CONSIST OF A PARADE THROUGH THE STREETS, USUALLY INVOLVING HUNDREDS OR THOUSANDS OF PENITENTS.

MURCIA IS ONE OF THE SPANISH PROVINCES WHERE THE HOLY WEEK IS FELT MORE INTENSELY. PROCESSIONS ARE SHOWY AND PICTURESQUE, LIKE THIS ONE, WITH HUGE TRUMPETS CALLED *BOCINAS* OR HORNS.

IT WAS IN SEVILLE IN 1480 THAT THE FRATERNITIES, NOW SPREAD ALL OVER SPAIN, FIRST MADE THEIR APPEARANCE. THEIR ORIGINAL PURPOSE WAS TO PROMOTE RELIGIOUS FERVOR AND, IN MANY CASES, TO PROVIDE CHARITY FOR THE NEEDY.



SOME PROCESSIONS ARE FAMOUS FOR RIVALRY BETWEEN DIFFERENT BANDS OF DEVOTEES, LIKE THE COLIBLANCOS AND COLINEGROS OF BAENA (CORDOBA), AND THIS LENDS A CERTAIN FRENZY TO WHAT IS STRICTLY SPEAKING AN EXPRESSION OF SORROW.

MANY OF THE PLAYS DEPICTING THE PASSION, DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST TAKE PLACE IN CATALONIA. SOME HAVE BEEN STAGED DURING CENTURIES AND INVOLVE MORE THAN 300 ACTORS, USUALLY LOCAL RESIDENTS.

THE CASTILIANS ARE KNOWN WITHIN SPAIN AS SOLEMN, RATHER DOUR PEOPLE, AND THIS SOLEMNITY IS PERFECTLY EXPRESSED IN THE RITUAL OF THE *VIA CRUCIS* WHICH TAKES PLACE ON GOOD FRIDAY IN BERCIANOS DE ALISTE (ZAMORA).

THE PRESENT-DAY MEANING OF THESE CELEBRATIONS HAS SHIFTED SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THE ORIGINAL. HOLY WEEK, WHICH FOR MANY PLACES IS THEIR MAJOR ANNUAL FIESTA, WAS FOR CENTURIES CHARGED WITH SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE, HIGHLIGHTED BY RITUALS AND DEVOTIONAL ACTS DEMONSTRATING POPULAR FEELING AND FAITH.

The culmination of the Christian liturgical calendar is not, as one might think, the celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas, but Easter Sunday which marks Christ's triumph over death, and promises eternal life. Easter is a movable feast, the formula for calculating its date having been established by the Council of Nicea in 325 on the basis of natural events and with a nod in the direction of magic. It decreed that it should fall on the Sunday following the first full moon after 21 March, the Spring equinox. This means that, like the phases of the moon, Holy Week (and with it all the other movable feasts– Carnival, Lent, Whitsun, Ascension Day and Corpus Christi) can all shift by almost a month either way. Given that the date of Easter determines, for example, the work and academic calendars in Spain and in many other countries with a Christian tradition, it is salutary to realize that as we approach the second millennium, in this age of the computer and global economy, some aspects of our lives are still ruled by the moon. The magical element was something of which 4th-century ecclesiastical elders were very much aware: their formula for calculating Easter ensured that during Holy Week celebrations (which continue virtually around the clock in Spain, as we shall see), nocturnal events occurred by the light of the full moon.

PRINCIPAL FESTIVAL

The present-day meaning of these celebrations has shifted significantly from the original. Holy Week, which for many places is their major annual fiesta, was for centuries charged with special significance, highlighted by rituals and devotional acts demonstrating popular feeling and faith. Today, though the content is generally not the same, many of these displays still survive, and they still form an important and, paradoxically, recently revitalized part of Spanish culture. And this is despite official directives which have declared one of Holy Week's most important days, Maundy Thursday, no longer a holiday.

From humble processions to spectacular Passion Plays, Holy Week celebrations take many different forms. Tableaux of articulated effigies, religious fraternities (*cofradías*), somberly rhythmic displays of mass drumming (*tamboradas*), processions of biblical characters, public penitence and self-inflicted physical suffering... all these can be seen during Holy Week in towns and villages the length and breadth of the country.

One of the most widespread popular celebrations is the procession. Floats or thrones bearing a carved figure, or groups of figures, representing a scene from the Passion of Christ, are borne through the streets accompanied by *nazarenos* (penitents dressed in purple tunics), other penitents and hooded figures, in a ritual in which faith, silence, sobriety, sacrifice, luxury, overstatement, frivolity and pain combine in a heady mix. Figures of Christ whose arms drop dramatically as he is brought down from the cross; Virgins who dry their tears; Veronicas who, like the character in the Gospels, raise a handkerchief to the sweat-soaked face of Jesus... The brief scenes that the articulated figures "act out" are a relic of, or prelude to, Passion Plays. These plays themselves are an excellent medium for communicating both ideas and emotions, and the traditional versions performed in many parts of the country combine both in perfect synthesis.

THE PASSION PLAYS

Many of the most interesting Passion Plays are performed from just into Lent until after Holy Week (a period of nearly two months) in the Catalan region of northeastern Spain. With the one exception of Cervera's (in Lérida Province), they are performed in the region's own language, as they were even during the difficult Franco years when the use of Catalan was prohibited. (In addition to its principal language, Castilian, Spain has three other official languages: Catalan, Basque and Gallego, which are spoken in Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, respectively.) In addition to their intrinsic meaning, these plays, like most folk festivals, symbolize and exhibit Spain's cultural diversity. Hopefully, too, they provide the proof that in diversity lies richness rather than a cause for confrontation.

Catalonia's only Passion Play acted in Castilian (Cervera is on the border with Aragon, and thousands of Castilian speakers flock there to see it) is considered one of the most ancient, with written references to it dating back to 1481. Present-day productions, which involve more than 300 actors, were resumed to great public acclaim from 1940 on. The play lasts almost the whole day, divided into two parts, one in the morning and the other in the evening. The local Passion Play in Esparraguera (Barcelona) also involves more than 300 actors, among whom there are several examples of three generations of the same family on stage, depicting the passion and death of Christ. These plays are an integral part of life for the town's inhabitants, who are totally committed to a tradition known to date back to at least 1611: a letter bearing that date and mentioning the *Misterios de la Passió*, was discovered in the loft of an old house. The play has evolved gradually, incorporating more and more identifying features. The contemporary version, based on a text written in the 1950s by a native of the locality, is accompanied by music composed specifically for it, and is performed in a purpose-built theater which holds 2000 spectators. The play is in two parts: in the morning, the *Vida pública de Jesús* (Public Life of Jesus) is represented, and in the evening, *Passió, mort i resurrecció* (Passion, Death and Resurrection).

After a fire in 1983 destroyed the splendid theater in Olessa de Montserrat (Barcelona) the reconstructed Teatre de la Passió was opened in 1987. This theater's annual Passion Play has been staged continuously since 1642, interrupted only by the invasion of the Napoleonic troops (early 19th century) and the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Between actors and technicians, over 600 local people take part in this *passió*, which lasts four hours and whose acts take place simultaneously on three stages.

Plays depicting the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus are by no means exclusive to Catalonia. In Chinchón (Madrid), the beautiful open-air setting of the arcaded Plaza Mayor with its picturesque houses and taverns, provides a spectacular backdrop to the play which has been held there on Easter Saturday night since 1963. In the archiepiscopal church of

FROM HUMBLE PROCESSIONS TO SPECTACULAR PASSION PLAYS, HOLY WEEK CELEBRATIONS TAKE MANY DIFFERENT FORMS. TABLEAUX OF ARTICULATED EFFIGIES, PROCESSIONS OF BIBLICAL CHARACTERS, SOBERLY RHYTHMIC DISPLAYS OF MASS DRUMMING, PUBLIC PENITENCE... ALL THESE CAN BE SEEN THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE COUNTRY.

San Martín Obispo in Callosa de Segura (Alicante), an event which originally consisted of *tableaux vivants* entitled *Corona Mortificada* (Tortured Crown) became, in the 1970s, a play for 90 participants, beginning with the *Tentaciones de Jesûs* (Temptations of Jesus) and ending with the *Resurrección del Señor* (Resurrection of the Lord).

Though not strictly speaking a play, the paraliturgical *Agonía de Jesûs* (Agony of Jesus) enacted on the evening of Good Friday in the parish church of Aledo (Murcia, southeast Spain) is the next best thing. While the sermon of the Seven Words from the Cross is being delivered, a centurion enters the church, backed up by Roman soldiers and stabs his spear into the side of an articulated effigy of Christ to establish whether he is really dead. After the departure of the soldiers, drums beat out a dirge while Christ is removed from the cross and placed in the arms of the grieving Mary, *la Dolorosa*.

TAMBORADAS

Like the Passion Plays, tamboradas–prolonged displays of nonstop insistent drumming–also have an archetype, even though they are common all over Spain. The archetypal tamboradas occur in the Bajo Aragón (Teruel Province) where the air is filled with the harsh beating of tenor and bass drums as an expression of grief for the death of Christ. The harder the drums are beaten, the better. Bleeding hands are disregarded, being considered proof of conscientious drumming. In some places the drummers form part of the procession of various effigies; in others the tamborada, lasting late into the night, is an event in itself.

Serious rehearsals start many days in advance: instruments are tuned, wrists and arms exercised, bodies accustomed to the weight and position of the drums so as to withstand the huge effort involved in the final performance. In some places, such as Calanda (birthplace of cinematographer Luis Buñuel, who included scenes of his home village's Holy Week celebrations in some of his films), preparations begin on Ash Wednesday, when the tenor and bass drums are brought out of storage to be cleaned, tightened, tuned and generally prepared for Easter. One of the most impressive moments takes place at midnight between Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. As the clock in the village plaza strikes twelve, the mayor gives a signal which unleashes a deafening sound, the earthquake-like din of hundreds of drums, large and small, being beaten. The noise goes on all night, until dawn. Tamboradas like this take place in Albalate del Arzobispo, Alcañiz, Alcorisa (which also puts on an impressive open-air Passion Play), Andorra, Ariño, Foz de Calanda, Híjar, La Puebla de Híjar, Samper de Calanda and Urrea de Gaén, all in Teruel Province.

BIBLICAL FIGURES

Midway between a procession pure and simple and a Passion Play, the biblical figures of Puente Genil (Córdoba, Andalusia) take to the streets on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The processions are made up of some 60 groups, with an average of 25 to 30 people per group, though the most outstanding one, the Roman Empire, has 150. The biblical figures, from both Old and New Testaments, are the most characteristic feature of this procession. There are usually three or four of these characters in these groups, though there are, of course, twelve Apostles. The figures' faces are masked (little holes allow them to breathe), and this gives them a stately, theatrical quality which is reinforced by their stiff, stylized movements. In their hands they carry a *martirio*, or traditional symbol of their character, some of which do involve a certain degree of martyrdom to support: St. Peter and St. Paul, for example, have to bear the weight of an enormous model of a church, which they carry between them. The processions last six or seven hours, except for Friday's, which starts at six in the morning and, with a two hour break, goes on until six in the evening. All this effort is gladly borne, sustained by faith, love, and free-flowing *uvita*, a very light wine made specially for the occasion by the local *bodegas* (this area produces excellent wines).

One of the most moving moments occurs at dawn on Good Friday, when the effigy of Jesus of Nazareth is brought out of the church. Despite its gentle expression, this figure is known to the locals as *El Terrible*. "Terrible in his authority as Son of God," they explain, "but it's an affectionate nickname." The Roman Empire, bearers of the effigy, intone the Miserere, the psalm chanted each night of Holy Week, and plays a reveille as day breaks. Julio Caro Baroja (1914-1995), respected scholar and researcher into Spain's folk festivals, declares that "the oldest components (silver lace, belts, fabrics and jewelry) of the outfits worn by the biblical figures and theological representations, could date from the late 18th century." Some local researchers date the use of masks back to the mid-17th century.

THE *VIA CRUCIS* OF BERCIANOS DE ALISTE

The Castilians are known within Spain as solemn, rather dour people, and this solemnity is perfectly expressed in the ritual of the Vía Crucis which takes place on Good Friday in Bercianos de Aliste (Zamora, Castile-Leon). The Vía Crucis, or Way of the Cross, is a route walked by the faithful, who stop to pray at the crosses and altars erected at intervals along it in memory of Christ's walk to the hill of Calvary where he was crucified. Nearly all the village men belong to the *cofradía de la Santa Cruz*, the Holy Cross fraternity: they usually join at the time of their marriage, as do their wives. This entitles them to the traditional right to be buried in a grave dug by their confreres. In preparation for that final ritual, they take part in all the other ceremonies that make up the community life of the fraternity, the best known of these being that of the Good Friday Vía Crucis. This preoccupation with death is explained by the circumstances of Santa Cruz's foundation in the Middle Ages, at a time when an appalling epidemic sweeping through the area around Aliste and nearby Sayago miraculously spared the inhabitants of Bercianos. In gratitude, they vowed to accompany Christ in his agony and death, wearing their own shrouds. The first written evidence of this custom occurs in a papal bull dated 1536.

On the morning of Good

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Friday, the confreres remove from a side altar in the church, a recumbent life-size figure of Christ, with articulated arms. Still inside the church, the figure is placed on a cross which is then carried out to the adjacent square where it is planted in the ground facing the figure of the Virgin of Solitude. Once everything is in place, two or three of the longest-serving brothers keep vigil until procession time, dressed in their traditional Aliste capes, retrieved from deepest storage for the occasion. Once the ceremony is underway, the priest preaches a sermon on the passion and death of Christ. This is followed by the removal of the figure from the cross, an imposing scene attended by white-shrouded penitents. Two priests climb ladders and, helped by the fraternity members, release the figure from the cross. First one arm falls, then the other... Supported by an altar cloth under its shoulders, the delicate figure is gently lowered to the waiting brothers below who then lay it in its glass case. The Santa Cruz brothers form the funeral cortege, most of them dressed in white, calf-length tunics, stockings and a cowl of the same material–generally linen–as the tunic. Others, for reasons of ill health or old age, have to leave off the shroud–the cowl worn close over the head is claustrophobic and not everyone can bear it–and wear heavy brown capes instead. They carry thick candles and, sometimes, rosaries. The procession that makes its way along the Vía Crucis (it is about a kilometer from the village to the Calvary Hill) also features banners, processional crosses, a crucifix, the case containing the recumbent Christ and a figure of la Dolorosa, and many devotees, who follow the ceremony with great solemnity. This is not, however, the general tone among the spectators, many of whom park their cars at the last minute along the route as just one example of their lack of respect for the event taking place. Even so, the slowly advancing procession on its way to the three crosses of Calvary is deeply affecting. The shrouded figures, white and immaculate, with only their hands and eyes visible, stand out starkly against the blue sky of the Aliste countryside, while behind them somberly caped brothers chant the Miserere.

In Toro, also in Zamora Province, the big Good Friday procession begins at first light. Its floats are carried through the streets and squares of the town, converging at around ten on its splendid collegiate church. There, the penitents and float bearers build up their strength with a traditional dish of *bacalao al ajoarriero* (cod cooked with peppers). As well they might for they need to keep going until well after midday, by which time silence and solitude will have given way to crowds of onlookers. Solemnity returns that night, with the appearance of a figure of the recumbent Christ by Spanish sculptor Gregorio Fernández (1576-1636) which encapsulates like no other, the most dramatic moments of the Passion.

PROCESSIONS

Overall, processions are the most widespread traditional Holy Week event, though even within that category there is huge variety. Basically, they consist of a parade through the streets, usually involving huge numbers of people. Thousands of penitents, an effigy of Christ or the Virgin Mary or a group of figures arranged in scenes on a float or throne, often carried on the shoulders of bearers known as *costaleros* (though female bearers–*costaleras*–are becoming more and more common) as in, for example, Elche (Alicante). Popular devotion is expressed both in respectful silence and in evocative *saetas*, folk songs reserved exclusively for this event.

The best-known processions include those of Seville, Málaga, Granada, Murcia, Valladolid and Zamora. These are not listed in any order of merit–I would not presume to do so, particularly given the passionate local loyalties that these events engender. It was in Seville in 1480 that the fraternities, now spread all over Spain, first made their appearance. Their original purpose was to promote religious fervor among the populace for the mysteries of the Passion and, in many cases, to provide charity for the needy. As we have seen, the fraternities are responsible today for the majority of community celebrations of Holy Week, including processions.

Seville's Holy Week procession is the best known outside Spain. Fifty-five fraternities take part in it, each of them with its supporters, defenders, and in some extreme cases, fanatics. Until quite recently, the impressive floats were carried by cargo loaders from the docks. Nowadays, though, partly because of disagreements over rates of pay, and partly because of a new wave of enthusiasm for Holy Week among young people, there are more and more volunteers for the job who consider it an honor to strap on their back supports, tie kerchiefs around their heads and plunge into a sweaty world of physical effort for a reward of emotional satisfaction. Among the sacred effigies most venerated by the people of Seville are Nuestro Padre Jesús del Gran Poder, the Virgen Macarena, the Esperanza de Triana, and the Cristo del Cachorro.

It would be impossible to compile a complete list of the processions which take to the streets of Spain during this special week. Some are famous for the quality of their processional figures created by gifted artists: in Mediterranean Spain, Murcia's is the work of the sculptor Salzillo (1707-1783), and Crevillente's (Alicante) of Mariano Benlliure (1862-1947). Inland, in Castile, the work of the Castilian sculptors of the 16th and 17th centuries is represented by figures by Gregorio Fernández, Berruguete, Juan de Juni and Gil de Siloé in the processions of, for example, Valladolid and Zamora. Other processions are famous for rivalry between different bands of devotees, which lends a certain frenzy to what is strictly speaking an expression of sorrow. Famous rivals include the *californios* and *marrajos* of Cartagena (Murcia), the *coliblancos* and *colinegros* of Baena (Córdoba), and the *Paso Blanco* and the *Paso Azul* of Lorca (Murcia), where the horse-drawn carriages, equestrian displays and biblical characters that make up the procession are reminiscent of old-style Hollywood extravaganzas.

All that said, though, each and every one of these processions is charged with popular religiosity, aesthetic awareness, community spirit, and love and respect for tradition, though degrees of each may vary. The fragrance of orange blossoms carried on the spring air, the melancholy harmonies of music in the streets, picturesque townscapes, the sound of saetas heard from a balcony, the gentle sway of mantillas in the light of the full moon... these complete the magic.

María Ángeles Sánchez *is a journalist, writer and photographer. She has spent 25 years researching the folk festivals of Spain and has published five books on the subject, illustrated by her own photographs. Since 1988 she has been in charge of the travel pages of the daily newspaper,* El País.

P. SANCHO MATA/ICEX

CHERRIES. THE PICK OF THE BUNCH

Text: **David Ing**

THERE IS AN OLD LEGEND IN SPAIN THAT ONE OF THE FAVORITE CONSORTS OF THE MOORISH KING, ABDERRAMAN III, WANTED TO SEE SNOW IN APRIL. TO SATISFY HER WHIM, HE TOOK HER TO A HIDDEN VALLEY AT THE FOOT OF THE GREDOS MOUNTAINS IN WHAT IS NOW THE EXTREMADURA REGION OF WESTERN SPAIN–TO SHOW HER THE BLANKET OF WHITE BLOSSOMS PRODUCED BY THE THOUSANDS OF CHERRY TREES THERE.

PABLO NEUSTADT/SOBREMESA

The cherry has become undeniably the mainstay of the local economy.

Today, that valley, through which runs the Jerte river, is not only the principal cherry-growing region of Spain, but also one of the most important in the whole of Europe. However, its international recognition is relatively recent. Only in the last few years have other nations been able to enjoy freely the fruits of this once remote enclave, thanks to the advances made in transport and refrigeration techniques. The same is true of Spain's other cherry-producing regions, Aragon, Catalonia, Andalusia and Castile-Leon–and Valencia, the first of the bunch to create its own "Specific Denomination."

The history of when cherry production began in Spain is open to debate. "The wild cherry was known by the ancient Romans, when they conquered Asia Minor," says Antonio Martín del Moral, director of the Inspection Center for Spanish Foreign Trade (CICE), whose department has recently published a comprehensive study of cherry growing in Spain and the Jerte valley in particular, whose cherries are quality controlled by the Provisional Denomination of Origin "Cereza del Jerte". "Apparently, it was the Ro-

P. SANCHO MATA/ICEX

A blanket of snow-white blossoms covers the Jerte Valley in spring.

man general Lúculo who introduced the cherry tree to Italy from the Kerassos region, a Greek name that was given to one of the later cultivated varieties and from which the Spanish word for cherry, (*cerezo*, the tree, and *cereza*, the fruit), took its name."

It was possibly the Romans who brought the first trees to the Iberian Peninsula when they conquered the region after driving out Hannibal's Carthaginian colonies. Or it could have been the Moors, well-known for their fascination with fruits. Nobody knows for sure. "It could even have been started from an autochthonous tree that was already established here," said Mr. Martín.

LEGENDS ASIDE

The romance of Roman and Moorish legends aside, the first documented evidence of Spanish cherry growing is located in this once isolated Jerte valley, some 220 kilometers (140 miles) southwest of Madrid. The trees were there when the first settlers began moving into the region in the 14th century, soon after its reconquest by the Christians. By the 16th century, the celebrated doctor, Luis de Toro, wrote

ONE OF THE KEYS TO THE JERTE VALLEY'S SUCCESS HAS BEEN THE UNIFIED EFFORTS OF THE GROWERS.

in his diary of the "excellent cherries" to be found there, describing in detail their color, size and flavor.

His mouth-watering reminiscences give some idea of how important cherry growing had already become. No doubt, Carlos V, the Habsburg monarch who forged the Spanish empire, would have been another of the early travelers to witness the first waves of what is now a sea of cherry trees as he struggled across the Gredos mountains to the monastery at Yuste, the haven in which he chose to spend the last months of his life following his abdication (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 40).

From the 18th century onwards, the cherry gradually began to displace the previously prevalent eating chestnut. But it was not until the next century that it was to be hailed as the "king of the Jerte valley." By the early 1900s it had seen off the vine, the last of the pretenders to the title, and its fruit had already become known in the principal market places of Spain and beyond. Since then, the cherry has become undeniably the mainstay of the local economy, with villagers taking full advantage of a micro-climate which provides both the necessary humidity and sunshine levels, and suffers little from the spring frosts which can savage a crop grown further north.

TEMPERATE CLIMATE

The temperate Mediterranean climate is aided by a topography which protects the trees from potentially damaging northerly winds and at the same time allows the penetration of humid, rain-producing currents of air from the southwest in spring and autumn. When these winds disappear in summer, the snow-melt from the surrounding mountains keeps the river well fed to provide sufficient nourishment for the orchards until the rains return. Even so, admits Mr. Martín, the valley has suffered like other highly traditional cherry-growing regions from the labor-intensive costs of picking a small fruit and relatively short harvesting periods which tend to produce a glut of fruit on the market at the same time, forcing down prices.

According to the CICE report, total world cherry production averages about 1.9 million metric tons a year. Of these, two-thirds are sweet cherries, some 60 percent of which are grown in Europe. The big difference is that while Europe eats most of the fruit fresh, some 80 percent, in the biggest rival production market, the United States of America, that figure drops to about 35 percent. With 28,000 hectares (70,000 acres) under cultivation, Spain represents the continent's second-biggest growing area after Italy–and the Jerte, together with its near neighbors some 6,506 hectares (16,000 acres), its most important.

"The area given over to cherry cultivation is in a position of decreasing or stabilization in all the European Union (E.U.) countries except for Spain which has shown important increases in recent years," says Mr. Martín. "As a large part of these new orchards has not begun full production, we can expect a significant increase in production in the short-term."

PLANNED GROWTH

Some of the signs of this planned growth can already be seen. At the start of the decade, Spain was just a minnow in the league of cherry exporters, shipping a mere 217 tons, 127 of which went to France and 79 to Germany. But, by 1995, it was exporting a total of 8,820 tons, with the United Kingdom (2,185), France (2,171), and Germany (2,072) as its three major customers. Other leading markets include Italy (1,111 tons), the Netherlands (676), Belgium and Luxembourg (406), and Portugal (198).

"Traditionally, the principal E.U. exporting countries have been France, Italy, and Greece for the fresh product and Germany for cherries for culinary use," says Mr. Martín. "Spain has joined them recently and with a major export drive has passed from shipping a symbolic amount in 1990 to becoming the second E.U. exporter after France. What is more important, we have an ample presence in the principal European markets, which makes an interesting perspective for the future of Spanish quality cherries."

One of the major goals of the Spanish growers had been to seek earlier ripening varieties to pre-empt the main surge of fruit which reaches the market in June and July. At the same time, it has to be taken into account that the cherry is a very perishable product and strongly dependent on the weather. Exports from each country are very variable from one year to another and can be suspended rapidly if the climatic conditions are not favorable.

Supported by a strong home market–the Spaniards match the Germans as Europe's top cherry eaters with an average annual consumption of about two kilograms (4.4 lb) per person–the area given over to the fruit's cultivation has virtually doubled since 1980. Much of the planting since then has been in newly developed areas of Spain, especially in the Ebro Valley near Zaragoza, which had robbed the Jerte of its earlier hegemony. The Zaragoza region now accounts for almost 20 percent of national production. Newer, still, are the orchards in the Grenada and Jaen provinces of Andalusia which have taken an 11 percent share. However, the Extremadura region, principally the Jerte valley, but also including neighboring districts such as La Vera, el Valle de Ambroz, Gata and Las Hurdes, made a resurgence in the early part of this decade and retains the biggest share, equivalent to nearly 29 percent.

RENEW CULTIVATION

The traditional stock tree in the Jerte valley is the *Prunus avium*, known in Spain as the *Revoldo*, with the most common grafts being for the Navalinda Aragón, Mollar, Ambrunés, Pico Negro and Pico Colorado varieties. But, recently, other varieties such as the Burlat from France, Duroni from Italy and the Van, Lapins, Sunburst and Summit from North America

THE SPECIFIC DENOMINATION CEREZAS DE LA MONTAÑA DE ALICANTE WAS CREATED FIVE YEARS AGO.

have been gaining an ever stronger presence according to the growers' federation, the Agrupación de Cooperativas Valle del Jerte.

The cultivation of the cherry has undergone a profound renovation in the last few years. Traditionally, the orchards took several years to come into production, with trees being allowed to grow freely and reach a large size, the fruit from which was usually small. All this made manual picking very difficult, with the resulting rise in costs. Picking grew to represent up to 80 percent of the total costs. Now they have sufficient varieties which can be brought rapidly into production.

The tendency now is to try to restrict growth to between 40 and 60 percent of the traditional tree, the so-called Spur or Semispur type.

One of the keys to the Jerte's success, according to Mr. Martín, has been the unified efforts of the growers. "All the villages in the valley have agricultural cooperatives grouping together the majority of producers in each community." Together with three other villages in the neighboring district, La Vera, they form the Agrupación de Cooperativas Valle del Jerte, which he describes as "one of the most efficient entities in the seasonal fruit trade in the country." Major investments have included new sorting and packing plants and also an impressive modern distillery where smaller cherries are used to produce a "kirsch"-style liqueur.

Culinary use of the Jerte cherry is minimal, although the orchards are a major supplier for the famous Ferrero liqueur-filled-chocolate makers, says the president of the Agrupación, David Martín Aparicio. He said various new cherry varieties were likely to be introduced to "match the tastes of the market." But, before they make their presence known, they all have to be tested rigorously at the Jerte's two hectare (5 acres) experimental farm in Cabrero to make sure they can adapt to the valley's climate and soil.

CHERRY MIXES

Virtually due east of the Jerte is the Valencia region, best known for another fruit, the orange, and the beaches of the Costa Blanca and the Costa del Azahar, not forgetting that most famous Spanish dishes, the paella.

Here, the cherry mixes with typical Mediterranean produce such as the olive, the almond and the vine. "It has long shared the land with these other crops," says José Ramón Espinosa Jiménez, president of the Regulatory Council for the Specific Denomination Cerezas de la Montaña de Alicante, created five years ago and the only one of its kind in Spain. "The cherry first began to grow in importance here about 50 years ago with improvements in road transport. Before that it was only sold locally. But in recent years there has been a major increase in planting, especially of smaller trees which make picking easier and less costly." Traditional varieties such as the Ripolla and Planera which are "very productive but produce small fruit" have again been joined by imported types such as Burlat, Van, Brux, Bing and Stark Hardy Giant. This region, too, has its own investigation centers, at Patró and Planes, where up to 50 varieties are being tested. Located in the mountains which straddle the borders of Alicante and Valencia provinces, just 25 kilometers (15 miles) from the nearest point of the Mediterranean, the biggest problem for the orchards is the lack of cold weather which is necessary for the trees to kill off any possible infections and provide their "winter rest." Because of this climatological weakness, production can fluctuate greatly with some recent crops falling well below the median–another good reason for searching out new varieties says Mr. Espinosa. In leaner years most of the crop goes to the home market. But in good years exports can reach 30 percent or more with Germany, Italy and France being the leading importers.

DENOMINATION IS FUNDAMENTAL

"Having a Specific Denomination is fundamental for us in our efforts to promote quality," he says. "Ours are among the best cherries in Europe for quality and the denomination provides a seal of recognition for the rigorous controls the fruit passes through. Our fruit is hand-picked and sorted, respecting nature as much as possible."

While he does not rule out the need for more mechanization in the future, Mr. Espinosa believes in the adage of "the less manipulation the better. We treat our fruit with affection," he says. And while other producers may be looking increasingly toward machines to cut labor costs, he sees the present manual system as the one that best meets the needs of this region that consists of many, mainly small producers. Apart from a few large farms, the bulk of the growers are family-run businesses scattered around 24 rural districts of Alicante and another two in Valencia Province.

In all, the denomination covers 1,400 hectares (3,500 acres), most of which are concentrated around Patró, the center of the Gallinera Valley, but stretch as far as 50 kilometers (31 miles) inland. Here, the terrain is more arid and rugged looking than the Jerte, although it shares the same topography of steep, terraced slopes which can make the use of machinery more of a hindrance than a help.

With harvesting possible by the end of April, the region is well placed to get its fruit on to the early market. Mr. Espinosa also sees a growing future for what has been a basically untapped market, conserves and culinary use. Until now the only significant quantity of fruit that has not been sold fresh has gone to distilleries in nearby Alcoy for producing liqueurs.

David Ing *is a freelance journalist who reports on Spain for several leading international trade publications involved in the travel, food and drink industries.*

See list of Main Exporters on page 11.

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(I)

Thirty something: A new generation of Spanish wine people

Text: **John Reeder**

Fresh new breezes are blowing through the world of Spanish wine-making. A new, younger generation of wine people are pushing their way to the fore. With that necessary blend – perhaps *coupage* might be a more appropriate word in this context – of experience and youthful energy, in the Rioja and the Penedés, in Jerez, Navarre and La Mancha, in the Ribera del Duero, Galicia and the Priorato, new, younger *bodegueros*, winemakers, export and marketing people, and specialist wine-writers are taking the helm. Right across Spain's richly diverse wine-producing areas youthful and dynamic men and women are bringing new energies and perspectives to the world of Spanish wine, a generation perhaps more internationally-minded than their forebears, more receptive, more aware of new consumer trends and preferences.

Andrés Proensa

Agustí Torelló

César Saldaña

Photos: **Pablo Neustadt/ICEX**

We thought that this new generation of "thirty-somethings" should have their say here in the pages of *Spain Gourmetour*, so we decided to go and talk to them – and above all, let them talk to you. So, here they are. Over the next three issues we shall be introducing you to nine of them, complete with portrait, split up into three batches of three, talking about themselves, what they do, what they think and about the wines of Spain.

Our first trio is made up of Andrés Proensa, a man who is bringing about a remarkable change in Spanish wine journalism; Agusti Torelló, one of the most innovative of the new breed of Catalan artisan *cava*-makers; and César Saldaña, the new young head of export at one of Jerez's most prestigious *bodegas*, Sandeman.


THE EARTH'S MOON

Andrés Proensa: The New Face of Spanish Wine-writing

A rather undistinguished-looking chalet on the outskirts of Madrid might seem to be an inauspicious place to launch a kind of revolution. Nevertheless, these are the offices of Spain's newest and one of the most successful specialist (but not exclusive) wine magazines.

From the beginning the magazine established a new and more user-friendly style of wine journalism. Surprise, surprise, it appears to have worked. Without the razzamatazz and paraphernalia of a costly promotional launch, last autumn the first issue sold–direct to the public via the news stand–over 20,000 copies and overnight became Spain's most widely read specialist wine journal. Considering the diffusion of some of the most important wine magazines, like British *Decanter* (35,000) or American *Wine Spectator* (180,000) it is a very promising start.

Who detected this yawning gap in the market and at one fell swoop left all his more elegant, learned and wordy competitors trailing in his wake?

Andrés Proensa, a thickset, bulldog of a man who exudes tenacity and purpose, is a thiry-eight year old professional journalist who already has half a lifetime of experience in writing for wine magazines.

From Bellboy to Editor

Classically, he began as a bellboy and general dog's body in a Madrid wine and food club, then graduated to helping to write the club's house magazine. That would have been in the late 1970s. With no real professional training or experience in the wine business, Proensa set about equipping himself better.

"I read everything about wine I could lay my hands on–you remember that at that time in Spain there wasn't much in the way of good wine-writing–just loads of highly technical oenological literature and some rather pretentious flowery prose. I went to the wine-tasting courses offered by the School of Agronomy at the University of Madrid–probably the best available at the time–and gradually learned more and more about wine. So much so that I was taken onto the wine-tasting panel of the Club and started to write regular articles on wine."

From there to taking over the writing of the Club's consumers' guide to Spanish wine and helping choose the Club's regular wine selections seems to have been a natural progression. What has given Proensa such a reputation in Spain is his fresh, unpretentious approach to wine-writing which he has developed over the years, writing which seeks to bring a greater understanding of wine to ordinary men and women. So much wine-writing is preaching to the converted. On the one hand, we have the necessarily arid technical treatises written in a scientific jargon which is hermetically impenetrable to the average wine-drinker. The other extreme is the floral pseudo-poetic subjective rhetoric of some wine-tasting writing, much of which is equally unintelligible. Both tend to frighten off Joe and Josephine Public.

Clear, Understandable Language

As Proensa says: "I am totally convinced that the more technical wine-writing becomes, the less ordinary people understand. My obsession, my fight has always been for clear, understandable language, the search for serious, accurate and precise journalism about wine which at the same time communicates and is enjoyable. Writing which is, as the computer people say, user-friendly. Avoid being pedantic but never be afraid to explain or offer information. There's no great secret in all this. Wine is something that can be understood and enjoyed by all. Let's break the closed circle of most wine-writing, exclusive articles for a supposedly knowledgeable elite. The specialist press is very limited in its appeal and its readership. I would like not only to influence the minority of cognoscenti, but reach the great public of wine drinkers."

Proensa's new magazine lives up to this creed.

This same approach lies behind Proensa's other success story, his best-selling annual *La Guía de Oro de los Vinos de España* (Golden Guide to the Wines of Spain; about 10,000 copies), now in its third year, a glove-compartment practical guide which is very popular in Spain.

Oddly, in Spain, one of the world's oldest and most important wine-producing countries, very little writing about wine appears in the daily press. The *New York Times* or the *London Daily Telegraph* devote considerably more space and importance to wine than the principal Spanish dailies.

"One of my ambitions is for Spain's daily papers one day to devote as much space in their pages to wine as they do, for example, to film reviews or cars. Why not? In Spain, the average consumer makes more use of wine than he does of the cinema."

Why not indeed? Once again, Proensa, practicing what he preaches, has recently convinced Spain's most prestigious specialist car journal that they needed a wine and food page. Always looking for fresh ground to break.

Agustí Torelló and the Search for Perfection

Not twenty-five miles down along the coast from the bustling, commercial Mediterranean city of Barcelona lies the beautiful pine and vine-clad wine-producing valley of the Penedés, an area famed for its fine, fresh, young white wines, its quality cask-aged red varietals, and, of course, for its highly distinctive sparkling wine, cava (see Glossary on page 130). Always open to new ideas and new ventures, home of such intrepid entrepreneurs as Codorníu and Freixenet, and swash-buckling adventurers of the Spanish wine world like Miguel Torres and Josep Puig, the Penedés always seems to be seething with change, almost to the point of bubbling over, as befits an area famed for its cava.

We had come to talk with one of its more renowned young winemakers, Agustí Torelló, maker of just one such cava, the mythical Krypta, in its rounded Greek wine jar shaped bottle, the *ánfora* of the ancient world of the Mediterranean.

A Family Winery

It was a soft autumn afternoon when we arrived at the Cava de Agustí Torelló, a small, ultra-modern winery–there is none more up-to-date in Catalonia or in all Spain, Torelló told us proudly–which employs just four full-time staff, three of whom are named Torelló. A family bodega then, founded by Agustí's father in 1953, a man who was to become the manager of the largest of the Penedés' cava firms, Segura Viudas. One day he decided that young Agustí was ready, handed over the winery lock, stock and barrel, and let his son get on with it.

Agustí is one of four children: one sister is a specialist in European Community Law and legal adviser to the Cava Producers' Association, a second has a degree in Business Studies and keeps a close watch over the firm's books and accounts, and a younger brother, like Agustí, an oenologist, helps with the winemaking. A truly family business.

Agustí Torelló himself is one of those people whose energy and enthusiasm for everything he does sweeps all before him, one of those whirlwinds of people who somehow seem to be able to extract thirty hours from each day, and make the rest of us mere mortals feel sluggish and ineffectual.

An agronomist who specialized in oenology, Torelló learned his trade in the family bodega and by acting as a consultant winemaker to a multitude of small wineries which couldn't afford a full-time oenologist.

As Torelló says: "Both things were important. My father transmitted to me his passion for winemaking, the need to always strive after perfection, that a fine wine is the result of doing things properly and carefully. The years spent as a journeyman winemaker helped me to build up experience quickly."

This passion for wine has led him into a whole gamut of activities: setting up the *Cofradía Bacchica de Cava*, a wine appreciation society for young people in Catalonia–"very rightly they threw me out when I got too old," he says with a grin; organizing diploma courses to teach specialist wine waiters–sommeliers (there is hardly a top restaurant in Catalonia where you will not meet up with one of Torelló's sommeliers). Then he is a founder member and current president of the Catalan Association of Wine-tasters. You see what I mean about energy.

The Artisan and Technology

Agustí Torelló's principal obsession, however, is his winery and his cava. A small-scale unit, artisanal, and at the frontier of winemaking technology. He sees no contradiction whatsoever between the search for an optimum quality wine and the use of the very latest equipment technology can offer.

"An artesan winemaker has no need to be primitive," he says. "There is no virtue in adherence to outmoded techniques, when better ones are available which will enable you to improve the quality of your wine."

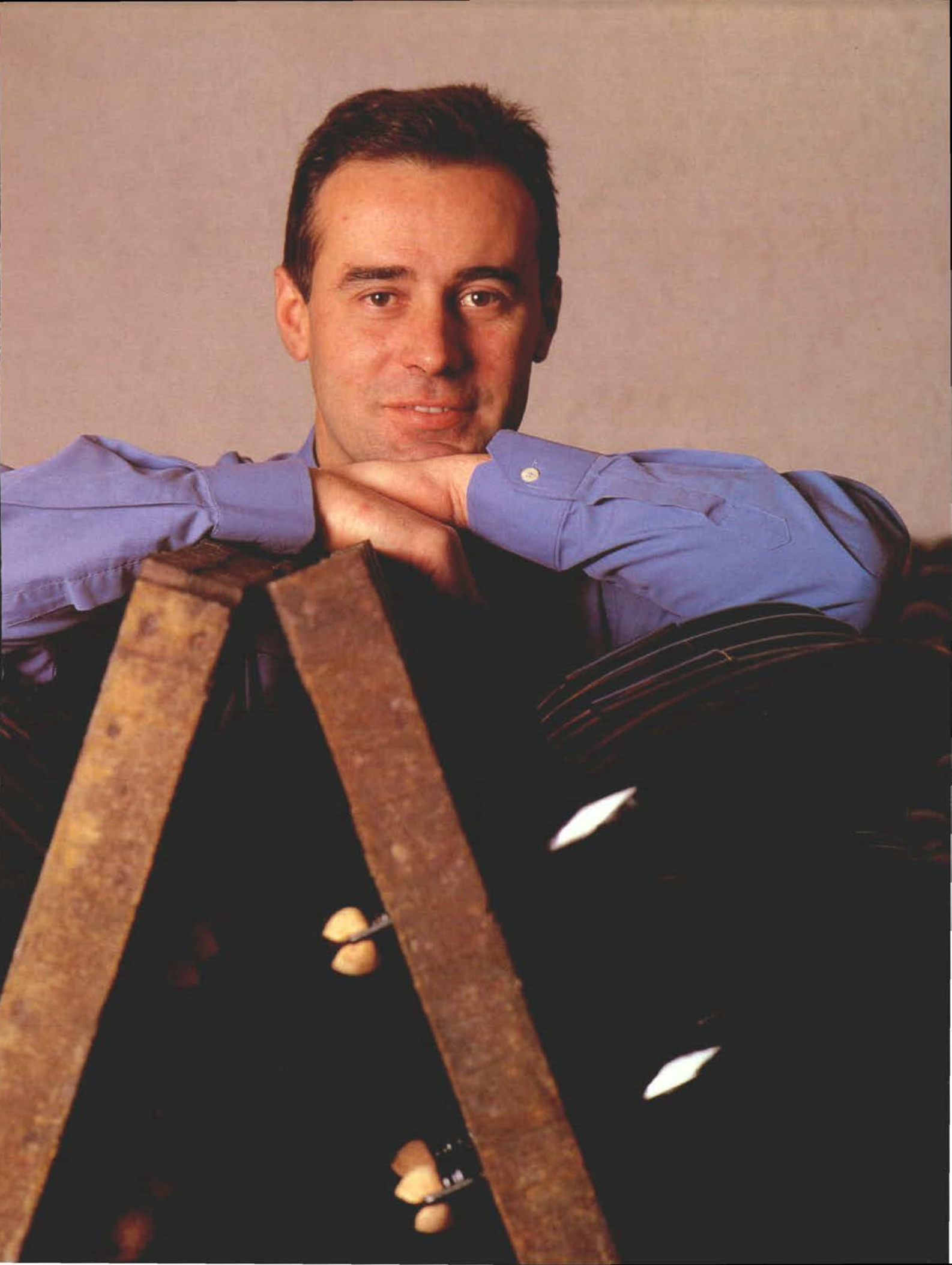
A walk around Torelló's winery–clinically clean, almost maniacally well-ordered–will convince of his belief in these words. The hand-turned *pupitres* have been replaced by computer-operated Gyropalettes which revolve the bottles a precise eighth of a turn at regular intervals–sedimentation is much improved, according to Torelló. The bottling line is an example of his obsession with the latest, the best, and the most efficient. Instead of installing a ready-made line Torelló has bought the best parts available on the market–a labeller from Germany, a shaker from France, another component from Italy–and assembled and coupled them himself. "That way," he says, "I've got exactly what I want."

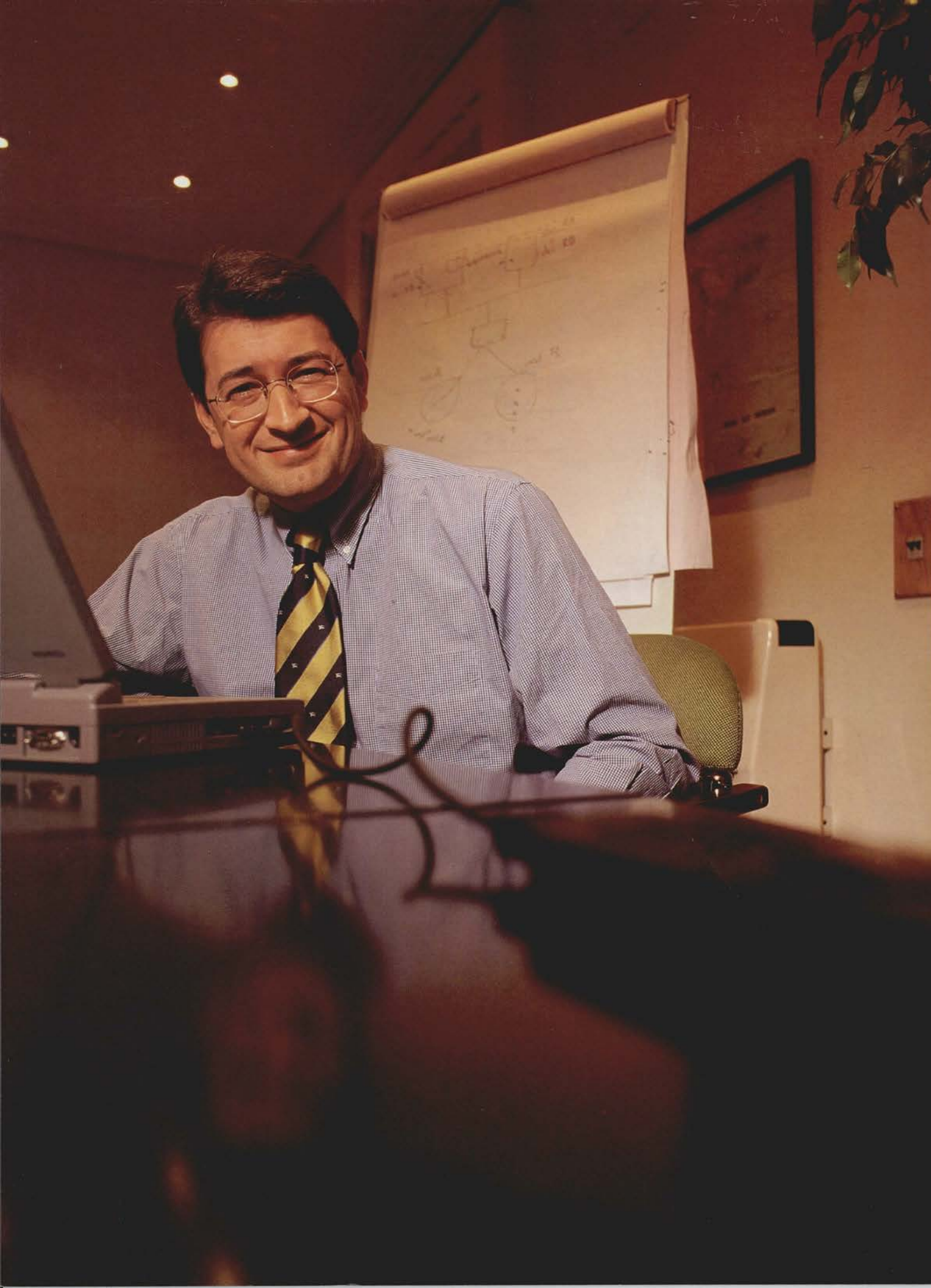
All this is geared to a single end–producing the finest wine possible. And that, in Cava, also means the freshest wines possible. As Torelló says, "After the final disgorging, the finished cava never improves in the bottle. One advantage of a small quality producer over the large-scale firms is greater agility in distributing the wines.

"Our cavas are bottled and finished to order–that's why the date of the last disgorging appears on our label, to guarantee the freshness of our wine, so that the consumer can be sure his cava is in optimum condition, not a shelf-stale product."

Savoring one of Torelló's impeccably dry Brut Reservas as a *digestivo* in a small but sophisticated (around fifty different malt whiskies on offer) village restaurant in the Penedés, we talked of the future of Cavas Torelló.

"The future? To continue to make the finest quality wine possible at the best price possible and to constantly seek to improve that quality. I want to make the best wine in the world. That's why I get a little bit upset when people go on about the fine price-quality ratio of cava. Listen, our cava at Torelló does not have to apologize to anyone. It is one of the world's great sparkling wines, of sufficient quality to stand comparison with any other wine. And fortunately, it just so happens that its price is competitive. What more can you ask?"





César Saldaña: The Competitive World of Export

Sandeman is one of the oldest names in Jerez, the company dating from the 1790s, when a young Scottish entrepreneur, George Sandeman, set up shop in London to import sherry. One of the original cranes used to lower the huge wooden sherry butts into the cellar is still owned by the firm. Described in the inventory as "A Capital Patent Crane with three iron wheels, Jib Roller, Rope, Pulleys and Jigger," it must have been state-of-the-art technology at the end of the 18th century. George roamed Spain and Portugal during the early 19th century, undeterred even by the Peninsular War against Napoleon, and built up a portfolio of fine Iberian wines, above all of sherry, the basis of Sandeman's import business. The shipping business was extended to include winemaking as time went by and the company grew to be a sufficiently attractive proposition for buyers. So much so that Seagrams, the Canadian firm, was tempted to invest in its purchase in 1980. And so the company whose image is still that of a 1920s poster, a tall Spaniard enveloped in a black cloak, became part of a multinational concern–Scots, Canadians, Spaniards, all part of the ever-changing wine world that is Jerez.

César Saldaña is the new young export chief at Sandeman, responsible for both the Jerez and Porto operations. An economist who worked for two years in auditing with Arthur Anderson–"that gave me an enormous insight into how companies worked"–Saldaña is first and foremost a "jerezano," Jerez born and bred.

The wine family sagas in Jerez are not just a question of the famous names, the Domecqs and the Osbornes, the González and the Terrys. Many families involved in perhaps more humble trades–coopers, warehouse foremen, office-staff–can also count back various generations of grandfathers, fathers and sons employed in one firm. Saldaña's father worked for over thirty years in González Byass before retiring as General Manager. Having grown up in and around the sherry trade, what more natural than that the young César should feel drawn to Jerez and its bodegas. Seven happy years at González Byass–"I went there as a professional marketing man, not as my father's son. It took a while to establish that but everyone soon forgot my name"–were followed by a move to Sandeman, where five years later, at the age of 35, Saldaña is now head of the export division.

Bodegas and Multinationals

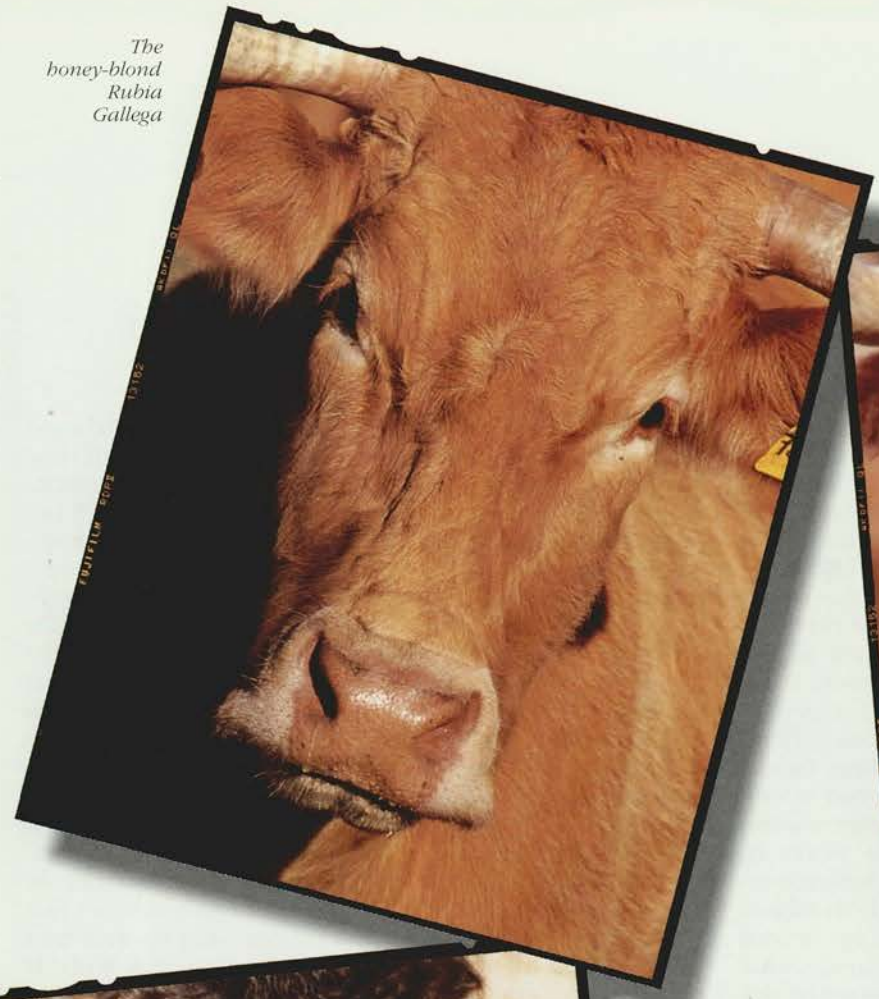
What's it like working in a big multinational? Has the sherry firm been swallowed up by a huge impersonal monster? Saldaña: "There's a lot of nonsense talked about multinationals. Seagrams is a large group of brand companies, where each company is, in the last analysis, a local company. Most multinationals have been sufficiently intelligent to maintain and respect the individual character and identity of their component companies, they would be silly not to do so. The fact that a large multinational like Seagrams was prepared to invest capital in Sandeman is tremendously healthy, a sign that the firm, and the sherry business in general, are attractive business propositions, that there was a good future for sherry. The injection of capital that Seagrams provided allowed the firm to invest in large-scale technological innovations, which could only mean that the final product, the wine, would improve."

Perhaps we shouldn't be so obsessed with property rights. Is it so important who actually owns a company? Surely, since the first shareholding companies of the last century, property rights have become more and more fragmented. A good firm is much more than the identity of its owners. Most of the people who work for Sandeman are local Jerez people with generations of experience in the sherry business behind them, who still have a strong local sense of their wine and their firm. The story of Jerez anyway is one of a constant flow of overseas investment and changes in the ownership of firms. No-one in Jerez should be traumatized or frightened by this. And although property rights have changed hands constantly, there has been a great deal of continuity: in the people who make the wine, in the systems of winemaking and in the styles of sherry itself."

The Export Manager

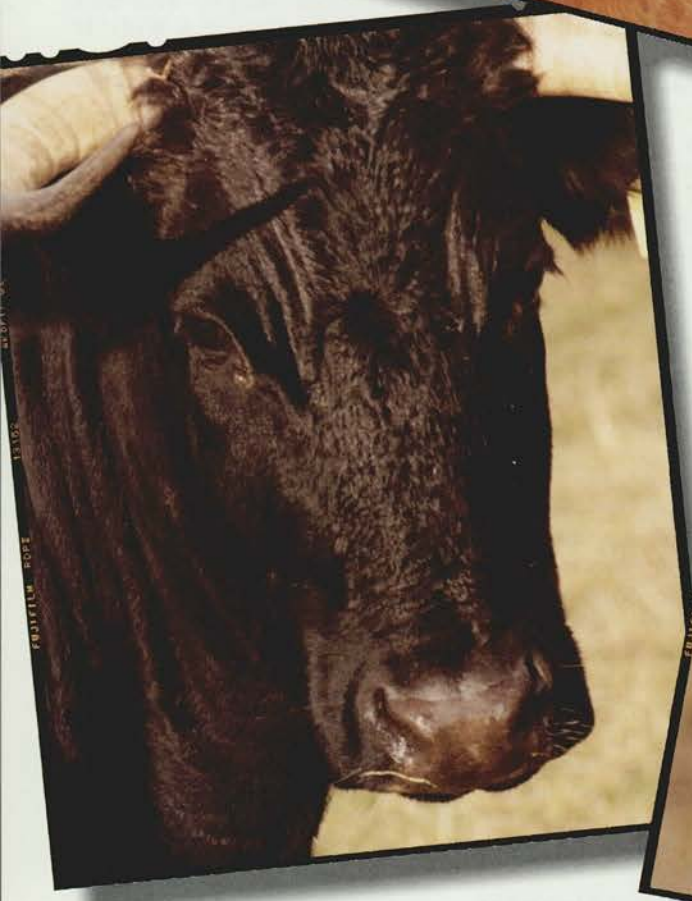
Sherry is still largely an export product, and an export manager has to spend most of his time wearing out shoe leather covering international markets. Saldaña still believes that this is essential: "Although, thanks to new communication technology–mobile telephones, portable computers and the like–the world has become an easier place to do business, wine is still a personal and highly personalized product. Human contact is still the key to success. You've got to meet and talk to your customers, go out and eat together. In this business you can't just send out samples and wait for orders on the Web. If you lose contact with your customers, you are lost. I am always prepared to spend time and money in trying to understand my customers and markets better before trying to sell to them. If you are abreast of what your customers think and want, and of the changes in their preferences, that's really half the battle won. That information will enable you to re-adapt to those changes and give the customer what he wants. I think that in order to prosper, we in sherry must be more and more flexible and versatile, be prepared to adapt ourselves to new and changing markets. Without, of course, abandoning our identity and character, a capital we have accumulated over so many centuries."

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.*



The honey-blond Rubia Gallega

The red, mahagony-colored Retinto



The black Avileña Negra Ibérica

The grey Morucha de Salamanca

TEXT: REBECCA DOULTON
PHOTOS: FÉLIX LORRIO/ICEX

BEEFING UP QUALITY

WITH CONSUMER CONFIDENCE AT AN ALL-TIME LOW, MAIMED BY HORMONE SCANDALS AND THE SPECTER OF MAD COW DISEASE HOVERING OVER MOUNDS OF INSIPID, MASS-PRODUCED MEAT, IT IS HEARTENING TO DISCOVER A SMALL OASIS OF SPANISH QUALITY BEEF PRODUCERS. THESE REAL MEAT ADVOCATES, WHOSE REARING METHODS MIGHT SEEM ANTIQUATED AND OUT OF TUNE WITH MODERN, INTENSIVE PRODUCTION SYSTEMS, HAVE DRAWN ON TRADITIONAL FARMING TECHNIQUES AND NATIVE BREEDS TO BEEF UP THE QUALITY OF MEAT OFFERED ON THE MARKET. BACKED BY NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN GUARANTEES PROTECTING ALL PHASES OF PRODUCTION, THEY HOPE TO REAP THE REWARDS OF RENEWED CONSUMER TRUST.

Cattle have formed an integral part of Spain's landscape since time immemorial. Today's native breeds can trace their lineage all the way back to the *Bos Taurus Ibericus* which was related to one of the earliest branches of the bovine family known to man, the Uro. These robust, bull-like breeds were appreciated more for their brute force and traction power than for their meat and were used as draught animals for centuries.

IN 1497, THE REAL CABAÑA DE CARRETEROS WAS CREATED , A ROYAL GUILD OF CART DRIVERS WHICH USED THE MAGNIFICENT RETINTO BREED FOR TRANSPORT.

In 1497, the Catholic Kings created the *Real Cabaña de Carreteros*, a royal guild of cart drivers which used the magnificent *Retinto* breed to transport mercury from the mines of Almadén (Ciudad Real) to Seville, enroute for the Indies. Even today, Spain's colorful *romerías*–a sort of pilgrimage where people either go on foot or in a cart drawn by oxen–are a clear evocation of cattle's role in the past.

With the exception of the rich pastures of the green north, Spain's expanses of barren scrubland are not a bovine's idea of paradise and can only sustain extensively-reared native breeds. Following the general European post-war trends, Spain's government conjured up a development plan to modernize livestock production and provide meat for its burgeoning middle-class. Traditional, small-scale rearing methods of the north and time consuming, extensive rearing systems were discarded in favor of state-of-the-art intensive production systems. Livestock farming moved indoors to large factory farms in Catalonia, Aragon and the cereal growing plains of Castile. Local breeds were considered too archaic for these new techniques and crossed with improved foreign breeds. They were crossed with such indiscriminate intensity however, that the rich genetic pool of some of Spain's ancestral varieties was almost diluted into extinction.

In addition to genetic tinkering, the use of hormones and antibiotic growth stimulants in intensive rearing systems became commonplace in Europe. The recent English BSE crisis has only undermined consumer confidence in beef products even further.

Paradoxically, these crises, provoked by intensive production methods, are just what the advocates of traditionally reared meat need. Consumers are finally beginning to ask just what has gone into the steaks on their plates.

THE REAL MEAT CRUSADE

They might not be numerous or enjoy a hefty share of the beef market (three percent), but the Spanish quality crusaders are bullish and determined to get their message across and their meat on the shelves. Even before the meat scandals which have sent beef sales plummeting by almost 30%, a handful of producers–whose meat is marketed under the labels *Ternera Gallega, Carne de Avila, Carne de Morucha* and *Carne de Retinto*–decided to roll back the tide of intensive rearing systems.

Their basic tenet is for humane animal husbandry methods, convinced that quality meat can only be produced if the habitat, feeding, reproducing, and nurturing habits of original breeds have been respected. These methods are slower and more costly but the trade-off is that consumers seem to be ready for a change; a recent market study revealed that housewives were willing to pay up to 200 pesetas more per kilo for labels which ensured quality. According to Mr. Enrique Temes, president of the Regulatory Council for Galician Veal, the "origin of meat is an important aspect of quality these days."

Their main objective now is to carve a select niche in the market for their quality products, fully aware of the fact that Spain has never been a hearty beef eating nation (of the 97 kg/213 lb of general annual meat consumption per capita in Spain, only 12 kg/26 lb goes towards beef). Most Spaniards, with the notable exception of the Basques, shun anything that looks remotely bloody or fatty, opting for lean, young cuts. In fact, most of Spain's "red meat" is exported to France in exchange for veal calves. *Añojo*, prime beef from yearlings, is what is most consumed in Spain although veal is the most prized meat. This preference is fostered by butchers who favor smaller carcasses which require less storage room, are easier to quarter, don't need to be hung, and guarantee tenderness.

Nevertheless, real meat crusaders know their commodity has a cutting edge and are resolved to differentiate it from the generic, factory issued stacks of beef on the market. "If there's one thing we would like to be remembered in history for," says Mr. Temes, "it would be for changing the concept of meat being bought in bulk form."

VOUCHING FOR QUALITY: DENOMINACIONES ESPECIFICAS

Champions of organically reared meat needed a way to guarantee the consumer that their particular animals had complied with a rigorous series of sanitary conditions from their birth to the butcher's shop. The answer was to be found in Spain's system of Denominaciones which were first created in 1933 by the Ministry of Agriculture to protect and control wine production in much the same way as a French *appellation d'origine*. Denominaciones Específicas (D.E.) now enjoy European Union recognition and have been corresponded by a Protected Geographic Indication (PGI) since 1992.

To register the meat under a D.E., the "specific" breed and geographic area or method of production is defined. "Having these guarantees," explains Mr. Temes, "is tantamount to possessing the sole rights to a product." Each D.E. has its own Regulatory Council which enforces the strict conditions laid down in the Magna Carta (see box 1).

Denominaciones de Calidad, or quality denominations, provide another legal mechanism to protect meat at an Autonomous Region level. They vouch for humane rearing conditions and the absence of illegal substances in the feed, but are not recognized by the European Union (see box 2).

D.E. GALICIAN VEAL

Galicia's humid Atlantic climate and lush, green meadows have provided an ideal stage for quality meat production throughout the ages. The quality of Galician meat became well known far and wide and was exported to Portugal and England for over two centuries. In the 1940s and 1950s, Galicia produced almost 70 percent of Spain's meat, but the arrival of American style intensive-rearing methods displaced the cattle nucleus to Catalonia and Castile.

In the early 1980s, Galician producers devised a strategy to recover a share of their former domestic market: they decided to turn back the clock on modern beef rearing systems and retrieve traditional livestock techniques from the past. A back to nature recipe of producing meat on smallholdings in the time-honored manner, slowly and surely, using local ingredients. They patented their method with a quality denomination in 1989 and obtained D.E. status in 1995. The strategy has paid off and Ternera Gallega now corners 95 percent of Spain's quality veal market.

QUALITY MEAT CAN ONLY BE PRODUCED IF THE HABITAT, FEEDING, REPRODUCING, AND NURTURING HABITS OF ORIGINAL BREEDS HAVE BEEN RESPECTED.

Around 7,000 tons were marketed in 1996, representing one percent of Spain's total meat production.

Farms registered under the D.E. tend to be small, with an average of 15-16 cows which must belong to one of the two native breeds–the honey-blond *Rubia Gallega* or the darker, more archaic *Morenas del Noroeste*. For veal to get the D.E. Ternera Gallega stamp, it has to be slaughtered between 7-9 months. The calves are reared in large barns with their mothers and plenty of room to roam and socialize. The cows are taken out to pasture twice a day by the herdsman who knows them all by name and temperament. These timeless methods produce a calmer, happier, better exercised animal which in turn will produce less saturated fat. Galician cattle farmers still make their own feeds using locally grown ingredients like maize, which is dried in the traditional Galician stone *hórreos* granaries dotting the countryside. The end result is excellent and Ternera Gallega veal can be recognized by its healthy, pink flesh and protective layer of fat which prevents shrinkage. A very different product from the watery, white, iron-deficient veal produced in intensive systems.

The objective over the next four years is to launch exports to potential veal markets in France, Portugal, and Italy and increase production six-fold to around 45,000 tons. The only way of increasing production is getting 80 percent of Galicia's veal producers registered under the DE since the essence of the system is based on smallholdings with scarce growth potential.

THE BLACK IBERIAN AVILEÑA

The mighty forefathers of the *Avileña Negra Ibérica* were once used to transport exotic merchandise brought back from the Indies along Spain's Silver Route to the rest of Europe. The sight of a herd of these strong, black beasts with their imposing horns still commands respect today and keeps many a Sunday picnicker off private property.

This native of the Avila Sierra has adapted over the centuries to the craggy terrain of Spain's Central Mountainous System. Capable of withstanding freezing winters, hot summers, and making the most of the sparse food supply underfoot, the Avileña is now bred as an excellent source of beef. This veritable four-wheel-drive of the cattle kingdom is a great walker and even today, 30,000 Avileñas undertake the grueling annual transhumance from winter to summer pastures.

Scattered throughout seven different Autonomous Regions, the Avileña is always reared in total freedom on farms of around 300-500 hectares (741-1,235 acres). They are left to fend for themselves and feed on grass, acorns, and any other

1995-1996 PRODUCTION FIGURES FOR D.E. PROTECTED MEAT

D.E.	Ternera Gallega	Carne de Avila	Carne de Morucha de Salamanca	Carne de Retinto de Andalucia y Extremadura
Status Obtained	1995	1990	1994	1997*
Breed Protected	Rubia Gallega and Morena del Noroeste	Avileña Negra Ibérica	Morucha	Retinto
Farms Registered				
1995	5,685	185	54	NA
1996	7,606	190	64	26
Abattoirs				
1995	35	3	1	NA
1996	40	4	2	4
Animals Slaughtered				
1995	27,424	1,005	446	208
1996	38,000	1,800	663	505
Average Number Animals / Farm	16 animals/ small holding	100 animals/ 300-500 hectares (741-1,235 acres)	100 animals/ 250-300 hectares (617-741 acres)	70 animals/ 250 hectares (617 acres)
Produced Meat (Tons)				
1995	5,388	268	120	51
1996	7,000	495	177	217

*Pending approval NA=Not Available

Source: ICEX.

THE EXCELLENT TERNERA GALLEGA VEAL CAN BE RECOGNIZED BY ITS HEALTHY, PINK FLESH AND PROTECTIVE LAYER OF FAT WHICH PREVENTS SHRINKAGE.

edible items they can get by foraging. They are not labor-intensive animals, and one good herdsman can comfortably look after 100 head of cattle. Although much has been done to save these once endangered breeds from extinction, the main threat to the survival of extensive farming techniques is, in the words of Mr. Alonso Alvarez, president of the Avileña Negra Regulatory Council, "the slowly dying breed of herdsmen. Young people are no longer interested in these traditional tasks and I feel we won't find substitutes for our cowboys in the near future."
Carne de Avila was the first fresh meat producer to receive a DE in 1990–protecting pure breeds only–and is renowned for its veal, characterized by its bright pink color and white fat, and prime beef, with light red to purple flesh and creamy colored fat. Meat from the young bulls–*novillos*–is perhaps the most tasty of all, with a deep cherry-red color and creamy fat with soft marbling throughout.

THE MORUCHA FROM SALAMANCA

The Morucha is the oldest of the three extensive breeds and has had centuries to adapt to the dehesas of western Spain, exposed to the rigors of a continental climate with long, freezing winters and dry, hot summers. Dehesas are the sparse Mediterranean woodlands in which holm and cork oaks predominate and in which shrub growth has been reduced by man. Originally used as beasts of burden and in bullfights, the Morucha is now reared for its meat.
Carne de Morucha de Salamanca has been protected with a D.E. since the end of 1994. *Añojo*–meat from yearlings–is the most marketed type under the D.E. label. This beef's characteristic rich color and strong flavor are a result of the animal's natural diet, left to graze on the dehesa with its native varieties of oak trees. This independent, outdoor life has made the Morucha retain their strong instincts. The Morucha has a dappled grey or black coat and imposing long horns. Any strange presence puts them on alert, making them adopt a defensive attitude. Like their cousins the Avileñas, the Morucha is never placed in stables and eats just about anything it can chew. They are particularly fond of oak tree branches and look forward to the whirring sound of electric chain saws which announce the annual pruning of oak trees known as the *ramoneo*. Herdsmen usually approach the cattle on horseback and round up the new members for branding in winter months.
The Morucha is also an effective environmentalist and has been nicknamed the "guardian of Spain's old dehesa ecosystem." Mr. Guillermo Marín, who heads the Morucha Regulatory Council, believes that these extensive breeds are responsible for saving a good part of Spain's two million hectares (4,940,000 acres) of oak groves (*genus Quercus*) from extinction by "preventing the flourishing of scrubland and the risk of fires; improving the terrain with their natural fertilizers and helping to spread seeds from one area to another." The potential for increasing Morucha meat production exists; the last census indicated that there are around

CARNE DE AVILA WAS THE FIRST FRESH MEAT PRODUCER TO RECEIVE A D.E. IN 1990, PROTECTING PURE BREEDS ONLY, AND IS RENOWNED FOR ITS VEAL.

220,000 heads of Morucha cattle in western Spain, many of which are not yet registered under the D.E.

RETINTO MEAT FROM ANDALUSIA AND EXTREMADURA

The ancestors of the Retinto breed crossed over into Spain from Africa. They were depicted by early man in cave paintings discovered in Extremadura, and domesticated by 3000 B.C. The progeny of this African line are referred to in the Bible as the cattle of ancient Tharsis–now Andalusia–and in the legend of Hercules and his victory over the local monarch, Gerion, following a heated quarrel over cattle rustling. On Columbus' second trip to the New World in 1493, he took along some specimens of the Retinto breed, and many of today's *Razas Criollas*, from the Rio Grande down to the pampas of Argentina, can trace their genealogy back to this millenary breed.

With their red, mahogany-colored hides, these cattle are now reared for beef, mainly on the semi-arid plains of Extremadura and western Andalusia. Their African genes have allowed them to adapt well to the difficult terrain and sweltering summer temperatures. Like the Avileña and the Morucha, the Retinto requires little handling and will eat grass, shrubs, branches, acorns, and whatever the dehesa can offer. Prime beef from the añojos is the most renowned Retinto product and this tasty red meat is ideal for barbecues.
Although an association of 185 Retinto breeders has existed since the late 1960s, they are currently awaiting approval of a D.E. which will guarantee the quality of their meat. In the meantime, the association has been busy marketing its prime beef and was chosen as the official meat supplier for Spain's national football team during the 1996 European World Cup finals in the U.K.!

In a coordinated effort to promote their meat, the three main producers of purebreed, extensively reared cattle, Carne de Avila, Carne de Morucha and Carne de Retinto, have clubbed together to form *Vacuno Extensivo de Calidad* or Extensively Reared Quality Beef. With aid from the European Union to cover part of advertising costs, these producers are keen to distinguish their meat with labels the customer can recognize.

MORE CREDENTIALS: CLARA

Other alternative quality labels have sprung up on the market to guarantee the consumer the origin of the meat and vouch for the fact that the animal has been reared without hormones or illegal feed additives. CLARA–an acronym for *Carne Libre de Aditivos Avalada y Regulada*, Guaranteed Additive-Free Meat, also known as European Quality Beef–is one such label. To date, 150 producers with 30,000 calves have signed up, although CLARA estimates that these figures will increase five-fold in the very near future.
These "back to the roots" rearing systems, which ensure a symbiosis between man, animal, and landscape, are gaining new adherents by the day. The most immediate challenge is to get consumers to distinguish between these quality cuts and the tasteless mounds of factory produced meat.

English journalist ***Rebecca Doulton*** *worked for the* Financial Times *in Mexico City and is now based in Madrid, contributing to various international publications.*

See list of Main Exporters on page 13.

BASIC RULES OF THE SPECIFIC DENOMINATION

A Denominación Específica (D.E.) or Specific Denomination is awarded by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture and corresponds to a European Union Protected Geographic Indication.

Breeds/Area/Regulatory Council
*Describes which breed and what geographical area of production will be protected by D.E.
*D.E offers legal protection to brand names and gives the Regulatory Council the task of upholding rules and promotion.

Feeding Regimes
*Outlines the feeding program for cattle; what material can be used in supplementary or concentrated feeds, and prohibits the use of products which can interfere in the normal cycle of growth and development (understood as hormones).

Slaughtering
*Age of slaughtering is determined according to the meat desired. Conditions are set for the transport of animals to the slaughterhouse. They must be registered with the Regulatory Council and comply with technical and sanitary conditions in current law, avoiding stressful incidents which may affect the animals' welfare.
*Establishes that animals be allowed to rest prior to slaughter. D.E. cattle cannot be slaughtered simultaneously with non-D.E. cattle.

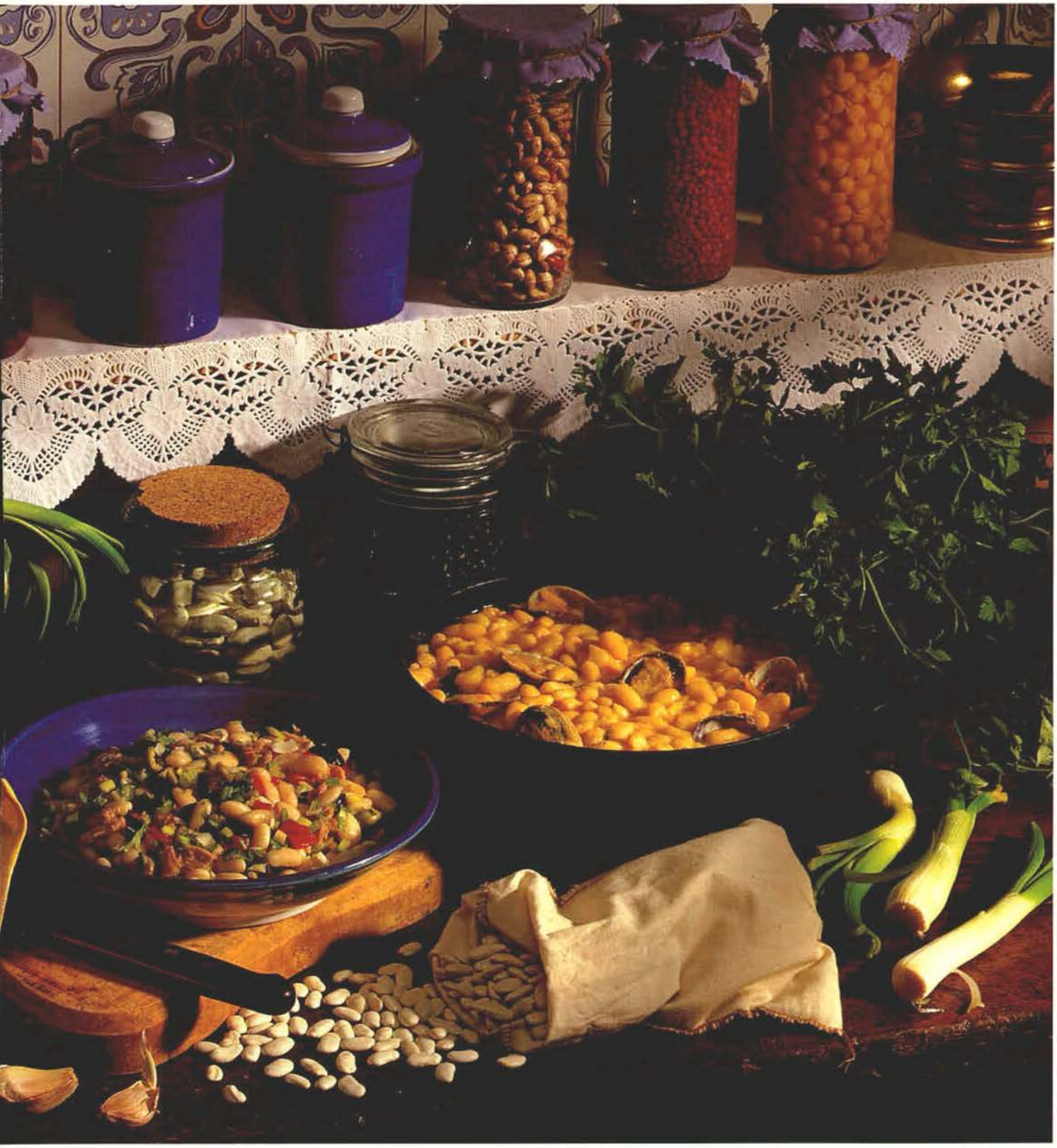
Identification/Butchering/ Quality Control
*D.E. carcasses must be identified and stored in such a way as to avoid confusion with non-protected carcasses. The Regulatory Council will devise its own system of carcass identification.
*Fat content and pH level is determined. Only carcasses which comply with quality controls will be marked and sealed with a D.E. stamp.
*Butchering of D.E. carcasses cannot be done simultaneously with other non-D.E. carcasses. Butchered meat must be packaged to avoid external contamination, with a label and an expiration date.

Technical Information/ Infringements
*Offers technical information regarding registration, fines, infringements, and procedures; and defines the rights and obligations of adherents.

A MEDITERRANEAN TASTE: PULSES

Text: **Lourdes March**
Translation: **Jenny McDonald**
Still lifes: **Menchu Artime**
Photos: **A. de Benito/ICEX**

THE CURRENT FOCUS ON THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET HAS LED TO RENEWED INTEREST IN ONE OF ITS TRADITIONAL COMPONENTS. PULSES ARE NOT ONLY VERY ADAPTABLE AND EASY TO STORE, BUT THEIR HIGH NUTRITIONAL AND ENERGY VALUE MAKES THEM INDISPENSABLE IN A BALANCED DIET.



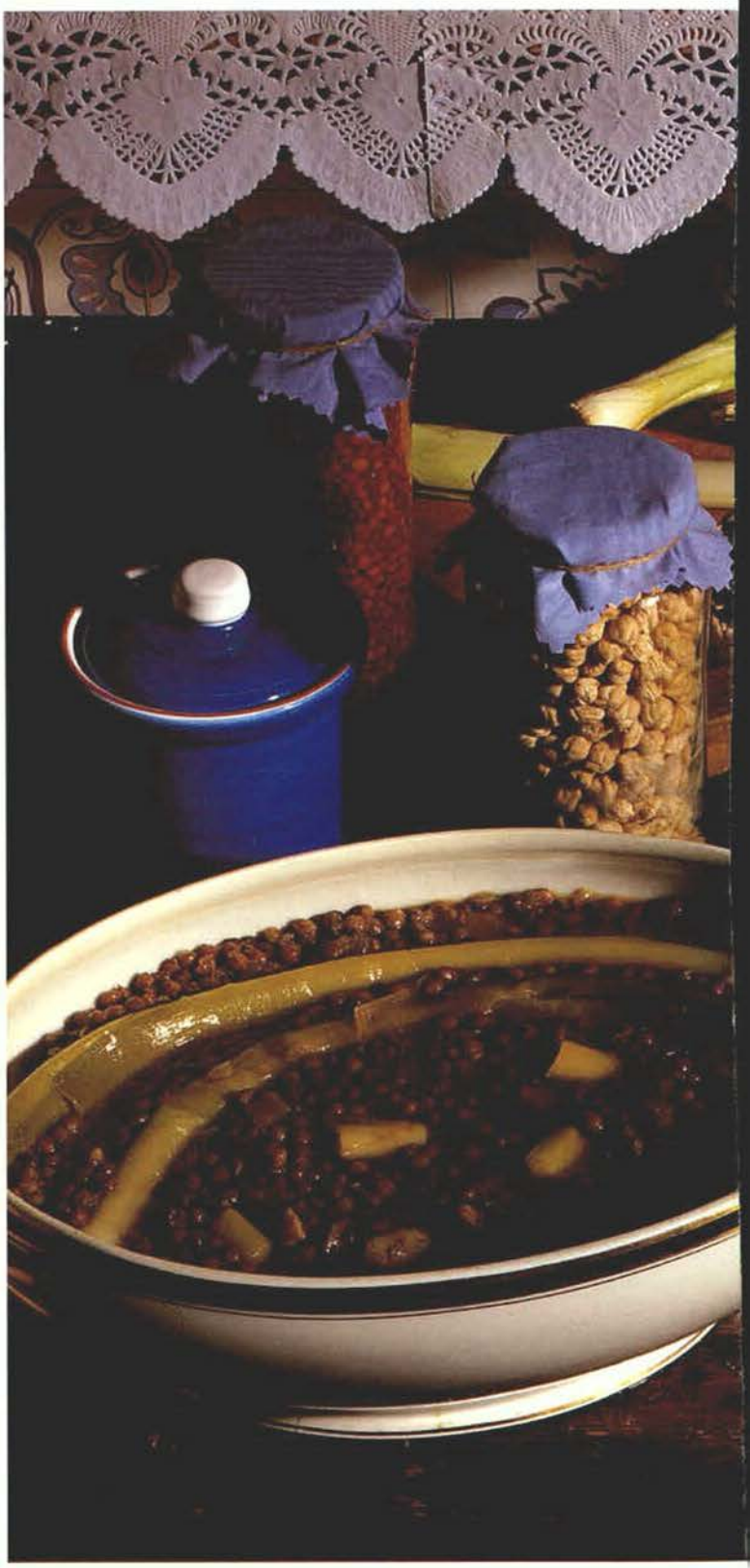
The technical name for the edible seeds growing inside a pod is *legume*, in Spanish *legumbre*, from the Latin word *lego* (collect, pick).

There are multiple historical references to the cultivation and consumption of pulses. Since Neolithic times, lentils and beans have been used as food. Lentils were widely cultivated by the Ancient Egyptians and they continue to occupy pride of place in the Egyptian diet today. Remains of lentils have been found in tombs dating from 2,200 B.C. They also formed part of the everyday diet of the Chaldeans, a Semitic people living in the rich agricultural areas between the Tigris and the Euphrates. The Old Testament mentions lentils on several occasions–the Hebrew name was *adaschum* or *adaschim*–and the book of Genesis tells how Esau sold his birthright to Jacob in exchange for a dish of lentils.

Chickpeas arrived in the Mediterranean from Western Asia and the Phoenicians are believed to have helped establish them in the local diets. Chickpeas are mentioned in the Iliad with the name *erebinthos*. The Latin name for the species was *cicer arietinum* and Cicero was given his nickname because of a chickpea-shaped wart on his nose.

The chickpea plant requires hot, dry summers so it never came to be widely cultivated or eaten in Europe, but in the Mediterranean countries chickpeas were to form an essential part of everyday cooking.

It is not clear whether haricot beans came from Asia or America. In his treatise, Dioscurides (1st century B.C.) called them *phasiolos* which was probably taken from the Latin *phaseolus*, the botanical name of the species. In the first century A.D., Columella recommended the cultivation of such beans.



CEREALS, PULSES, OLIVE OIL, FRUIT, VEGETABLES, FISH AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, MEAT AND DAIRY PRODUCTS, ARE SOME OF THE INGREDIENTS OF THE TRADITIONAL MEDITERRANEAN DIET.

OF ALL THE FOODS FROM THE PLANT KINGDOM, PULSES HAVE THE HIGHEST PROTEIN CONTENT AND THEIR PROTEIN IS OF GREAT BIOLOGICAL VALUE.

After the discovery of the New World, many varieties of beans were brought to Europe and over the years they became acclimatized and began to form part of the basic eating habits of many nations.

Cereals, pulses, olive oil, fruit, vegetables, fish and, to a lesser extent, meat and dairy products are the main components of the traditional Mediterranean diet, which nutritionists have now rediscovered and are actively recommending. It is the result of the coming together over the centuries of very different peoples and cultures within a common geographical and bioclimatic environment–the Mediterranean.

HEART-WARMING FOOD

Pulses play a very important role in Spanish eating habits from both the nutritional and gastronomic points of view. They were present at the birth of traditional cooking in the different regions when the nutritional value of pulses was combined with the local ingredients of each area.

One of the most emblematic dishes of the north of Spain is the *fabada asturiana* (Asturian bean stew) which, if it is to be authentic, must use the local, top-quality *fabe* or *faba* (bean) in combination with the local pork products–blood sausage and *chorizo*, succulent ham, salted belly pork, a ham bone and pig's ear or tail. These Asturian beans are also used for other delicious combinations such as *fabes con almejas* (butter bean stew with clams).

If we chart Spanish gastronomy, the *cocido* or stew can be found practically everywhere, but probably no two such stews will ever be the same because each region, or even town, offers its own variations on the basic theme of chickpeas with meat and vegetables. There is the *escudella* in Catalonia, the *cocido maragato* in Leon (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 26), the *olla* or *puchero* in other regions and, in the capital, the *cocido madrileño*, a magnificent synthesis of many other similar Spanish dishes (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 22). Its clearest predecessor is the ancestral *olla podrida* ("rotten pot") referred to in Don Quixote.

Stews such as these made with haricot beans, lentils, or chickpeas, with vegetables, salt cod, or a simple dressing, are traditional, heart-warming dishes that help us to enjoy the cold days of autumn and winter.

HEALTH-GIVING AND NUTRITIONAL

Of all the foods from the plant kingdom pulses have the highest levels of protein, and their protein is of a high biological value. In comparison with animal proteins, pulses provide a much more economical source of energy.

They are especially rich in complex carbohydrates and contain a large proportion of dietary fiber (see table on page 53). Moreover, not only do they have a minimal fat content, they also help to keep down cholesterol and blood pressure.

Pulses belong to the small group of foods that provide protein together with calcium and iron. Both these minerals are essential for human nutrition. For every 100 grams, chickpeas give 329 calories, haricot beans 286 and lentils 314. Nutritionists recommend that pulses be eaten in the company of cereals–especially rice–potatoes and vegetables. For a balanced diet, in line with Mediterranean custom, they also recommend the consumption of pulses three times a week, alternating with cereals (rice and pasta).

A WEALTH OF VARIETIES

The climate and soil conditions of each area of production exert a great influence on the different varieties of pulses.

Haricot beans, or *alubias*, grow throughout Spain and are given different names in each area–fabes, *mongetas*, *caparrones*, *habichuelas*, *fréjoles* or *bajocas*. But they basically belong to four species–common bean, scarlet runner bean, lima bean and white bean.

There is a *Denominación Específica*, or Specific Denomination, for the beans from El Barco de Ávila, a district between Ávila and Salamanca to the northwest of Madrid, covering seven varieties–*Blanca redonda*, *Blanca riñón*, *Morada Larga*, *Morada redonda*, *Arrocina*, *Planchada* and *Judión de El Barco*–each with a characteristic shape, color and size.

The Denominación Específica Faba Asturiana covers the production areas within the Principate of Asturias in the north of Spain where the cultivation of butter beans forms part of local farming tradition. Production is controlled by the *Consejo Regulador de la Denominación Específica* which supervises cultivation, harvesting, cleaning and selection of the beans. The protected variety is called *Granja Asturiana*. The beans are large, long, flattish, kidney-shaped and a creamy white color.

The north of Spain is also the home of another variety that is highly esteemed in the Basque Country. These are the *pochas* or shelled beans that are grown mostly in Navarre in the northeast. They are tender shelled beans that reach their full size in the pod but are collected before the seed dries and hardens. As the season when they are fresh is short, they are mostly sold as an excellent bottled product.

The *garrofón* or lima bean is a variety of kidney bean grown in the Valencia area in the east of Spain which, both as a young seed and as a dried pulse, is en essential element of any authentic Valencian *paella*.

Turning to lentils, one of the main varieties grown in Spain is the *Armuña* variety. Its Denominación Específica covers 38 municipal areas in the northern part of the province of Salamanca. The Rubia de la Armuña lentil is a light green color, sometimes speckled, measuring up to 9 mm (0.35 in) in diameter. Harvesting has to comply with all the requirements of the Consejo Regulador, or Regulatory Council, such as beating once the grain is dry and mature and winnowing by air and vibration.

The brown or French lentil is small in size, has a very pleasant flavor and is very smooth on the palate, perhaps because of its higher than usual carbohydrate content which means that its cooking liquid thickens more than with other varieties. It is grown in the area of Tierra de Campos, in the north of Castile.

The varieties of chickpeas that are most commonly sold in Spain are the milky white, which is large, yellowish-white, has a high iron and magnesium content and is grown in Andalusia and Extremadura; the medium-sized Castilian, grown on the Castilian

NOW FORTUNATELY REINSTATED, THE BENEFITS OF PULSES ARE CLEAR AND THEY ONCE AGAIN OCCUPY AN ESSENTIAL PLACE IN A HEALTHY DIET.

Meseta and in Andalusia, and the veiny Andalusian, grown in the Granada area of Andalusia, which is very large and has an exceptionally high iron and calcium content.

KEEPING UP WITH THE TIMES

Pulses used to be a problem because they needed such a long time to cook but pressure cookers have changed all this. And the food industry has found an additional solution by canning them after cooking by the traditional methods–perfect for eating in a hurry.
Most of the Spanish companies that pack cooked pulses also pack them uncooked. And in both cases pulses first undergo a series of analyses to determine the quality of the final product, such as measuring the resistance of the skin to cooking, cooking times, etc.
Canned, cooked pulses not only save time but get around the difficulties of cooking them in areas where the local water does not allow for good results.
Pulses have always been a permanent fixture in Spanish homes and traditional restaurants–in most, a chickpea stew or other typical dishes using pulses feature regularly on the menu. But chickpeas, lentils and haricot beans are now also appearing in the more innovative restaurants in the form of garnishes or as main dishes. This should come as no surprise considering to what extent such foods form part of the Spanish life style, so much so, that certain important social events are linked to them. For example, it is a great honor to be awarded a *Garbanzo de Plata* (silver chickpea). This is the award given to relevant people in the field of culture and art in recognition of their work, and the ceremony is held over a splendid cocido madrileño in a Madrid restaurant. Also lentils used to be the excuse for regular meetings held by important figures in politics, the arts and public life in general. *Las lentejas de Mona* or Mona's Lentils (Mona being the hostess) became an institution in their own right during the period of the Spanish transition when many a heated debate was held around a dish of lentils.
Pulses have now caught up with the times and it is clear that their virtues will continue to be extolled as part of a diet from which they should never have been dropped.

Lourdes March *is the author of many books about Mediterranean cooking and is considered an expert in olive oil and table olives. She is also a gastronomic adviser and collaborates in radio and TV programs.*

See list of Main Exporters on page 13 and recipes on page 119.

COMPOSITION OF PULSES
QUANTITIES PER 100 GR OF THE EDIBLE PART

	CHICKPEAS	BEANS	LENTILS
ENERGY (KCAL)	328.85	285.48	313.90
ENERGY (KJ)	1374.59	1193.29	1312.10
PROTEIN (GR)	19.40	19.00	23.80
FAT (GR)	5.00	1.40	1.80
CARBOHYDRATES (GR)	55.00	52.50	54.00
FIBER (GR)	15.00	25.40	11.70
SATURATED FAT (GR)	TR	-	0.30
MONOUNSATURATED FAT (GR)	1.87	-	-
POLYUNSATURATED FAT (GR)	1.87	-	0.90
CHOLESTEROL (MG)	0.00	0.00	0.00
CALCIUM (MG)	145.00	128.00	56.00
IRON (MG)	6.70	6.70	7.10
IODINE (MG)	-	0.00	0.00
MAGNESIUM (MG)	160.00	160.00	78.00
ZINC (MG)	0.80	4.00	3.10
SODIUM (MG)	30.00	40.00	100.00
POTASSIUM (MG)	800.00	1160.00	740.00
PHOSPHORUS (MG)	375.00	400.00	400.00
PYRIDOXINE (B6) (MG)	0.14	0.56	0.60
VITAMIN E (MG)	-	-	-
THIAMIN (B1) (MG)	0.40	0.50	0.50
RIBOFLAVIN (B2) (MG)	0.15	0.15	0.20
EQ. OF NIACIN (MG)	4.30	5.90	5.60
FOLIC ACID (µG)	180.00	-	35.00
VITAMIN B12 (µG)	0.00	0.00	0.00
ASCORBIC ACID (C) (MG)	4.00	TR	3.00
VITAMIN A (EQ.RETINOL) (µG)	32.00	TR	10.00
VITAMIN D (µG)	0.00	0.00	0.00

TR = TRACES

Source: Composition of Spanish Foods by José Mataix. Institute of Nutrition and Food Technology, University of Granada. 1995.

IN A CLASS OF THEIR OWN

An old proverb says "God gives us good meat, but the devil sends us cooks." In Spain, however, talent, time and dedication have proven a more effective means of grooming the kitchen virtuosos who have revolutionized the country's culinary profile. To that end, a number of its great chefs have thrown open their kitchens to aficionados and fellow professionals, sharing their expertise in helping them master today's new-wave Spanish cuisine.

Text: **Robert Latona** Photo: **Félix Lorrio/ICEX**

New interest and growing respect on the international food scene for what has come to be known as Mediterranean cookery has brought Spain's top-ranked professionals into the limelight. No longer is Spanish cooking seen as a catch-all category for the distinctive regional specialities around which peninsular eating habits had long been compartmentalized.

Traditional dishes relying on geographical and seasonal proximity have been updated, revived, modified, or complemented by new creations exploiting the exciting range of flavors and textures made possible by modern transportation and storage techniques.

Widely respected as the "maestro of maestros," Luis Irízar has been teaching Basque cuisine since the late 1960s.

"Teaching is as rewarding as cooking," says Mey Hofmann, from Barcelona Arnadi school. Her ideal student is an educated professional.

Call it "creative cookery," "cuisine d'auteur" or whatever you please, for all its astonishing variety, the results remain uniquely Spanish in the sense of being inspired by, rather than limited by, long-established cultural idiosyncrasies.

The chef's own imagination and sureness of touch act as a respectful counterweight to tradition, as he reassesses the repertory cutting back on calories, substituting, adding, taking away, to come up with something new.

"The trouble is we never really knew how to make the most of the marvelous raw materials we had," says superstar chef Salvador Gallego. For too many years, he adds, poverty and indifference furthered the neglect of even native culinary treasures like virgin olive oil.

But a common denominator runs through all Spanish cooking, Gallego insists. "It is invariably the cooking of the poor. And when you are forced to make the most of whatever you have, and what you have is precious little of anything, you can't help but becoming creative."

BASQUE TO THE BASICS

As the new creations formed culinary constellations, it was contemporary Basque cuisine that established itself as the brightest in the firmament. Many of its most innovative practitioners got their start at the hotel and catering school in Zarauz, near San Sebastián, where Luis Irízar was teaching back in the late 1960s.

Widely respected as the "maestro of maestros," the Irízar alumni roll could be copied verbatim into the Michelin index: Juan Mari Arzak, Pedro Subijana, and Ramón Roteta, to name just a handful.

Which is why, though he has presided at well-known restaurants in Madrid and London, Irízar's long-term legacy will doubtless be reckoned in terms of his disciples, rather than signature dishes.

"What my students learned from me," he says now, "was a kind of attitude that helped them unleash their own talents. If my students' creations are totally unlike what I have taught them, then I feel I've done my job right."

Since 1989, Irízar has been imparting Basque cuisine in San Sebastián's old town, a few steps up from the docks where fishermen unload their catches.

Daughter Visi sees to the "blackboard" part of the two-year training course, covering the basics of nutrition, food handling, and other matters, while assistant Iñaki lays down the law in the kitchen.

While most of his time is dedicated to turning out entry-level restaurant professionals, slots for refresher courses and for taking on students from abroad is necessarily limited, though August and September offer the best possibilities.

A group of Californians are slated to spend two weeks with him in September 1997, and professional chefs from Austria have also booked for later in the month.

"I believe in giving my students pretty much a free hand almost from the start," says Irízar, "within limits, of course, and taking the classics as a point of departure." Students evaluate each other's work. "Learning to taste goes hand-in-hand with learning to cook and is every bit as tricky."

The day I happened to stop by, the class was busy with variations on a theme of duck à l'orange, arranging ingeniously carved portions on a bed of shredded fruit pulp, or in concentric rings of kiwi and orange-based reduction sauce.

You get to spot the born cooks, says Luis. "They're quick to catch on, and they keep one step ahead of you. And of course, they are organized and disciplined. This is a profession which requires a great deal of personal sacrifice."

That dedication has paid off for Irízar student José Antonio Martínez Valera, a talented 21-year-old from Murcia, who represented Spain in the Young European Chef of the Year competition held at Nîmes in February.

Another student, Greg Araujo, is a young Californian who has been at Irízar's side for three years, and he figures he'll need at least that much direct experience before he heads back home. To introduce authentic Basque cooking to the West Coast? "Basque yes; authentic, I'm not so sure," he answers. "Maybe you could call it fusion by default. I'm from San Diego, but the seafood you get there is nothing at all like what you have here. The trick will be getting first-rate results from second choices."

A short stroll away, just opposite San Sebastián's covered market (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 38), more future chefs are busy chopping and stirring away in the basement workroom associated with the speciality food shop "El Txoko del Gourmet."

Again, the emphasis is on providing hands-on kitchen experience and apprenticeship in local restaurants to young people in the restaurant sector. Just a stone's throw from La Concha, one of Europe's coziest urban beaches, "some of these kids go the entire summer without getting their toes wet," says Pepa Armendáriz, who teaches as well as supervises. "I don't trust anyone to be as rigorous with the students as I am."

In addition to the career program, the school often does shorter courses, devoted to a single aspect such as stews, game dishes, or Christmas cooking, or else structured around a given region or food category.

One of her most requested seminars is on *pinchos*, the skewered multi-layer *tapas* that are a Basque standby, but requests for other topics such as the fundamentals of Galician shellfish or Valencian rice specialities present no problem.

Individuals with some command of basic Spanish and professional experience would also be allowed to do a three or six-month segment of the three-year course and so get to do an internship at local restaurants and hotels.

Field trips take them to slaughterhouses, distilleries, organic farms, and other places of interest, and in the classroom, an overhead mirror helps learners follow the demonstration of the day before they are turned loose to replicate the results.

BARCELONA SWEET TOOTH

In the heart of Barcelona's *barrio gótico*, just around

"In El Molino Culinary Institute, in Andalusia, we are concerned with dishes and techniques that go back to the Moors," says co-owner Javier Carrillo.

the corner from the Picasso Museum, where ancient stone arches are set off by Art Deco flourishes, chef Mey Hofmann has shown that notions of fine dining elsewhere in Europe mesh very well indeed with the Catalan sense of tasteful elegance.

Her eponymous eatery is located in a 200 year-old building near the church of Sta. María del Mar and is a natural extension, rather than an appendage of her 15 years' experience in training chefs. That arrangement is the most natural thing in the world to Hofmann, but apparently not so to guidebook gurus.

"There's not a big-name restaurant in Spain, or France for that matter, where the actual cooking is not done by learners under supervision," she notes. "But if you are proud to be offering professional training, the critics refuse to take you seriously as a restaurant."

Career-oriented students complete a demanding and intensive first year of a three-year apprenticeship before they are allowed to prepare the highly original dishes that she has popularized in a regular magazine column, several books, and a weekend radio show.

Originally a jewelry designer until persuaded by friends to go professional–the restaurant's decor is superbly tasteful without being in the least bit ostentatious or intimidating–Hofmann's style of cookery eschews all labels and categories.

"Cooking is cooking" she maintains, and hers is certainly not constrained by passing fads or local chauvinism, as demonstrate her fillets of a tiny Mediterranean sardine coming to rest in a kind of blini, layered over a delicate mousse of tomato and herbs.

"If I use local ingredients or adapt a dish, I do so because it is good, not because it is Catalan," insists Hofmann, who studied in Switzerland, Austria, and especially France, where she returns each week to scour the markets in search of the choicest ingredients.

Two-day courses are offered from October to December, focusing on themes such as *foie*, wild mushrooms, and tapas, as well as a Christmas course with licorice-perfumed roast lobster as one of the entrees.

Teaching is as rewarding as cooking, Mey Hofmann says. Her ideal student is an educated professional, architects usually have the makings of good cooks, but professional chefs tend to be too set in their ways.

"Once I had a bank president who kept coming back for more and you could see he had what it takes. Finally he hung up his striped suit for good and donned a white apron; he is working not far from where we are now," she relates.

There are two areas where students do not tread. One is the service. Rather than having to rotate personnel, the restaurant stays closed on weekends. "You can't take chances with something so vital. The people who deal directly with the customer are simply the best, and a real closeness develops."

The other activity entrusted strictly to professionals is that of loading up the dessert trolley with a stunning selection of fabulous finales that harmonize and complement the rest of the meal.

Spain's most conceited chefs humbly doff their toques before Mey Hofmann's prodigious talent for pastry, desserts, and sweet dishes of all types, and it is no accident that her school, Arnadi, takes its name from an old Moorish concoction of candied pumpkin.

THE ROOTS OF AL-ANDALUS

People used to joke that everyone in Andalusia lived to a ripe old age on tapas and sherry, but that canard was laid to rest in 1992, when Seville hosted the Universal Exposition and emerged with a fascinating and mostly forgotten cuisine. The El Molino Culinary Institute played an important part in that year's doings when it was put in charge of the catering at the Andalusian pavilion at Expo 92. Now, from a 200 year-old flour mill in Dúrcal, a half-hour's drive from Granada, its promoters are determined to pass on their specialized knowledge of a hitherto neglected cuisine.

"Everyone knows about sherry and olive oil, but we are most concerned with dishes and techniques that go back to the Moors," says El Molino's co-owner Javier Carrillo. "They were Spain's farmers. Their cooking was natural, very healthy, mainly vegetarian. *Gazpacho*, for example. We all take it for granted but it's really an extraordinary creation.

"Then you have to remember that all the food products that came back from the New World first disembarked here in Andalusia, where they started combining potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, and chocolate with absolutely no preconceptions."

Carmen is one of the young cooks who trained here in Dúrcal, at the foot of the single-arched bridge that spans the gorge of the Lecrín River. She maintains that the essence of Andalusia lies in flavor combinations that transcend arbitrary boundaries between sweet and savory dishes.

"We use cinnamon and vinegar, and bitter herbs that never found their way into later Spanish kitchens. Sauces thickened with ground almonds, lots of nuts, saffron, vegetables that don't get much use today, like squashes and turnips."

The cookery instructor is Javier Carrillo's brother, Manolo, who went poking into remote rural corners of Andalusia to unearth this mostly forgotten cuisine that was becoming as scarce on the ground as the Moors who invented it. The nearby Alpujarra mountains, where the Moors fled after the Christian reconquest, proved a treasure trove of neglected kitchen lore.

"Some of the elderly ladies we spoke with had never actually made the dishes themselves, but remembered how their mothers used to do them. They call for small game, homemade cheeses, and ingredients that became too much trouble to obtain or make when alternatives became available."

The other forgotten repository of Andalusia's astonishing lore were the convents, says Carrillo. Detailed household account and recipe books

PCYC

SOLERA GRAN RESERVA

CARDENAL MENDOZA

Brandy de Jerez

SANCHEZ ROMATE HNOS. JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA

"Great chefs are neither born nor made; they invent themselves," says Salvador Gallego, Spanish Chef of the Year for 1994.

dating back centuries were scrupulously preserved to instruct novice nuns in the divine art.

Authenticity is paramount. Instead of coffee, diners are invited to round off their meal sipping a surprisingly satisfying malt and herb-based brew (which, incidentally, tastes nothing like chicory). A selection of interesting young wines from Cádiz adds a welcome note to the wine list, but liqueurs and spirits are absent.

Thanks to magazine write-ups in the U.S. and Germany, foreigners come calling at Dúrcal in search of enlightenment, along with English-speaking residents of Costa del Sol. Courses can be arranged in conjunction with stays in the verdant Lecrín Valley, so enticingly close at hand to Granada.

THE MADRID SCENE

The Hasburg-era heart of old Madrid, just across from the 16th-century Encarnación convent, is where the El Alambique cooking college first hung out its shingle 23 years ago. Founder Clara María de Amezúa is known as one of the most knowledgeable, as well as enthusiastic, authorities on Spanish cuisine, and is the author of several books.

At first, Mrs. Amezúa recalls, the aim was to establish a permanent forum for chefs from abroad to come over and show the continental way of doing things. Now, some 12,000 students later, the traffic is heading in the opposite direction.

"We have people come from France and most of Europe, and interestingly, from Japan, where a deep appreciation of Spanish cuisine exists. Did you know they still eat an olive oil sponge cake that they learned how to make from Jesuit missionaries in the 16th century?"

Special survey courses aimed at foreigners are held in June and July, says Mrs. Amezúa, who got a head start on her lifetime vocation by being raised in the Basque country, a short distance away from the French border.

"When I was a child, it was a great treat to go over to France to shop and eat. Nowadays, when I return to my home, I am struck by the fact that outside all the great or even good restaurants, most of the cars have French license plates."

Clara María de Amezúa has worked closely with the world's top cooks, including the *New York Times* authority, Craig Clairborne, and made many appearances in France.

She is convinced that never before has Spanish cooking witnessed such an explosion of interest and talent. "The next century will see Spain claim its rightful place in the gastronomic firmament. The only thing holding us back was our own disdain and ignorance of the marvelous materials and know-how we had at our finger-tips."

The trouble, she explains, began in the 18th century when the Bourbon dynasty from France came to rule the country and introduced butter and cream-based cuisine right into the kitchens of a fawning nobility.

"What makes our cuisine unique is the cultural admixture of Jewish, Christian, and Moorish influences," she says. Many *pot-au-feu* type dishes originated in Jewish households where cooking was forbidden on the Sabbath, she notes.

But this does not mean that El Alambique sees itself as a museum of culinary archaeology. Quite the opposite is true. Staff and subject matter are constantly being reviewed, recycled, and renewed, and Spanish cooking will always have a prominent part in the curriculum.

"We go after the best and the brightest of the new chefs who have made a name for themselves and invite them to show us what they've come up with. Trends and preferences are constantly changing, and we want to change with them."

One of El Alambique's guest instructors in 1997 is Salvador Gallego, voted Chef of the Year for 1994 by the Spanish Academy of Gastronomy. Discerning diners have never objected to making the long drive out to his restaurant, El Cenador de Salvador, located in the foothills of Madrid's Sierra de Guadarrama.

It is during the restaurant's slow season, from January to the latter part of May, that Gallego devotes to demonstrating that "cooking doesn't have to be expensive or complicated to be good."

Groups of up to ten students are put through a whirlwind of four dishes a day during four consecutive days, allowing time for them to be eaten, discussed, criticized and analyzed.

"Of course what I am teaching them is Spanish cooking because I am Spanish and this is evident in everything I prepare," says Gallego, whose regular diners include many prominent politicians, financiers, and business leaders. "But it is also creative, because at the same time it is unquestionably mine."

Salvador Gallego grew up in Úbeda, in the hilly Andalusian heartland of Spain's olive-growing country. That accounts for the "sobriety" that characterizes his work, especially when contrasted to the Basque Country which has always made the most of its proximity to France and a bountiful ocean.

His point of departure is a respect for the properties of his ingredients that borders on reverence, no matter how unpromising they may appear. "Think what can be done and has been done and has yet to be done with a dull starchy tuber like the potato."

For this chef, a dish "works" if the final result turns out to be greater than the sum of its parts. To have that happen, you have to pay attention to a myriad of tiny details. "A chef is like a conductor of a symphony, once he loses the beat, then he's in big trouble."

"I don't mind in the least sharing my recipes, but what I try to provide my students is an orientation rather than a set of instructions." Knowing how to choose your ingredients and respect what they can contribute is only part of the reason why a little learning goes a long way in the kitchen. Talent will have to see to the rest.

Robert Latona *is an American journalist based in Madrid, who works for EFE News Agency and contributes to various publications.*

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CLOSE ENCOUNTERS AT EL BULLI

No serious eater contemplates leaving Catalonia without a pilgrimage to the cove at Cala Montjoi in Gerona, where chef Ferrán Adriá invites admirers to ease withdrawal symptoms occasioned by the seasonal closure of his restaurant, El Bulli, with a three-day gab and grub fest for star-struck foodies (See *Spain Gourmetour* No. 38).

Four sessions are usually scheduled between mid-February and end of March. A ticket of the entry comes steep—around 150,000 pesetas (1,200 U.S. dollars) per head, with a maximum of 18 participants at a time. But this is an event aimed at attracting well-heeled gourmands, not cooks.

"They watch me as I prepare the meals and try out the recipes that may or may not appear on next season's menu, but I do all the work. I don't teach them. It's a behind-the-scenes encounter. We talk and we eat. Then we eat some more and talk some more," says the engaging Catalan who was proclaimed Best European Chef for 1995.

The eating part would include some of Adriá's spectacularly original *mar y montaña* (meat and seafood) combinations, but what exactly do they talk about between mouthfuls? "Everything. The philosophy behind my cooking. This year, as you know, I got my third Michelin star so I suppose we'll be talking about that. Everything goes except politics and soccer."

Indeed, you'd better not try badmouthing Barcelona's all-star soccer team when Adriá is within reach of a meat cleaver.

SPANISH COOKING SCHOOLS

ESCUELA DE COCINA LUIS IRÍZAR

C/. Mari, 5, bajo
20003 San Sebastián (Guipúzcoa)
Tel: (34-43) 43 15 40
Fax: (34-43) 42 35 53

Offering a two-year professional course with apprenticeships at leading restaurants (monthly tuition: 65,000 pesetas/520 U.S. dollars). Short-term seminars for chefs and non-professionals can be scheduled by previous arrangement during August and September for a minimum of 12 students.

EL TXOKO DEL GOURMET

C/. Aldamar, 4
20003 San Sebastián (Guipúzcoa)
Tel: (34-43) 42 22 18
Fax: (34-43) 42 76 41

A twelve-month vocational course consisting of 160 hours/month, with internships at top local restaurants on weekends and in the summer. Tuition, 46,000 pesetas (368 U.S. dollars).

Shorter specialized courses on specific genres or Spanish regional specialities covering 14 to 21 teaching hours can be scheduled by arrangement for a minimum of ten students; if possible with three month's advance notice.

ESCUELA DE HOSTELERíA ARNADI

Argentaria, 74-76
08003 Barcelona
Tel: (34-3) 319 58 82
Fax: (34-3) 319 58 59

Two-day seminars between October and December focus on tapas and Mediterranean cooking, among others. Pastry courses consisting of six hours weekly over 18 months begin in September and March. Special courses on the preparation of *turrones*, marzipan, and other holiday treats are offered in early December. A month-long course on summer specialities is usually scheduled for June, dealing mainly with Spanish/Catalan dishes. The following month, a course highlighting Spain's regional cooking is given. Tuition is from 15,000-35,000 pesetas (120-280 U.S. dollars).

INSTITUTO CULINARIO EL MOLINO

Paraje de la Isla, Camino de las Fuentes
78027 Dúrcal (Granada)
Tel: (34-58) 78 02 47

Details on request.

EL ALAMBIQUE, S.A.

Calle de la Encarnación, 2
28013 Madrid
Tel: (34-1) 547 88 27
Fax: (34-1) 559 78 02

Well-known Spanish chefs are signed to give classes, usually on short notice; please enquire for details. Special classes for foreigners conducted in English and Spanish are offered in June and July, consisting of either three or four 2 1/2 hour sessions a week. Price 12,000-14,000 pesetas (96-112 U.S. dollars), plus a 3,000 peseta (24 U.S. dollars) inscription fee.

EL CENADOR DE SALVADOR

Av. de España, 30
28411 Moralzarzal (Madrid)
Tel: (34-1) 857 77 10
Fax: (34-1) 857 77 80

Courses from Tuesday to Friday are offered every week from late January to May at the restaurant, including the preparation, consumption, and discussion of four different dishes each day. Price 80,000 pesetas (640 U.S. dollars), excluding lodging and transportation, which are optional.

EL BULLI

Cala Montjoi
17480 Rosas (Gerona)
Tel: (34-72) 15 04 57
Fax: (34-72) 15 07 17

A complete Spanish cheese portfolio would comprise more than one hundred varieties.

COOKING WITH SPANISH CHEESE

Cheese is a product of the living countryside with the complexity of monastic seclusion. It is a substantial food reminiscent of the quiet life but it is also a sophisticated food, painstakingly made by artisans with know-how gained over the centuries, often by trial and error. One of the basics of everyday eating, cheese can also enhance and add interest to cooked dishes. The variety of Spanish landscapes and pastures is clearly reflected in the variety of Spanish cheeses and the many ways they can be used in cooking.

Cheese is basically a method of using milk after it has curdled without missing out on any of its qualities. It is probably one of the first foods man was able to conserve and this must surely have been an important discovery. Early man must have wondered why the stomachs of young lambs contained not milk but a solid, whitish, sweet-smelling mass. Legend tells how the merchant Kanana was surprised to find that the milk carried in a goat's stomach on a camel's back had curdled. There must have been endless experiments by peasants, monks and farmers with milk, rennet and salt until they were able to establish a reliable way of making what we know as cheese.

The first stage in the process is curd, a fresh cheese that takes the shape of its container. Before the introduction of ferments, the milk used to be heated by the primitive procedure of placing in it a hot stone, thus giving it a pleasant toasted flavor. Today in Spain, curd cheese is a Basque/Navarran speciality which is popular as a dessert throughout Spain, usually being served with honey or sugar.

Literary references

The literature of the Spanish Golden Age (16th century) includes many references to pastoral subjects. There are eclogues and bucolic novels indicating the importance of stock-breeding for the Castile of the times. Cervantes (1547-1616) introduces us to Marcela, a haughty but beautiful shepherdess who is sieged by a multitude of lovers, and Don Quijote attacks flocks of sheep believing them to be enemy armies. He describes how "cheeses laid like bricks made a wall" amongst the huge array of food for Camacho's wedding. Lope de Vega (1562-1635) in his *El Isidro* describes mealtime for a poor family as follows: "At the end of the meal comes the dessert, an apple, ripe cheese and quince jelly, then with a wicker tray the table is cleared away." Baltasar del Alcázar (1530-1606), a Sevillian poet and one-time sailor in the galleys of the Marqués de Santa Cruz, sings the praises of the cheese from Pinto in his *Cena jocosa* and dedicates a whole poem to his three passions: "Three things hold my heart captive–the lovely Inés, ham and eggplants with cheese." We can therefore assume the latter was a popular dish during the Golden Age.

Text: **María Jesús Gil de Antunaño**
Translation: **Jenny McDonald**
Still lifes: **Menchu Artime**
Photos: **A. de Benito/ICEX**

Its very varied climate and terrain make Spain a land of goats, sheep and cattle.

Cheese, bread and wine...

Its very varied climate and terrain make Spain a land of goats, sheep and cattle and many of its inhabitants over the centuries have devoted their lives to animal husbandry. The roots of cheese-making lie in distant history. Remains of pots displayed in the Spanish National Archeological Museum show that cheese was made in Spain from the very earliest times. The Phoenicians and Greeks who settled in the Iberian Peninsula, from Ampurias in the northeast, to Cádiz in the south, helped to establish trade in the ewes' and goats' milk cheeses from Hispania.

Cheese has always been eaten in Spain with bread and wine so there is not much tradition for cooking with cheese. Practically the only classic recipe is fried Manchego cheese–a wonderful cheese fried to perfection in olive oil of the highest quality. But today cheese is used in many recipes, some of them original and others taking their inspiration from other countries.

Cheese enhances flavors and can give a smoother, creamier texture to certain dishes. So when used for cooking, account must be taken not only of its taste but also of its fat content and meltability. There is a right type and a right degree of ripeness for the cheese in every dish, depending on what is required–a crisp, toasted cheese topping or a creamy, smooth sauce.

Cooking with Spanish cheeses

One of history's famous anecdotes was the comment made by the French president, Charles de Gaulle, that it was practically impossible to govern a country producing over 300 different types of cheese. By the same chalk, governing Spain cannot be much easier as the Spanish cheese portfolio comprises about one hundred varieties. So, to simplify the complex task of compiling a set of recipes using Spanish cheeses, we based our selection on geographic origin and the type of milk used. Of the eleven cheeses selected, seven have a Denomination of Origin (Tetilla, Majorero, Idiazábal, Mahón, Roncal, Manchego, La Serena).

The *Torta de La Serena*, produced in the district of La Serena in Badajoz, Extremadura, which is in the southwest of Spain, has a minimum ripening period of three weeks although it can last several months. The paste is fairly compact and soft and the rind is washed. In my opinion, its unusual flavor–slightly sour from fermentation and bitter from the vegetable renne–makes it suitable for quick recipes as it melts in the mouth. It is excellent for filling quick-fried pasties, in a pasta sauce or on quick-grilled canapés.

Tetilla is produced in the area between La Coruña and Lugo in Galicia, in the northwest corner of Spain. This cheese, with a compact and uncooked paste, ripens in just two weeks. It is a soft, full fat cheese that is slightly sweet and not at all salty. It is an excellent choice for use in dishes needing fast-melting, fatty cheeses, being ideal for hot pasties and stuffings.

Valdeón is produced in the Valdeón area in the province of Leon, close to the Picos de Europa mountain range in the north of Spain. It is a blue cheese that is generally made from cows' milk but in spring and summer from a blend of cows' and goats' milk. The minimum ripening period of three months gives a soft paste with blue veining. It is a very strong cheese with a very high fat content appropriate for any dishes in which Cabrales or Picón cheeses might be used, as long as care is taken to avoid smothering the flavor of the main ingredient. To accompany red meat, it is often beaten with cream to make it smoother and milder.

Majorero or Fuenteventura cheese is produced on the island of Fuenteventura in the Canaries in winter and spring with full cream goats' milk. It is usually consumed when semi- or fully-ripened but sometimes when fresh. The paste is uncooked and compact and the flavor is strong. Depending on the degree of ripening, it can be used to greater or lesser effect for sauces, fillings and salads.

Ibores is produced in the northeast of the province of Cáceres in Extremadura with full cream Retinto goats' milk. It is a very aromatic, slightly sour and salty cheese that has the typical flavor of goats' milk. It is ripened for two weeks to three months. The paste is soft, as is the rind, which is oiled and coated with paprika. It has a high fat content and a great personality. An unusual gastronomic application is to breadcrumb and fry it and serve it with redcurrant jelly.

Manchego cheese, from the La Mancha provinces of Ciudad Real, Toledo, Cuenca and Albacete, is made from the milk of Manchega sheep. It is ripened for a minimum of 60 days and is sold either semi-ripened, ripe or aged. It is a very useful cheese in the kitchen, mostly because of the potential of the different degrees of ripening, all with the same amount of fat but with different degrees of moisture.

Idiazábal is produced throughout the Basque Country in the north of Spain from winter to summer using uncooked Latxa ewes' milk. The pressed paste is ripened for a minimum of two months and is sometimes smoked. It is a full cream cheese. The smoked and fully-ripened version confers a delicate wood flavor to au gratin dishes. When not fully ripened, it is creamy, with the slight tang that is characteristic of ewes' milk. It is ideal for mixing with other cheeses in desserts such as ice creams, cheesecakes and creams.

Ibérico is a very characteristic Spanish cheese as it mixes the three types of milk–cows', ewes' and goats'. This cheese, with the highest production in Spain, is elaborated industrially from pressed paste and its ripening period lasts from 25 days to six months. The flavor is a combination of the three types of milk. It is as versatile for cooking as Manchego, the strongest cheeses being ideal for grating and the softer ones being suitable when a fast-melting cheese is required.

La Garrotxa is produced in inland Catalonia in the northeast of Spain from goats' milk and ripened for three to six weeks. It has a soft, compact paste and a bluish-grey rind. Its strong, piquant taste means that its gastronomic partners should either be strong-flavored so that they are not overwhelmed by the cheese, or neutral-flavored, such as pasta and potatoes.

Mahón comes from the island of Menorca in the Balearics, being produced from September to July. The ripening period is between one week and up to five months. It is made of uncooked pressed paste, and the orange rind is oiled or coated with paprika. It is a

very aromatic, full-fat or medium-fat cheese with a slightly sour and salty taste and its texture is similar to that of Parmesan. It is used in several Menorcan dishes with vegetables and meat.

Roncal is produced in the Roncal Valley in Navarre in the north of Spain. The uncooked or semi-cooked pressed paste is ripened for a minimum of three months. The rind is dark brown and the very rich paste is ivory white. When grated for use in cooking, its strong taste and slight sharpness give a very unusual and pleasant flavor.

The keys to success

Cooking with cheese requires care. A few golden rules must be remembered, as excessive or incorrect cooking may separate the fats from the proteins, converting the cheese into an oily, leathery and indigestible mass.

* Cheeses should be added towards the end of the cooking process. When used in the oven, the temperature should never exceed 160°C (320°F) and the dish should be no less than 6 cm (2.4 in) from the heat source.
* Au gratin dishes should not be allowed to darken too much because heat alters the flavor of the cheese. A few dabs of butter may help the cheese to melt and spread better over the surface.
* A simple salad has a lot to gain from the addition of a little diced cheese.
* Many soups are much tastier if a few spoonfuls of grated cheese are allowed to melt in them just before serving.
* Hard cheeses are suitable for grating but they should be grated just before use in order to ensure that their aroma is not lost. They are also ideal for soufflés and for au gratin dishes.
* Soft cheeses are ideal for egg dishes, sauces and egg custards.
* Medium hard cheeses that can be sliced or diced and that melt easily, are suitable for fillings and other preparations in which all that is required is the creaminess of the cheese.

María Jesús Gil de Antuñano *is one of the most veteran Spanish food writers. She has worked with a number of publications and has written several books. She also gives courses in Spanish food and cooking, and in 1994 she was awarded the National Gastronomy Prize.*

A list of Spanish cheese producers will be published in the next few months and will be made available as a brochure or on diskette. For more information, see page 9.

RECIPES

Valdeón or Cabrales Cheese Dip

225 gr of Valdeón or other Spanish blue cheeses, such as Cabrales
1 1/2 glasses whipped, unsweetened cream
1 tbsp Worcester sauce
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Mix all the ingredients in the blender. Serve in a bowl surrounded with carrot sticks, chips, savory biscuits, celery, etc. Makes an excellent starter.

Recommended wine:

Dry natural cider.

In general, sauces like this that are served as aperitifs have strong flavors that encourage drinking. The Valdeón or Cabrales cheese dip goes remarkably well with fresh, dry cider, preferably from the latest apple harvest.

Spinach Salad with Ibérico Cheese

SERVES 4:
1/2 kg young spinach
250 gr medium-ripe Ibérico cheese
150 gr bacon in one thick slice
3 slices of bread for frying
100 gr walnuts
Olive oil
DRESSING:
12 tbsp virgin olive oil
4 tbsp sherry vinegar
1 tbsp mustard
1 tbsp sugar
Salt and pepper

Choose the most tender of the spinach leaves. Wash, drain and tear into more or less even pieces. Remove the rind from the cheese and bacon and dice both. Then dice the bread. Fry the bacon and bread in the oil. Mix the spinach with the bacon, cheese and walnuts.

DRESSING: Dissolve the sugar, salt, mustard and pepper in the vinegar because they do not dissolve well in oil. Add the oil while stirring and dress the salad. Finally sprinkle with the cubes of fried bread and decorate with walnut quarters.

Recommended wine:

D.O. Navarra rosé.

Salads do not generally go well with wine because of the acidity of the vinegar or lemon used in the dressing. In this case, the other ingredients counter the acidity, so a fresh, aromatic, smooth Garnacha rosé wine would neutralize the vegetable flavor of the spinach and bring out the full taste of the Ibérico cheese. This type of rosé wine from the D.O. Navarra is excellent. A new D.O. Cigales would also go down well, being based on the expressive Tinto Fino variety.

Ibores Ramekin with Prawn Sauce

SERVES 4:
250 gr ripened Ibores cheese, grated
75 gr streaky bacon
1 glass of milk
1 glass of cream
4 eggs
Salt and pepper
Nutmeg
PRAWN SAUCE:
250 gr prawns
4 tbsp olive oil
1/2 onion
1 garlic clove
6 tbsp tomato sauce
1 glass Brandy de Jerez
A few drops of Tabasco sauce
Dried tarragon

Finely dice the streaky bacon and blanch in boiling water for one minute. Beat the eggs in a bowl, add the grated cheese, milk, cream, salt, pepper and nutmeg. Grease a mold with butter (or four individual molds) and fill with the mixture. Stand in a pan of hot water and bake at 180°C (354°F) for 40 minutes (or 20 minutes in the microwave, but remember that the mold must be made of a suitable material).

PRAWN SAUCE: Peel the prawns, wash the heads and boil for 20 minutes in just a little water with salt, pepper and an onion skin. Drain, squeezing the juice out of the heads and set aside. Sauté the chopped onion and garlic in the oil and, before they darken, add the prawns, the tomato sauce and the crushed tarragon. Then sprinkle on the brandy and as soon as it heats up, put a flame to it. Season with a few drops of Tabasco to taste, add the stock made from the prawn heads and stir. Bring to a boil and serve with the ramekin.

Recommended wine:

Young white wine, C.V. Tierra Matanegra* (Badajoz). The strength of the Ibores cheese, with its aromatic reminiscences of goats' milk, dominates the eggs

and cream in the recipe so the wine chosen should not overcome these aromas. A wine from the same area as the cheese would be a good choice–a C.V. Tierra Matanegra. Today these are sweetened by modern processing and are based on the Viura grape and the native varieties Cayetana and Mantua. This wine fills the palate with aromas and is warm on the nose while light so it will neither dominate the food nor will its effects be lost because of the strength of the cheese.

* C.V. stands for *Comarca Vinícola*, or winemaking district.

Vegetable Soup with Mahón Cheese

SERVES 4:
2 medium-sized onions
2 carrots
2 leeks
1 garlic clove
1 celery stalk
6 tbsp olive oil
1/4 kg potatoes
1 liter of water
1 glass of milk
Pinch of thyme
1/2 bay leaf
150 gr full-fat ripe Mahón cheese, grated
Salt and pepper

Peel the onions and garlic and chop finely. Peel the carrots and celery, wash and dice. Remove the outside leaves and the green part of the leeks, wash and cut into fine rings. Heat the oil in a large pan and slowly sauté the vegetables. Peel, wash and dice the potatoes and add. Before the vegetables turn color, add the boiling water and season with salt, pepper, thyme and the 1/2 bay leaf. Cover the pot and leave to simmer for 45 minutes. Add the hot milk and half the grated cheese. Leave to cook for a further 10 minutes and check the seasoning. Serve the soup, offering the rest of the grated cheese at the table. This soup also works very well with ripe Manchego cheese.

Recommended wine:
D.O. Navarra rosé.
Although soups are not the best companions for wine, as this soup has been enriched with the creaminess and zing of the cheese, it would go well with a young rosé. The fruity aromas, youth and slight acidity of a Navarran rosé wine can compete on an equal footing with the combination of Mahón cheese with vegetables.

Eggplants with Tetilla Cheese

SERVES 4:
4 eggplants of similar size
250 gr Tetilla cheese
8 tbsp olive oil
1 kg tomatoes
1 garlic clove
1 large onion
1 small green pepper
50 gr Ibérico cheese, grated
Salt and pepper
Tarragon
Pinch of sugar

Finely chop half the onion and sauté in half the oil. Wash the tomatoes, chop and fry on top of the onion until any water has evaporated (about 20 minutes). Sieve and season with salt, pepper and finely chopped tarragon (adding a pinch of sugar, if necessary, to counter the acidity of the tomatoes). Wash the eggplants and cut into two, lengthwise. Blanch in salted boiling water for 8 minutes. Drain face down on kitchen paper. Remove the pulp with a teaspoon, setting aside the empty shells. In the rest of the oil, fry the finely chopped garlic clove and remaining onion together with the washed and chopped pepper. Add the eggplant pulp, diced Tetilla cheese and two tablespoons of the tomato sauce. Season with salt, pepper and chopped tarragon. Fill the eggplant shells, sprinkle with grated cheese and brown in the oven. Serve hot with tomato sauce sprinkled with cheese and chopped tarragon.

Recommended wine:
Young red Cencibel, D.O. La Mancha.
Eggplants are grown and eaten throughout Spain but receive special attention in the area of Castile-La Mancha, so the best partner would be a wine from this region where the predominant variety is the noble Cencibel, elsewhere known as Tempranillo. A young, fruity wine with a good acid balance combines well with the acidity of the tomato, although this is already toned down by the creamy cheese. The clean, fresh and fruity aromas of the Cencibel marry well with this vegetable dish.

Tagliatelli with Four Cheeses

SERVES 4:
250 gr spinach tagliatelli
50 gr Garrotxa cheese
50 gr very fresh Manchego cheese
50 gr Mató or Burgos or Requesón cheese
20 gr ripe Manchego cheese, grated
2 egg yolks
1 glass of milk
1 small glass of cream
Salt and pepper
Nutmeg
Fresh sage

Ripe Manchego cheese, grated as an accompaniment.
Remove the rind from the cheeses. Crush them together with a fork or mix in the blender, then add the ripe Manchego cheese, the egg yolks, the milk and the cream and mix until a light cream is obtained. Flavor and season to taste with salt, pepper, nutmeg and chopped sage. Cook the pasta in plenty of salted boiling water, drain and while hot, mix with the cream over the heat but without allowing it to boil. Serve at once.

Recommended wine:
Red '95, D.O. Somontano (Huesca).
Pasta is a neutral food that is flavored by the sauce accompanying it so the choice of a wine must take into account the flavor of the sauce ingredients. The mild, medium fat cheeses with a little ripe Manchego would go well with a red wine from the new but prestigious D.O. Somontano. This wine is based on carefully blended Tempranillo and Moristel grapes, giving a fresh, firm and fruity persistence that combines well with the small proportion of ripe Manchego included in the sauce.

Hake with Valdeón Cheese

SERVES 4:
4 hake steaks
3 tbsp very finely chopped leek (about 2 leeks)
3 tbsp olive oil
100 gr Valdeón cheese
1/4 liter cream
1 medium-sized can of small cooked peas
Salt and pepper
Lemon
Remove the rind from the cheese and crush it with a fork. Beat the cream a little and mix well with the cheese. Sauté the leek in the hot oil. When soft, add the cream and cheese mixture with the peas, stirring over a gentle heat until it comes to a boil. Remove from the heat. Season the fish steaks, sprinkle with lemon and cook covered in the microwave (or fry or grill) for one minute on each side. Arrange on a dish and pour the sauce over it.

Recommended wine:
White *Crianza*, D.O.Ca. La Rioja.
The delicate flavor of the hake generally marries well with a dry white wine and this is especially so in this case because of the cream sauce with the slight piquancy of the blue Valdeón cheese. A dry Rioja white wine matured in wood would be ideal; or a Rueda white wine, which has the personality of the Verdejo variety with its characteristic bitterness and dryness, would neutralize to perfection the flavorsome sauce. Also suitable would be a strong, young Navarran Chardonnay.

Chicken Breasts with Roncal Cheese

SERVES 4:
4 half chicken breasts
4 slices of Roncal cheese
1 egg
Flour
Salt and pepper
Olive oil for frying
Tomato sauce
Matchstick potatoes

Make a lengthwise slit through the middle of the chicken breasts. Open them up and flatten them a little, season and place a slice of cheese inside each. Close up, season and coat in flour and beaten egg. Deep fry until golden outside and cooked inside. Serve with tomato sauce and matchstick potatoes.

Recommended wine:
Young red D.O. Ribera del Duero.
In this simple recipe, the forceful flavor of the Roncal cheese blends well with the rather tasteless chicken meat and gives it character. Although the cheese on its own would go well with an aged wine, this mild combination would be very pleasant served with a young red Ribera del Duero to which the Tinto Fino variety gives an excellent aromatic potential and a splendidly balanced flavor.

Loin of Beef with Smoked Idiazábal Cheese

SERVES 4:
800 gr loin of beef
1/4 liter concentrated beef stock
100 gr raisins
200 gr smoked Idiazábal cheese
1 glass of herb eau-de-vie
4 cooking apples
Salt and pepper
Olive oil
Mâche (or watercress)

Soak the raisins in the herb eau-de-vie for half an hour before use. Remove the rind from the cheese. Cut the cheese into pieces and melt in a double saucepan over a medium heat with the brandy and a little of the stock, stirring all the time while adding more stock until a thick cream forms (about 10 minutes taking care that the cheese does not separate). Put the sauce through a fine sieve and add the raisins. Brush the beef with oil and place in an iron frying pan over a medium heat. Sprinkle the top surface with plenty of rock salt and leave to cook on one side for 20 minutes. Remove the salt with a spatula, turn over and place salt on the other side. Again leave to cook over a medium heat for 15 minutes. Remove the salt and cut into thick slices. Peel the apples, cut into wedges and brown in oil. Serve the meat with the sauce, the apple pieces and a few leaves of Mâche or watercress.

Recommended wine:
Red *Reserva* D.O. La Rioja.
Red meat asks for a red wine and here a red wine is doubly necessary because of the combination in the sauce of the smoky flavor of the Idiazábal cheese with the herb brandy. These strong flavors blend well so the ideal wine for this dish would be an intensely aromatic red Reserva (see Glossary on page 130) in which the Spanish grape varieties-Tempranillo, Mazuela and Graciano--combine while under the influence of the oak cask used for aging. Even if the wine were a Gran Reserva aged in wood for 36 months, there would be no danger of it overwhelming the food, which requires a powerful partner.

Terrine of Quince Jelly and Majorero Cheese

SERVES 8:
500 gr quince jelly (or two tablets)
200 gr fresh Majorero cheese
1 glass of cream
3 tbsp icing sugar
Juice of half a lemon

Beat the cream when very cold in a bowl that has also been cooled with ice cubes or in the freezer, together with the icing sugar. Beat the Majorero cheese with the lemon juice and blend with the cream. Slice the quince jelly into long strips. Grease a loaf tin, line the base with greased paper and arrange in it alternate, very thin layers of quince jelly and cheese. Leave to cool and settle in the refrigerator for eight hours. Cut into slices and serve. A mint-flavored custard sauce would be a very welcome accompaniment.

Recommended wine:
Oloroso Dulce or Cream, D.O. sherry.
Quince jelly with fresh cheese is a classic combination in Spanish gastronomy, popular with all. In this case, the traditional formula is given a sophisticated presentation which could be enhanced further by serving it with a sweet sherry in which the Palomino grape neutralizes the almost excessive sweetness of the Pedro Ximénez variety.

Manchego Cheese Custard

SERVES 8:
150 gr ripe Manchego cheese, grated
100 gr sugar
4 eggs
1/2 liter cream
4 tbsp sugar to make the caramel
1 dozen walnuts

Place the sugar in the mold, sprinkle with water and caramelize over a hot flame. Coat the walls of the mold with the caramel. Beat the eggs with the sugar, add the very finely grated cheese and the cream. Beat together well and pour into the mold. Place in a dish of hot water and bake in a moderate oven for 30-40 minutes until, when a needle is inserted in the center, it comes out clean. When cold, turn out and decorate with the walnut halves.

Recommended wine:
Sweet red wine, Crianza, D.O. Priorato (Tarragona).
Both the walnuts and the strong flavor of the ripe Manchego cheese with a touch of piquancy and saltiness, incline the balance towards a flavorsome red wine aged in the cask. But a sweet, dessert wine would also be suitable. So an original choice would be a Priorato wine with its aromas of preserved fruits, caramel and raisins that would blend well with the fragrance of this exceptional cheese custard.

Cheese Ice Cream

SERVES 8:
1/4 liter cream
50 gr Idiazábal cheese
350 gr Torta de la Serena cheese
2 eggs
200 gr sugar
1/4 liter milk
Blackberry, redcurrant or raspberry sauce

Boil the milk with the cream and the Idiazábal cheese. In a separate bowl, beat the Torta de la Serena cheese with the eggs and sugar. When the milk reaches a boil, pour on the other cheese mixture then beat well with an electric beater. Cool. Fill the freezer container and freeze, beating once or twice during the freezing process with a hand beater. Serve with the fruit sauce.

Recommended wine:
Moscatel de Godelleta, D.O. Valencia.
The perfume of this grape variety, modified by pleasing touches of spice from the oak cask, contrasts with the acidity of the ewes' milk with which these cheeses are prepared. The slightly smoky flavor of the Idiazábal cheese, which is countered to some extent by the cream, is enhanced in the company of this wine and the overall blend of flavors on the palate is thoroughly pleasant.

Text: **Enric Canut**

THE BOY, THE CHEESE, AND THE QUINCE JELLY

(The tale of the incorrigible cheese-eater)

Certain childhood memories last as if they were indelibly printed on our brains.

One of my most vivid memories stems from when I was seven or eight, sometime in the sixties, in a distant mountain village where I used to spend the summers immersed in a world of smells, colors and sensations. Those three months every year, with the wealth of experiences they offered, seemed to last forever. Towards the end of one hot summer, a close relation asked my father if I could help in the harvest on a farm two kilometers from the village.

This man, his son and I spent the next three days traveling to and fro with a line of ten donkeys, their side packs up to the brim with apples, pears, plums, quinces, nuts, almonds and hazelnuts. Our job was to keep the animals in line and make sure that none of them straggled.

The precious cargo was carefully deposited in the attic of the family home where hopefully it would last the winter without rotting. We left everything in a jumble on the floor but, on our return from the next trip, everything had been perfectly laid out and ordered and a heady perfume of fresh fruit met us as we came in.

The last day, all those who had helped in the harvest were invited to a celebration lunch. There were about thirty people around the table. I sat wide-eyed at one end, clutching the coin I had earned. The food was plentiful and of the sort to satisfy hard-working men and women so I ate little, but then it was time for the last course and two dishes were placed just in front of me.

One bore tablets of freshly-made quince jelly of a dark mahogany color but shiny and slightly translucent with a grainy texture and a sharp, fruity aroma with a hint of cloves and cinnamon. Served with it were thin slices of ewes' milk cheese, with its characteristic, almost rancid smell. On the other dish was a lumpy, cheesy, snow-white mass swimming in whey and dotted with walnuts, raisins, almonds and hazelnuts. Amber-colored honey had been trickled over the top.

As you can imagine, with these desserts I made up for my lack of interest in the main course and that was the day I discovered that cheese can be eaten in ways other than with bread for breakfast or as an afternoon snack.

That memory has accompanied me over the years and I now see that the contrasting flavors of oriental cuisine are also to be found on our own doorstep where acid, sweet, salty and spicy flavors can get on surprisingly well together.

And as an adult traveling around Spain I have frequently seen cheese served with quince jelly and fresh fruit and I have also noted that one of the desserts most often repeated on menus is *requesón, mató* or *cuajada* (curd or cottage cheeses), either alone or with honey, dried fruits or aniseed liqueur.

Cheese, or rather cheeses, are part of the normal Spanish diet, and served mostly with bread or as a *tapa*. All Spaniards relish the idea of a chilled *fino sherry* with a few slices of medium ripe ewes' milk cheese, preferably in a Seville bar. In Spain, cheese is more often served as a starter or aperitif than at the end of the meal as in France.

Bodegas Franco-Españolas, S.A.

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A SPANISH CHEESEBOARD

A selection of cheeses is much more than a satisfactory substitute for an everyday meal. If the cheeses served are Spanish, preferably with a Denomination of Origin, then properly partnered, they can amount to a real feast–with good fresh bread, red wine, fresh and dried fruit, raw and toasted nuts, and fresh, young vegetables such as celery, carrots, radishes, red peppers and young zucchini.

Our suggestion would be a selection of five Spanish cheeses with five D.O.s, cheeses that can be found on the international market–Tetilla, Majorero, Manchego, Idiazábal and Cabrales. This order would be the right one for tasting–from the mildest to the strongest. All are made with whole milk so they are full-fat cheeses and highly nourishing!

The first is the typical Galician Tetilla so named because of its shape–a slightly flattened breast with an unusual sort of nipple. Made in the northeast of Spain in Galicia, the part the Romans called *Finis Terrae,* it is mild, sweetish, creamy and melts in the mouth. Its slight sharpness combines with the aroma of fermented butter. It goes very well with thick bread, ideally from a loaf made of corn flour.

The second, Majorero, is new amongst the constellation of D.O. cheeses. It comes from the island of Fuerteventura in the far southeast of the Canaries and is made exclusively from goats' milk, a thick and aromatic milk from animals that graze on the thin grasses growing in this semi-desert area where most of the moisture comes from the marine breezes blowing off the Atlantic. It is a semi-ripened cheese of pressed paste, containing all the flavor of goats' milk and leaving the persistent aftertaste of walnuts and dried fruits given by its ripening process. In the Canaries, it is usually eaten with the classic *papas arrugadas* (potatoes boiled in their jackets) or with thick white unsalted bread.

Halfway through our cheeseboard we come to Manchego, the best known of the Spanish cheeses and the one that sets the standards for cheese-making in Spain. It is made of pure ewes' milk from the Manchego sheep and should be medium ripe to ripe, well-pressed and with the whey removed. The flavor is intense and mature, creamy in the mouth and slightly piquant with a touch of salt and the powerful aromas of ewes' milk. For a recommendation as to how to eat it, what better than to copy the example given in Don Quijote de la Mancha and eat it with bread freshly baked in a wood oven with a young, fruity red wine.

Next we come to a farmhouse cheese that is much prized by a region famous for its food and home to the best restaurants in Spain: Idiazábal is one of the hallmarks of the Basque Country. It is a ripe cheese traditionally made for keeping and normally smoked. A thin slice placed between the tongue and palate will reveal its piquancy and slight bitterness (from the lamb's rennet), its aroma of beech, birch and hawthorn wood and its persistent sharpness. In its homeland, it is traditionally washed down with a good Rioja or, more recently, with cider in one of the many local cider bars.

Finally, the most powerful and well-defined of the Spanish cheeses. A classic from the Asturian mountains where it matures in high caves aired by the cold, damp and salty winds from the Bay of Biscay. Cabrales is a cylindrical, medium-sized cheese, produced by hand in small quantities in the Asturian part of the Picos de Europa National Park. It is a blue cheese that is so creamy it can be spread, with a sticky rind and a penetrating smell. It is a cheese for connoisseurs and lovers of mature, full flavors. Spread a little on a slice of fresh toast or serve it with cider or an oak-aged white wine; or try it with a generous, sweet, thick wine like Pedro Ximénez.

The result of our cheeseboard is a full meal with five varieties of cheese (we will probably have eaten between a hundred and a hundred and fifty grams of cheese), different types of bread, a selection of fruit and fresh vegetables and at least a couple of wines–white crianza (see Glossary on page 130) and young or crianza red.

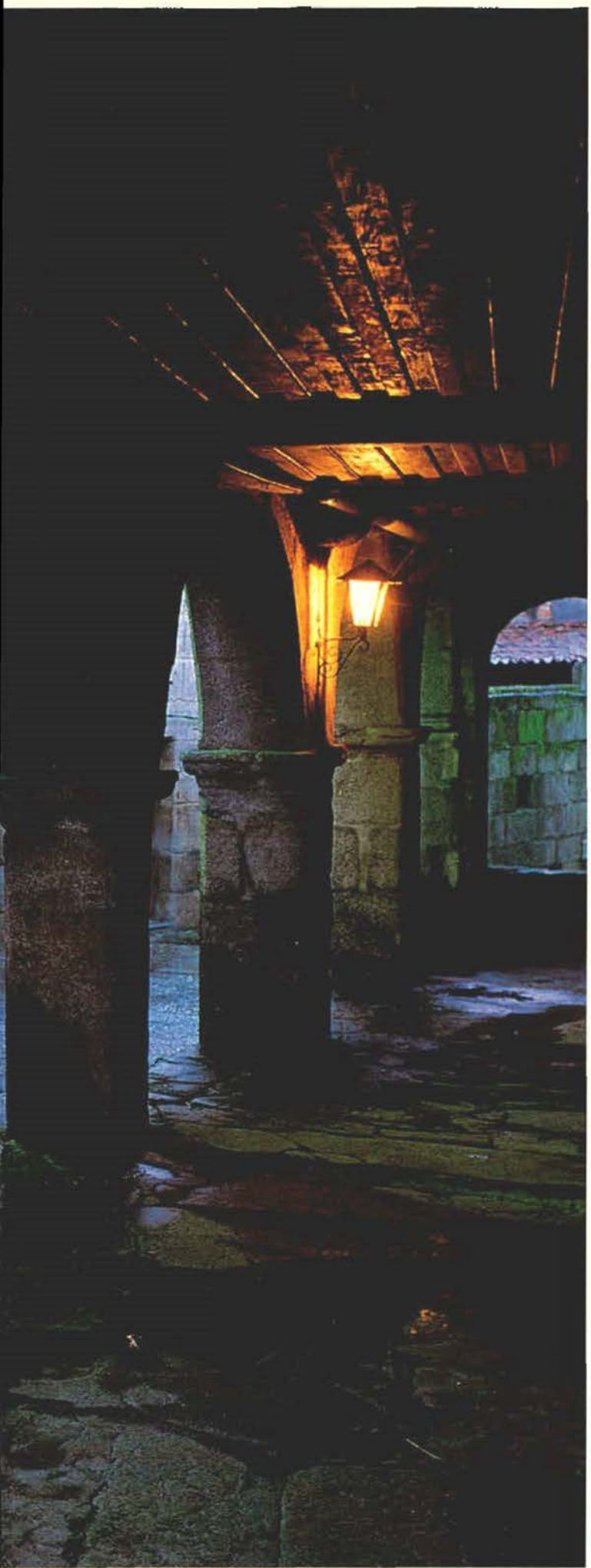
And that's where my story ends!

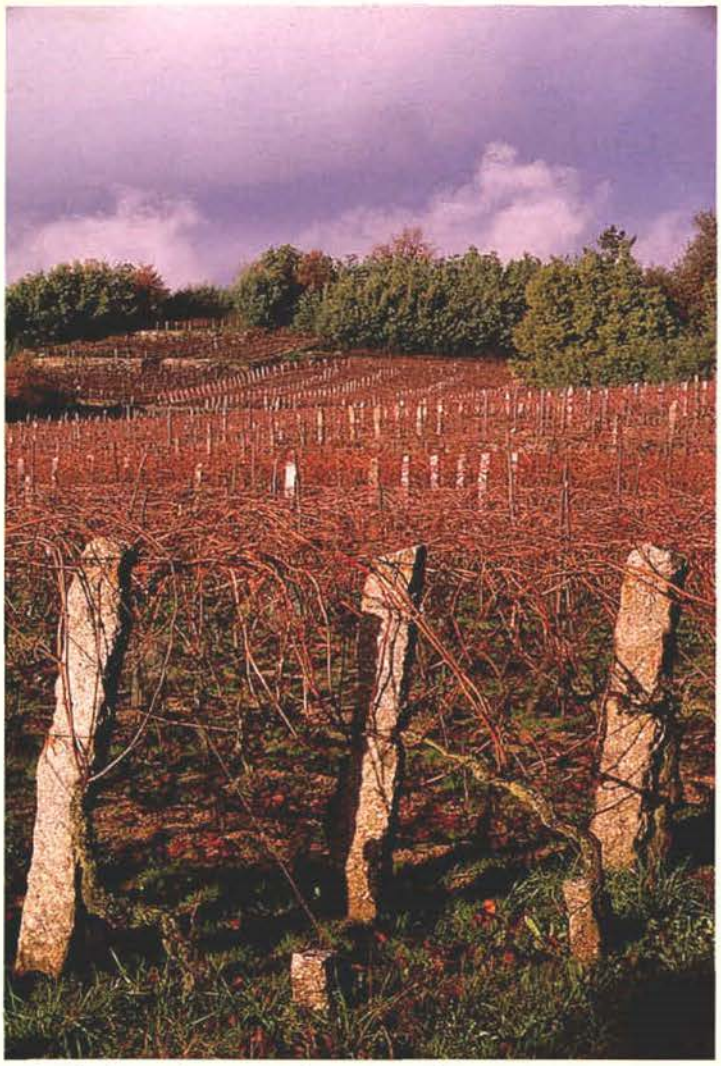
Enric Canut *is an agricultural engineer specialized in dairy farming who has devoted most of his professional life to the world of cheese. He has published two books on the subject and has been a regular contributor to publications specializing in gastronomy for more than a decade.*

In this issue we begin a series of travel routes around Spanish wine regions. Each journey will take readers around one region's *bodegas* and vineyards, exploring the landscapes, culture and character of the people behind the wines on the way. Our first route loops through the vineyards of southern Galicia in the green northwestern tip of the peninsula. Here, in the last twenty years, no less than five denominations have leapfrogged their way from obscurity to an international reputation for producing characterful, cutting-edge wines. The journey starts in the pilgrimage city of Santiago de Compostela, runs down the western Atlantic shores and then cuts east along river valleys and over *sierras* before returning to Santiago along the southern pilgrimage trail. It takes you past fishing ports and Celtic sites, Cistercian monasteries and pilgrimage churches, all set against mesmerizingly green landscapes of the region where they say rain is art.

GALICIA

Text: **Vicky Hayward**
Photos: **Fernando Briones/ICEX**

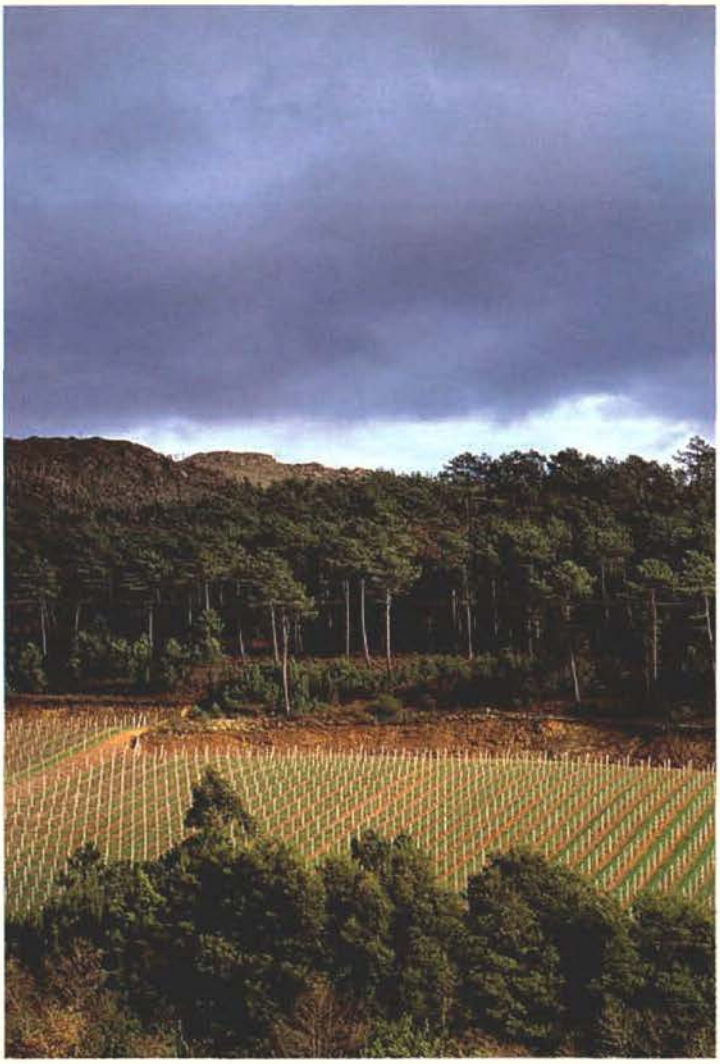




Left: Ribadavia. Above: D.O. Ribeiro vineyards near Leiro.

Wet foliage in the vineyards, scudding clouds above, and legend hanging in the damp sea air. On the road from Santiago to the wine country, vines appear well before the coast. By the time you reach the silted-up port of Padrón they seem to be everywhere, squeezed into gardens and vegetable patches or planted as arbors over porches and pathways, but rarely more than the handful of vines needed to supply a family's needs for the year. The townspeople here say Saint James, patron saint of Spain, preached his first sermon on the hill overlooking the town; from it you can see south over viciously bright green fields to the Ría de Arosa, where the commercial vineyards start. Local legend also tells that the boat which brought St. James' body back to Spain after his death made landfall here, and in the parish church, doors in the altar-front swing open, as if miraculously, to reveal the mooring stone. Wine, too, is magicked into a spiritual affair. "*Dempóis de Dios ¡viva o viño!*"–After God, long live wine!-wrote Rosalía de Castro (1837-85), Galicia's greatest poet, who spent her final years in Padrón. The poem, a conversation between landlord and tenant, goes on:

- *¿E haberá viño na Groria?*
- *¡Coló, coló! -¡Cousa boa!*
- *¡Cólase como xarabe!*
- *Meu compadre, o que ben sabe corre sin trigo nin broa...*
- And would there be wine in Heaven?
- Drink, drink! What a beautiful thing!
- It's as smooth as syrup!
- Oh how it slips down, my friend, with neither wheat nor cornbread...

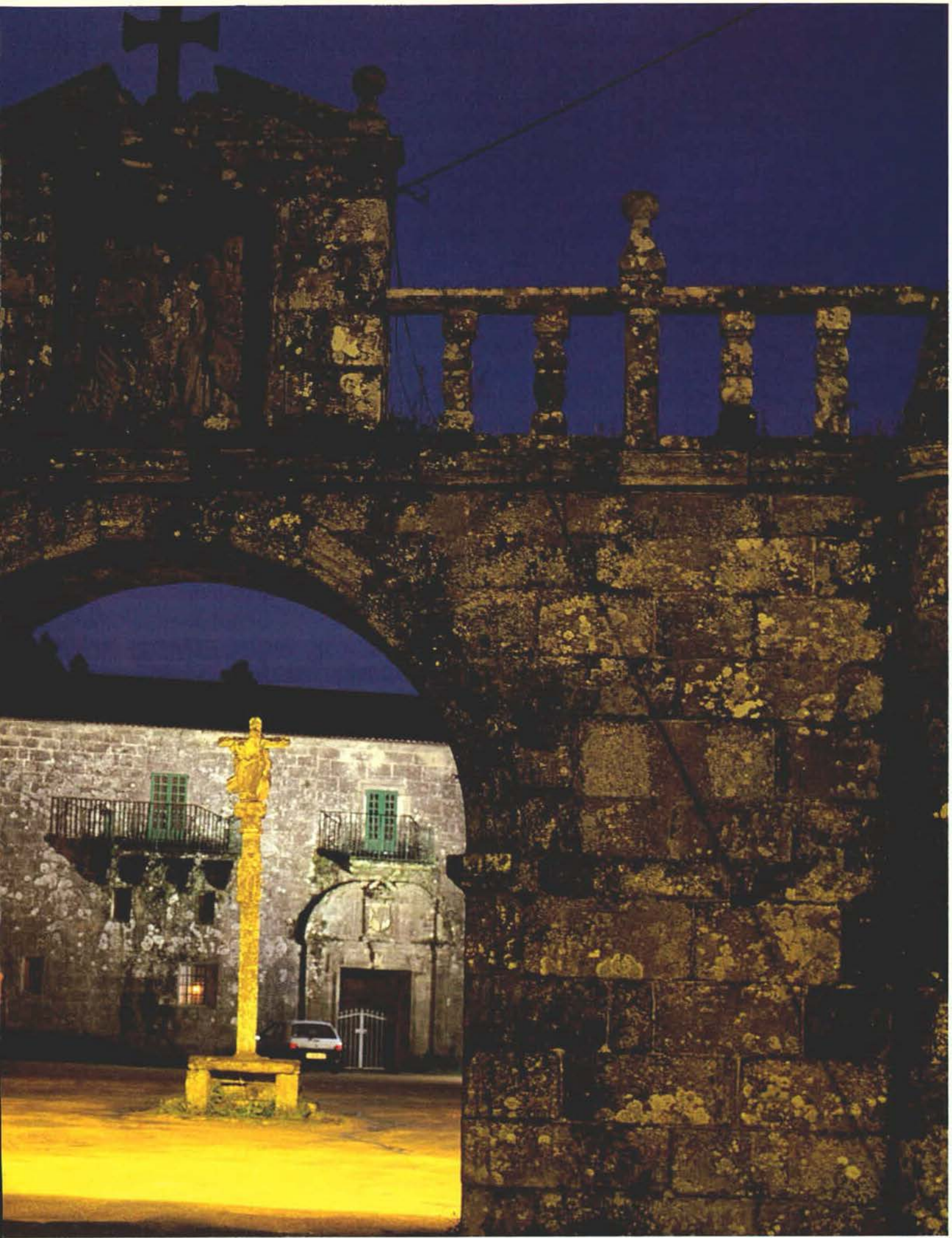


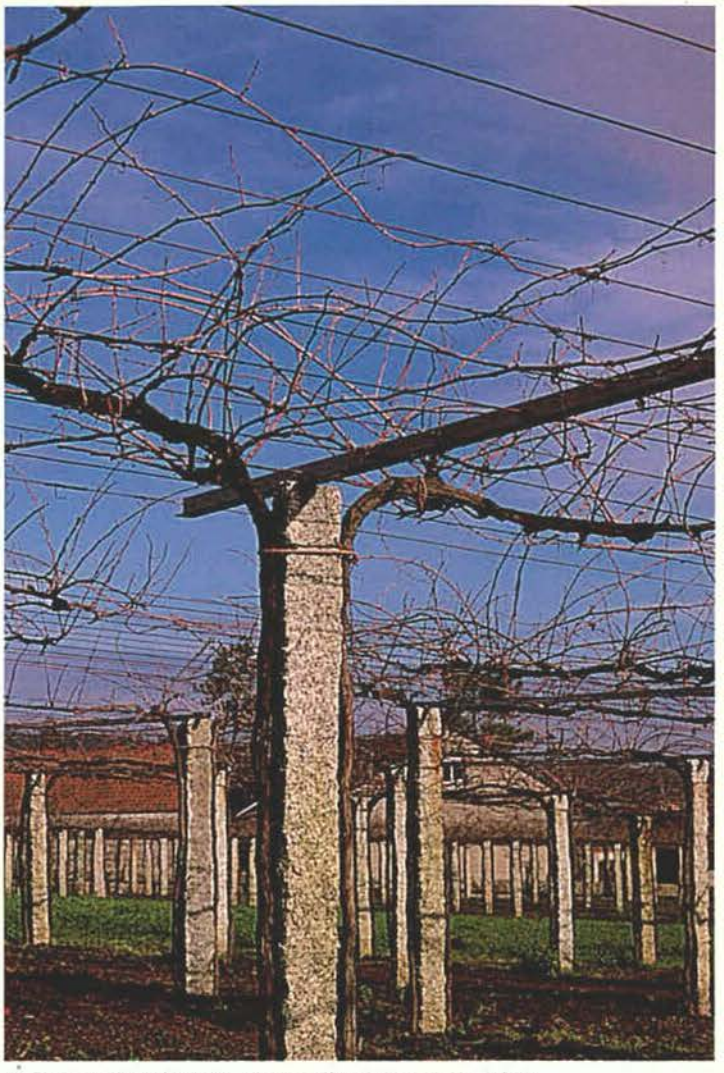
Above: Lagar de Fornelos. Right: Monastery of Armenteira.

The Rías Baixas: Old Grapes, New Wines

Soon after leaving Padrón, you reach the Arosa estuary's glassy waters and cross the northern limit into the first of the Rías Baixas denomination vineyards. The quilt of low rolling fields is crisscrossed by *parrales*, distinctive granite and wire pergolas used along this Atlantic coastline to lift the vines away from the wet earth and towards the sunshine. All the vineyards here are planted with the same native grape, Albariño (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 36), which has grown in this region for at least seven centuries alongside other local varieties whose singsong names dance off your tongue: Treixadura, Caiño, Loureira, Espadeiro and Torrontés. It is these grapes and above all the Albariño, a small thick-skinned type which resists Atlantic damp well, which give the Rías Baixas' luminous white wines their character. Intensely fruity, with lingering aromas reminiscent of a walk through an orchard, they fill every corner of your mouth with flavors running the gamut between sweetness and acidity.

Why, then, did Albariño and the other native varieties take so long to make it onto the world wine map? One simple answer is that until recently the Galicians drank the wines themselves (and they really do drink, an average of 134 liters of wine a year, three times the national average). Also, despite the wines' semimythical reputation based on their scarcity, their high acidity and low alcoholic content

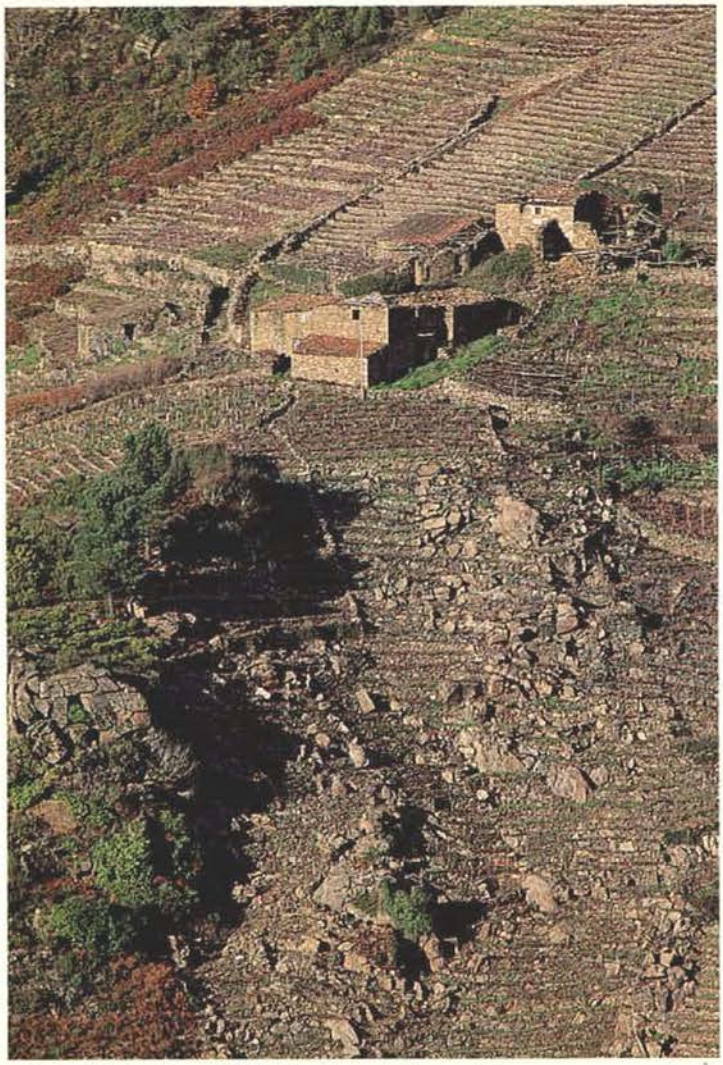


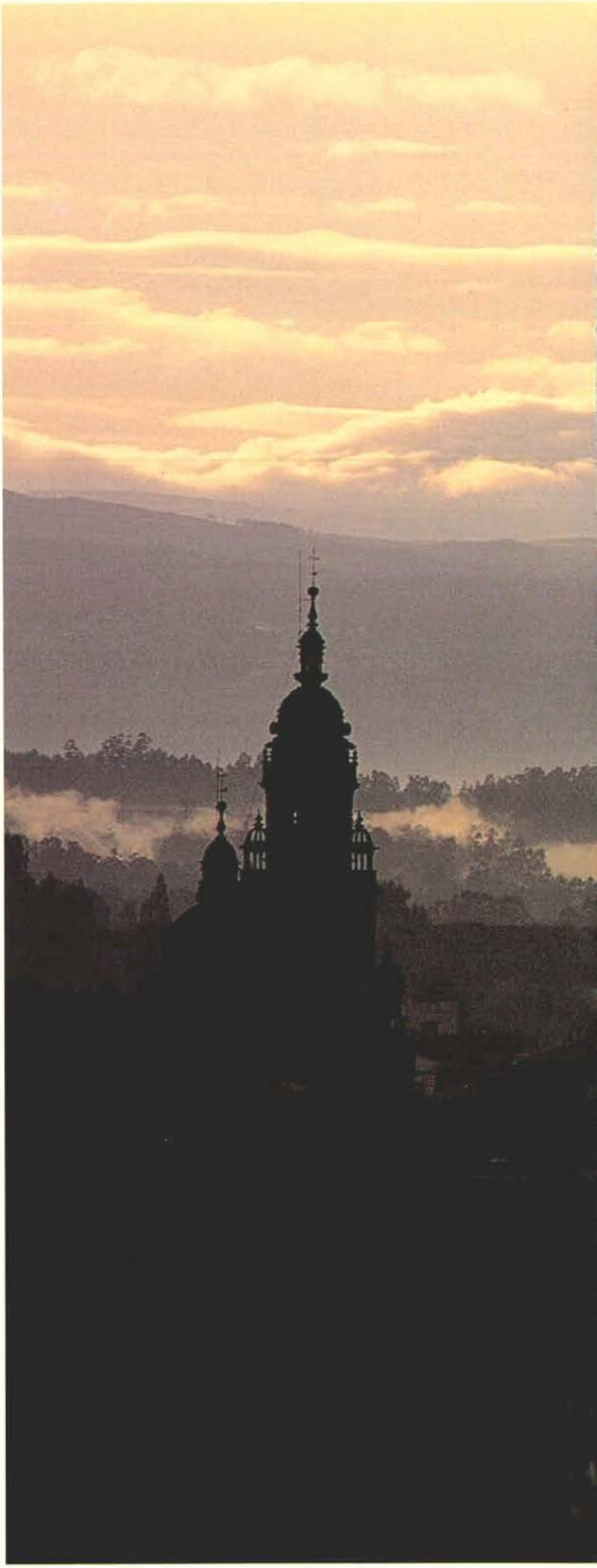


Left: Pazo de Fefiñanes. Above: Albariño vines in Salnés.

often tipped them over the edge to cringingly sharp table wines. In the end, it was the arrival of temperature-controlled steel vats for slow, precise fermentation and chilled stabilizing that allowed the grapes to show their full potential. As pioneering bodegas led the way in the late 1970s, new planting took off spectacularly–over 85 percent of it Albariño–and native grape prices soared.

But it took another decade of work replanting controlled cloned stock for the wines to win full Denomination of Origin (D.O.) status. Finally, in 1988, three growing areas were grouped around the Albariño grape and Atlantic climate: the Salnés Valley, on the left bank of the Arosa estuary; El Rosal, on the lower Spanish reaches of the River Miño, where it forms the frontier with Portugal; and Condado del Tea, higher in the Miño valley. All three areas share broadly similar growing conditions: an Atlantic climate with morning mists, heavy rainfall (around 1,500 mm/59 in annually), lightly acidic soils of eroded granite overlaid with sand or river clay, and similar cultivation techniques. The vines are densely planted, mainly on parrales which bank the vineyards high with green foliage in summer. In winter, after pruning, they convert to steel and stone skeletons. Today, over 1,700 hectares (4,200 acres) of vineyards produce 7 million liters of wine annually (99.6 percent of it white) and the grapes are the most expensive in Spain. Production continues to rise–in fact, it is expected to double in the





Above: Ribeira Sacra. Right: Santiago de Compostela

next decade–since few vineyards have yet reached full maturity and fringe pockets of vineyards are being absorbed into the D.O. all the time.

The Atlantic Vineyards: Valle del Salnés

Once a poor area of fishing villages that lived off subsistence farming and fishing, the bulging Salnés peninsula is the largest of the Rías Baixas three growing areas (1,105 hectares/2,730 acres). The vineyards here are jumbled with eucalyptus woods, classic *minifundios*–smallholdings of cabbage, potato and turnip green fields plus a few fruit trees and vines–and marshlands running down to the sea. To the north and south, the shoreline runs inland along the deep *rías*, or estuaries, which slash the coast. Here there is every type of wine making operation: elegant granite *pazos*, or manor houses, whose owners have made wines in the same bodegas for centuries; new cooperatives with state-of-the-art equipment owned by several hundred growers; and small wineries with limited production of estate-bottled fine wines.

The most architecturally striking of the dozen wine-making pazos is Fefiñanes, a 16th-century palace whose low profile frames one of Galicia's most beautiful squares in the seaside wine capital of Cambados (see page 93). The pazos were always as much farm estates as country palaces and at Fefiñanes the old walled garden and bodega here survive intact. In 1919, the owner, the Marqués de Figueroa, pioneered Albari-

IN THE RIAS BAIXAS, 1,700 HECTARES OF VINEYARDS PRODUCE 7 MILLION LITERS OF WINE, BUT SMALL-SCALE PRODUCTION HELPS TO PRESERVE THE WINES' FRUITY INDIVIDUALITY.

ño vines at a time when imported disease-resistant varieties had swept the board in the wake of phylloxera. He began to make fine wines aged and fermented in wood up to six years, for many years the only ones of their type. Even now, after a late switch to fermentation in steel, a round oakiness remains a Fefiñanes trademark (they use American oak barrels from Jerez). However, today, the current Marqués buys most grapes from other growers to make up the total production of 150,000 liters bottled in early summer.

Bodegas Salnesur, on the other side of town, offers a complete contrast. Founded as a cooperative in 1988, it's one of the denomination's two largest producers, with 341 members and an average annual production of 800,000 liters of wine. From the top of its modern purpose-built bodegas there is a splendid view over eucalyptus forests, vineyards and the ría where it meets the sea. Three different monovarietal Albariños are now produced. One is a classic wine fermented in steel for 20-25 days before clarification, stabilization and microbiotic filtering; the second is a wine aged in Galician oak which emerges with darker flavors; the third is made with macerated fruit to give a wine fairly bursting with feisty flavors and aromas.

Finally, Pazo de Señorans represents a classic *vino de autor*. Rebuilt within the thick stone walls of an old bodega, it produces a domain wine in limited quantities according to the makers' convictions rather than market tastes. Owners Javier Mareque and Marisol Bueno, together with oenologist Ana Quintela, have collected great plaudits for the wine, made from the grapes of fully mature, carefully tended vines grown on inland slopes. Quintela emphasizes the importance of the vineyard's *pie de cuba*–that is, selected natural yeasts cultured from the vineyard's grapes immediately before the harvest and used to kick going fermentation. This, she says, is the key to the wine's final tasting qualities. Delicate but well structured and with a long finish, these wines show the future potential for aging Albariños into *reservas* (see Glossary on page 130).

The contrast between these three Salnés bodegas says much of Galician character and winemaking. Fragmentation makes for endless divided opinion, but also for variety. Over 4,000 growers are registered with the D.O. Rías Baixas and each of the hundred or so bodegas takes a slightly different approach. The main distinctions can be found in El Rosal and Condado del Tea where wines may be blended with other native varieties, but there is also considerable variety in the Salnés, where the Albariño clearly predominates. Some bodegas cold macerate the grapes before pressing; most–but not all–leave the musts to settle before fermentation; a few separate grapes by variety and area for vinification, then blend; some rack the wines once, others up to three or four times before bottling. And as a second generation of wines are coming through in the 1990s, their character is developing again. Many of the young oenologists who design the wines–over half of them women–are experimenting with aging in French, American or Galician oak. Commercial yeasts, which throw up cloyingly strong flavors, have been abandoned and bodegas are also turning away from the secondary malolactic fermentation which adds a sparkly prickliness at the cost of aroma and flavor.

The southern coast road takes you from the vineyards through fishing villages which have grown fat on tourism and contraband: El Grove is a mecca for seafood and fish lovers, La Toja is an elegant *Belle Epoque* spa hotel dating back to Roman times, and Combarro keeps the most picturesque popular architecture, including a lineup of 35 stone granaries on stilts, called *hórreos*, right on the waterside. Behind here a road runs inland to Armenteira's austere 12th-century abbey, which now sprouts bracken and moss from its granite blocks. According to folk history, it was the French monks invited here by Alfonso VII who first planted Riesling-style grapes and these mutated to produce Albariño. In fact, as scientists point out, Galicia's wealth of distinctive varieties–over a hundred are planted today–could not have evolved in so few centuries. And, in any case, evidence of wild grape pips on Celtic archaeological sites and Roman wine presses in Valdeorras suggests they evolved slowly as hybrids of indigenous wild vines and varieties imported from Roman times onwards.

But it is clearly no coincidence that wherever there is a Cistercian monastery here, good vineyards are close to hand. The Burgundian monks, skilled viticulturalists, not only made their own wine, but also substantial profits from selling it to city taverns. Santiago fed and watered half a million pilgrims a year at its height in late medieval times–"walk the road with bread and wine" ran one pilgrims' saying–and even small market towns had their *calles de vino* or wine streets, encouraged by the town councils to avoid the drinking of infected water. They survive in many towns. Nearby Pontevedra (see page 94) has some of the most characterful bars for trying country wines, served blood red or straw yellow against white porcelain *tazas*, or cups.

These bars are great places to tap into traditional foods: Padrón's tiny spicy hot green peppers, served fried and salted; shellfish from the estuaries, steamed with their juices or cold in *salpicón* salads; *pulpo a feira*, boiled octopus from the Atlantic, sprinkled with sea salt, spicy, hot paprika and olive oil; tangy soft cow's milk cheeses, chorizo sausages and ham from the pazos and minifundios; and, finally, country sourdough bread made with rye or cornmeal and delicious flat *empanada* pies with every kind of filling from scallops to pork and peppers, from the bakers' wood-fired ovens.

GALICIA'S WEALTH OF GRAPE VARIETIES–OVER A HUNDRED ARE PLANTED TODAY–EVOLVED AS HYBRIDS BETWEEN NATIVE WILD VINES AND THOSE IMPORTED FROM ROMAN TIMES.

South to the River Miño: El Rosal and Condado del Tea

The road from Valle del Salnés to El Rosal and Condado del Tea runs down the coast past the humming city of Vigo, Spain's most important fishing port (see page 94). Here you can veer off along the coastal road. South of Bayona you finally hit open countryside with broad horizons. The fields are gentle and dotted with *meidas*, teepees of maize leaves, but the seas beat against a wild coastline. It is said by the Galicians that every wave carries the soul of a sailor who has died, so many boats have been lost in the swell or smashed against the rocks. The graceful Cistercian monastery of Santa María de Oya (1185) is perched right on the cliffs before the countryside softens again at La Guardia (see page 94), the quiet fishing port at the mouth of the River Miño. Known for its lobster, it has a clutch of unpretentious restaurants for eating great seafood plainly cooked in the Galician way. The great Miño Valley, which carves a deep channel diagonally through central Galicia, quite literally shapes the Rosal and Condado vineyards. Both are smaller growing areas than Salnés–234 and 391 hectares (578 and 966 acres) respectively–but have longer traditions of winemaking and a stronger emphasis on *terroir*. The Rías Baixas denomination recognizes this by allowing bodegas in both areas to make traditional wines in which Albariño is blended with other native varieties–in Rosal's case, 25-30 percent of Loureiro, Caiño Blanco and Treixadura and in Condado's case, up to 30 percent of Treixadura, Torrontés, and Loureiro. For many wine lovers the greater complexity gives these wines an edge over the monovarietals. Combinations vary. In El Rosal, the signature grape is Loureiro, which gives a green, herby aroma reminiscent of bay leaf; in Condado del Tea, it is the flowery Treixadura and bitter Torrontés.

Rosal has the mildest climate of the two areas. The south-facing slopes running along the northern bank of the Miño estuary get 200 more hours of sunshine a year than Salnés and give ideal ripening. The bodegas here are also marked by Santiago Ruiz, whose success in pioneering fine regional wines twenty years ago is still quoted (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 26). Most bodegas here have followed his line. Lagar de Fornelos, for example, was set up as a winery in 1982 around an old farm and has been steadily expanding its vineyards in order to produce a domain Albariño. Ángel Suárez, who runs the bodega and vineyards for a Riojan group, has planted high on the slopes away from river mists and preferably on forest land to cut pests. Back at the riverside bodega in the valley below there is an old press installed in the farmhouse and a wonderful distillery, where six traditional copper stills make double-distilled 45 percent proof *aguardiente de orujo*–a white grape spirit like *grappa* or *marc*–from the pulp and pips left after pressing. This is bottled three ways: as a dry, young white spirit, or flavored with herbs to a deceptively soft, sweet green, or mellowed by a year's aging in oak in the Portuguese style. Such is the boom in aguardiente sales throughout Spain that it is now made by most Galician bodegas. Beware of its deceptively gentle palate. Just a few gulps at 50 percent proof can knock you off your feet.

Adegas das Eiras, another young Rosal winery built in its own vineyards, puts a similar emphasis on making wines as much on the plant as in the bodega. They use few pesticides and organic manuring, select grapes on the vine, and ferment the musts of each variety and parcel separately. Joaquín Álvarez Martínez, who cares for the vineyards, rescued the Caiño Blanco grape from virtual oblivion and today it gives their delicious blended Rosal wine an unmistakable peachy muskiness.

Condado's vineyards are separated from those of Rosal by only a dozen or so kilometers of river, but in that short journey upriver the Miño narrows from a wide estuary to a twisting valley (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 40). By the time it reaches the hilltop town of Tuy (see page 94 and *Spain Gourmetour* No. 29), capital of Galicia in Visigothic times, the river is slender enough to be spanned by a boxed metal bridge running over to the Portuguese fortress town of Valença. Further upriver, where Condado's vineyards start, temperatures rocket in summer on the valley floor and the grapes may be harvested as early as August. The bodegas here are among Galicia's most picturesque. At Pazo San Mauro, near Salvatierra de Miño, the lands curve down like an open scallop shell on the river bank, and the best of the old has been preserved alongside the new: a lovely 16th-century farmhouse and chapel, water straight from source, stone tanks where lamprey caught in the river once swam in spring. The vines grow on L-shaped stone posts, with each variety planted at the height of the slope that best suits it. Once inside the old stone bodega, you find it almost entirely renovated. Here, they make a pure Albariño and a classic blended *Blanco Condado del Tea*, given its distinctive bitter elegance by 5 percent Torrontés.

Since it is still difficult to find a large range of Condado wines outside the region, it is worth dropping off at several bodegas as you drive east through the vineyards. In the spring fishing season, you may be lucky enough to find the region's great gastronomic specialty, lamprey, cooked the old way with spices and wine, in the restaurants at Arbo. It even holds an annual lamprey festival late in April. But, in any case, the drive up the valley is worth it for the landscape alone. You might doubt Galicians' belief that rain is art, but it is certainly true of the Miño's mists. In the mornings, they snake along the valley, curl sensuously up the slopes, then break like silent waves over the mountains.

THE IMPRINT OF RIBEIRO'S LONG WINE HISTORY ON ITS LANDSCAPE AND CULTURE MAKES IT GREAT TRAVELING COUNTRY FOR WINE LOVERS.

D.O. Ribeiro: Signs of Renaissance

Ribeiro's long winemaking history has some good anecdotes attached to it. One, told by 14th-century French chronicler Froissart, is that John of Gaunt's archers were left helpless for two days by drinking its "ardent" wines. The Napoleonic troops who passed through here centuries later supposedly made the same mistake. Both lots must have got drunk on the *tostados*, powerfully sweet wines made with sun-dried grapes and exported around half of Europe for several centuries. The first leg of the journey down to the coast was made by oxcart or river raft. Then, from the 18th century, the vineyards entered a long decline: foreign wine merchants moved on to Oporto, the vines were devastated by phylloxera, and the high-yield imported varieties planted in their stead made country wines rarely worth bottling.

It is only in the last twenty years that the Denomination of Origin, set up in 1932, has begun to lift its head thanks to independent winemakers' insistence on a return to native grapes and quality. Now, 20 percent of the 2,600 hectares (6,400 acres) of Denomination-registered vineyards in the Avia, Arnoia and Miño valleys are planted with old varieties: among them Godello and Albariño, Treixadura, Loureiro and Torrontés (for whites); Mencía, Caiño, Ferrón, Brancellao and Sousón (for reds). The giant industrial bodegas which account for most production–the Cooperativa de Ribeiro, for example, produces an annual 7 million liters of wine–are also following suit with small quantities of quality wine. At the same time, the 50 or so registered *colleteiros*, small vineyard owners making wine from just their own grapes, are also cautiously replanting, largely on the dryer and sunnier uplands away from the river mists below.

Perhaps because the quality bodegas were a minority breaking out in a new direction, they are making highly individual wines. At Viña Meín, a spacious restored farmhouse and bodega set in its own vineyards, the emphasis is on letting the wine take its time. The grapes–Loureiro, Torrontés, Albariño and Godello–are harvested slowly, patch by patch, stripped of their stalks and cold macerated. The musts, graded but not decanted, are then slowly fermented in separate batches for up to seven weeks at 15-18°C (59-64°F) before being left to mature on steel for at least six weeks–and for as long as nine months. Bottling is left as late as possible, with just enough wine kept in hand to supply orders, and the wine is racked off five to six times to remove impurities. The result is an exceptional wine, heavily aromatic and straw gold, lively but honeyed, which has shown itself capable of keeping for at least two years. Owner Javier Alen–a Madrid lawyer–and on-site director Ricardo Vázquez are now vinifying the first vintage of a red wine from the Caiño grape matured in oak. If Ribeiro can look to the standards being set here and in other independent bodegas–such as those of Emilio Rojo, Arsenio Paz (Vilerma) or Luis Angel Rodríguez Vázquez (Viña Martín)–the next generation of wines could show a spectacular broad-based renaissance.

At the same time, the imprint of Ribeiro's wine history on its landscape and culture make it great traveling country for wine lovers. Ribadavia's medieval quarter, fit for a major city, was built with wine wealth (see page 93 for details) and sits in a bowl of steeply terraced hillsides shored up by *sucalcos* (dry-stone walls) where the vines are lifted high from the ground on stone supports or chestnut stakes. At harvest time they swarm with growers' families, carrying vast open-mouthed baskets carried on their backs and heads. One of the two 12th-century monasteries, Melón and San Clodio, which planted many of the vineyards, may be visited. And basement bodega bars sell wine tapped straight off the barrel with local food such as the sweet cured ham, fried river fish, *lacon con grelos* (boiled ham with turnip greens), or even lamprey empanada if it's in season. If the night is long, don't forget John of Gaunt's archers. Today only one bodega makes tostado and the other wines rarely rise above 12°, but you are sure to be offered the local aguardiente, famously described by a Cooperativa de Ribeiro brochure as "a drink which taken by itself requires three men to a glass: one to drink it and two friends to support him."

Towards Castile: Monterrei

Galicia's youngest Denomination of Origin takes you back close to the Portuguese border, but this time to the region's southeastern tip. Rusty red soils and wide horizons, burning summer sun and frequent winter frosts give an air of neighboring Castile, but the landscape is softened by chestnut woods, pine groves and abundant rivers. In the gently sloping vineyards, spaciously planted bush vines grow low as in central Spain. Above them perches the 15th-century castle of Monterrei (see page 93), splendidly atmospheric, which both protected the sweep of the Tamega valley where pilgrims passed from central Spain and controlled the price and quality of wines made on local monastery and feudal estates.

Today there are some 3,000 hectares (7,400 acres) of vineyards in the area, but only three bodegas are registered with the new denomination, approved after several hiccups, in 1995. It permits a mix of old grape varieties: the most characteristic are Palomino, Doña Blanca and Godello for white wines and Mencía, black Godello and Tinta Fina for reds. Two bodegas are cooperatives, which buy grapes from a large number of growers. The third, José Luis Vaz Vilera of Adegas Ladairo, is a pioneering independent producer who inherited a family bodega and just a few vineyards, but expanded and replanted with regional grape varieties showing good results else-

MONTERREI WINES ARE HARD TO FIND EVEN ON GALICIAN WINE LISTS, BUT PRODUCERS ARE DETERMINED TO PUT THE DENOMINATION ON THE MAP.

where. It took him over a decade to hit upon the right blend for his bouncy Ladairo white wine, first bottled in 1992: 50 percent Godello–a grape already flourishing in Valdeorras (see article on page 97)–40 percent Treixadura plus 5 percent each of Loureiro and the local Doña Blanca. Now his work is paying off. The wine, poised midway between Galicia's fruity flavors and central Spanish body and dryness, is a consistent regional prizewinner. He also makes a young red, finished in oak, using 75 percent Mencía and 25 percent Tempranillo.

While these are still new wines little known outside the Monterrei area, Vaz Vilera is determined to put Monterrei on the map. In the newly expanded bodega, he and oenologist Álvaro Bueno constantly experiment with new blends and vinification in a series of miniature steel vats. As he samples a rosé made in small quantities this year with Cabernet Sauvignon, Mencía and Godello, he quotes his motto. *"Si el dueño es serio, el vino también."* In other words, a wine can only be as serious as its maker.

North to the River Sil: Valdeorras Gold

Easterly Valdeorras may be the first place where wine was made in Galicia. The Romans struck gold here and while the slaves mined they also built roads and bridges–two of which still stand at Petín and el Barco–and planted vines. A 4th-century wine press has been found at Fontei while the Latin inscription on a marble slab elsewhere mentions the wines by name. Valdeorras: valley of gold. The Sil cuts a long east-west corridor here between sierras which protect its warm microclimate. Summer sunshine is balanced by winter rains. Chestnuts grow alongside olives and lemons, and in summer the hillsides blaze yellow and purple with gorse and heather.

Renovation also began here before anywhere else. In the early 1970s agricultural researchers discovered that the native Godello grape, then on the point of disappearing, could be cloned to produce an improved early variety before rot. The first varietal Godello was made in 1976 and the following year the Valdeorras Denomination of Origin was set up, with Godello and Mencía as the defining grapes for white and red wines. Extensive replanting began on high slopes away from the intense valley heat and now over 20 bodegas produce a clutch of fine wines. The Mencía tintos, cherry red to purple, are fresh and light with plenty of tannin while Godello whites are straw gold, perfumed, with well-balanced acidity and full aromas. The whites are now rated among the finest in Spain and this year carried off the sommeliers' prizes for both young and mature whites.

The winery which scooped both prizes, Senén Guitián–also known as Finca La Tapada–was the lifetime dream of architect Ramón Guitián, who redesigned the family bodega around ideas developed with his friend and ace oenologist, José Hidalgo. Initially the vineyards, just nine hectares (22 acres) high on the slaty slopes, were completely replanted with Godello. Then they rebuilt the bodega, modest on the outside but beautifully designed around function inside. Split-levels allow the newly harvested grapes to drop to the press and the musts to pass from there by gravity. Very cool fermentation for eight to ten weeks and maturing for at least six months take place in separate enclosed areas to cut noise to a minimum. Bottling begins in June, but the wine is then left to rest for another month. There is the same attention to detail in the vineyard, with each harvest followed by soil and leaf analysis to trace any deficiencies. In 1995 the Guitiáns' dedication produced two memorable wines, one matured in oak for eight months, which have picked up a clutch of international prizes. Sadly, Ramón Guitián died last year in a car accident. But his brother and sister continue making the wines with José Hidalgo's help. This is a bodega to watch. And surely, if Rosalía de Castro is right, Ramón is now drinking wine in heaven.

Down the Sil Valley: the Ribeira Sacra

Ribeira Sacra's red wines also date from Roman times. Or rather, it is said the spiced wines of Amandi were so highly prized that they were dispatched to Caesar along with lamprey from the River Miño. Remarkably, winemaking in Amandi is still on a farmhouse scale, with each bodega making just a few thousand bottles. The grapes are organically grown on tiny strips of land scattered around the Sil Valley, whose slopes run from steep to precipitous. It is not that the wines are unappreciated–they have recuperated their classical fame since chestnut barrels were ousted by steel vats and today the best ones sell out direct to restaurants within a couple of months. But the quantities are limited by the unique landscape needed for the best wines: their intense flavors and high alcoholic content come from the condensed heat of the sun where the valley narrows almost to a gorge and, more precisely, the very best grapes grow only on the spurs of south-facing slopes which receive long hours of direct sunlight. These, the most intensively cultivated, are considered by experts like British wine importer Simon Loftus, among the world's great vineyards. As you drive through, or travel by boat up the river, these densely cultivated areas make a dizzying abstract landscape that represents centuries of hard toil.

It is this unique geography, partly manmade, which still gives Amandi a special fame within the much larger demarcated Ribeira Sacra growing area of 2,000 hectares (4,940 acres) scattered along the banks of the rivers Miño and Sil. Many of the vineyards were planted by the string of Romanesque monasteries built in spectacular sites above the river between the 8th

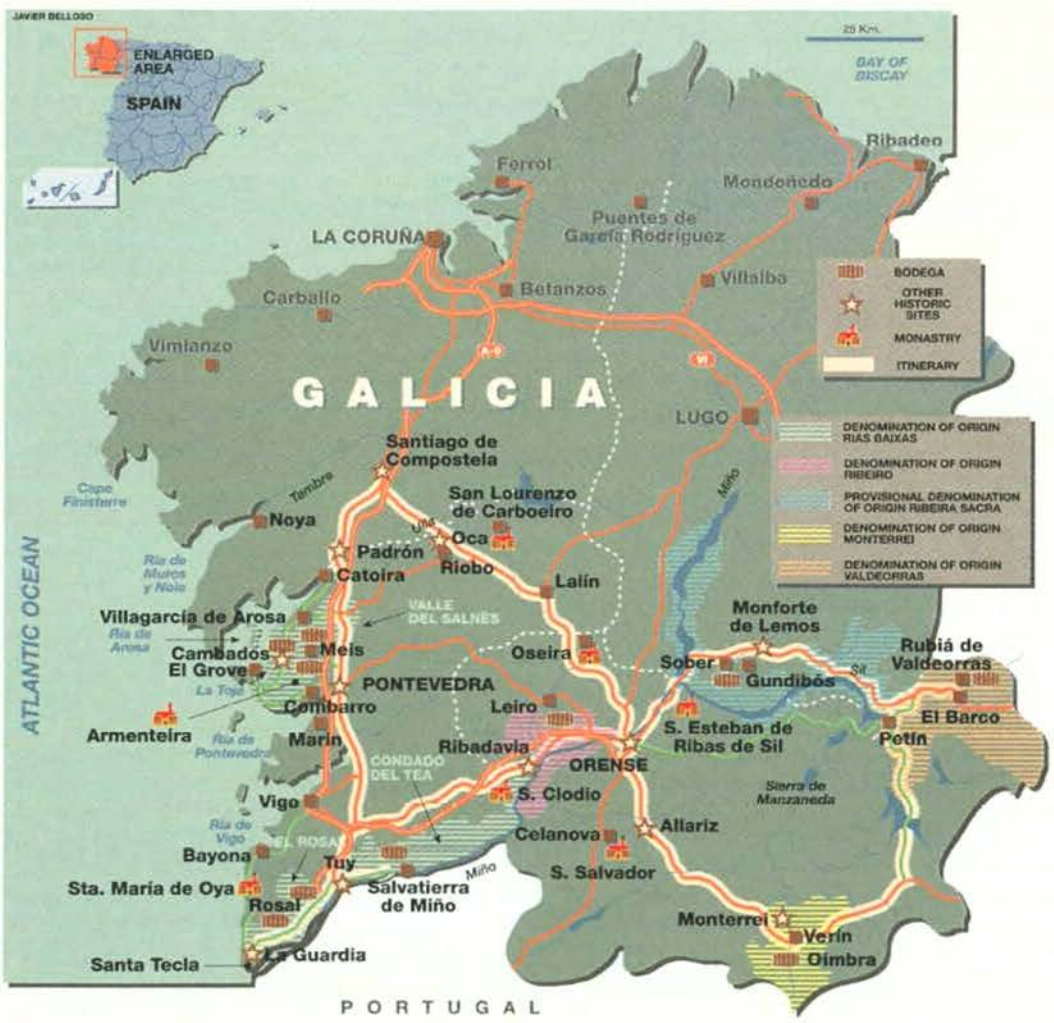
and 12th centuries (see page 93). Hence the name Ribeira Sacra–literally the Sacred Riverbank–now in the process of being upgraded from a regional to national D.O. It is split into five subzones, which share the same definitions for monovarietal reds and whites–based on Mencía and Godello–and for blended wines. Most wines are Mencía reds, but a few bodegas are also making outstanding Albariños. Growers' main problem here is limited access to the vineyards by footpath or from the river. They hope that with Denomination of Origin status, the Ribeira Sacra growers will win subsidies to help mechanize cultivation and harvesting while holding on to traditional organic methods such as manuring with furze dug into the soil.

José Rodríguez Gómez, who won first prize at the Santiago Cata de Vinos, the regional wine tasting, last year, is a typical maker. He produces some 12,000 bottles a year–mainly red–alongside milk and vegetables. His couple of hectares of vineyards can be reached only on foot. After harvesting his grapes with his sons in mid-September, he crushes the fruit then ferments the pulp in steel before racking and bottling early in summer. Of all the Galician wines, those from Ribeira Sacra are the hardest to find and your best chance of tasting a selection of the best is to make a special trip to the Amandi wine fiesta on Palm Sunday.

In Pilgrims' Steps: Orense to Santiago

From Ribeira Sacra, it is a short journey back to Santiago de Compostela along the southern pilgrimage route from Salamanca. Orense (see page 93) has a fine cathedral and keeps its Roman bridge where the pilgrims crossed the Miño for centuries. In the nearby market, kiosks sell wonderful country bread: yellow cornbread, grey rye, and nut or raisin studded loaves sold in heavy slabs. The road lopes on from here past a string of villages and Romanesque churches. At Oseira (see page 93), you can visit the earliest Cistercian monastery still standing in Galicia (1137). Its original, gracious minimalism expressing St. Bernard's reform of the over-worldly monastic life, is overlaid with local Muslim detail and gilded baroque clutter, but it is still beautiful. Once you have crossed the River Ulla and passed the most beautiful of Galicia's manor houses at Oca (see page 94), the pilgrims' final destination soon comes into sight, its twin baroque belfries piercing the skyline.

Santiago de Compostela (see page 93) is a pleasure to explore, not just for its historic monuments but also as a living market town packed with food shops, restaurants and quiet squares or alleyways running around the Cathedral. Only once you are inside the Cathedral's honeyed baroque shell does its true medieval spirit reveal itself. In front of the high altar dangles the outsize incense burner, or *botafumeiro*, which has swung over millions of pilgrims' heads. As you stand under it, with St. James' tomb just a few feet away, you cannot miss the carved decoration on the gilded columns around the high altar: a mass of intertwined vines with fat bunches of grapes tumbling down on all sides.



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See exporters of Galician products on page 11 and recipes on page 98 .

Traditional shellfish farming in the Ría de Arosa near Carril.

HARVESTING THE SEA

Seafood abounds wherever you go in Galicia. Even far inland, piles of shellfish lie on beds of ice in restaurant windows and the scallop shell, symbol of the Santiago pilgrims, lurks in the shadows of every pilgrimage church. Along the western coast many more scallop shells are used to seal houses against the damp; they gleam there like fish scales in the ocean light. For the Galicians harvest the sea as intensively as they do the land. In winter, crowds of women take to the sands, bending low to dig out the clams and cockles they seed earlier in the year. Much greater risks are taken by the *percebeiros,* the hunters of goosenecked barnacles, since the best come from rough tidal waters; these are the highest-prized shellfish on Spanish menus.

In the 1860s this age-old harvesting by hand changed scale after the first fish-canning factories were built along the *rías.* Soon the old exports–salted herrings and marinated oysters packed in barrels–were ousted by summer-fished sardines steamed and preserved in olive oil. Today more than 80 brick chimneys belch out steam from coastal factories and Galicia produces over 60 percent of Spain's canned fish and shellfish. In the ports, over 20,000 boats land a million tons of fish a year. The sardine fleet, based at Vigo, remains the mainstay of the canning industry but since canned preserves have moved upmarket, traditional dishes such as mussels or oysters marinated in *escabeche,* have also come back as a specialty. Finally, in the 1940s, intensive farming of the western rías began. The first mussel-growing platforms were built along Japanese lines. Today the *rías* of the west coast are dotted with them, bobbing around like oriental houseboats (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 39). The long ropes dangling into plankton-rich waters below yield 56 kilos of mussels per square meter and an annual harvest of some 70,000 tons. Oysters, clams, scallops and seaweed are now cultivated in the same way, the young shells or plants, stuck to the ropes with cement and then left to grow for the best part of a year. Some of the harvest is frozen or canned, but much goes straight to the local restaurants where shellfish lovers eat their way through vast platefuls, called *mariscadas,* washed down by the local wine. One Galician food writer suggests beginners should don a plastic raincoat rather than tuck a napkin under their chins before attacking a mariscada, such are the spurts of juice from the sea's harvest.

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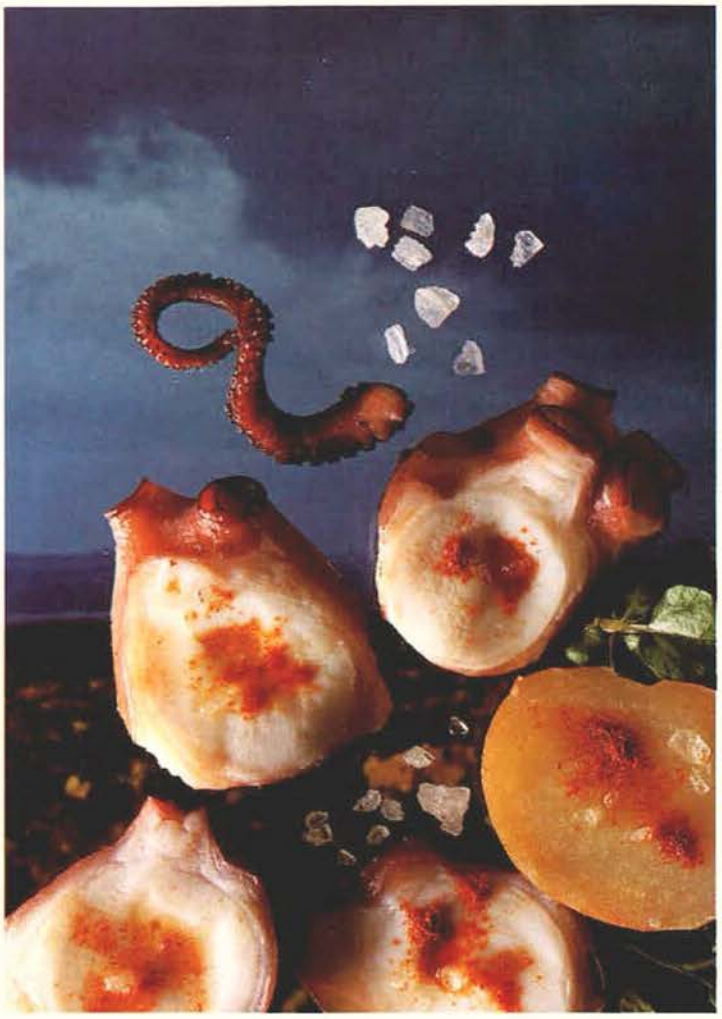

A. DE BENITO/ICEX

Seafood abounds wherever you go in Galicia: one of the classic dishes is boiled octopus.

GALICIAN MENUS AND WINE LISTS

Galicia's cooking has traveled far around the world along with the Galician emigrants, but it's hard to capture its ancestral flavors away from home territories. For the main idea is simply to take the best local produce, whether potatoes or oysters, and cook it simply but superbly to bring out the flavors just as they are. One Galician food writer, Jorge Victor Sueiro, put it this way, "At a glance you can see that we Galicians basically boil and bake, and next we put things in pies. Then, but less so, we casserole and roast." Of course the apparent simplicity of classic Galician dishes–such as boiled octopus, steamed clams, hake baked with a sprinkling of parsley and a squeeze of lemon, a ham pot-boiled with greens, a scallop pie or potatoes casseroled with *chorizo* sausage–is deceptive. Galicians know this. So humble dishes are placed with respect at the top of the smartest menus and even the most experimental modern cooks respect the notion of pure, unadorned flavors.

As Galicia's vineyards have flourished in the last decade, so its restaurateurs have paid growing attention to their wine lists. A sommeliers' association was founded in 1994 and even restaurants which don't make a feature of their cellar usually have a dozen or more local wines on offer. Indeed, with demand outstripping supply for many small vineyards, sharp-eyed local restaurants are sometimes the only place to try wines. (And it's not outrageously expensive to drink this way. Markups, rarely above 25 percent, are less than elsewhere.) Most restaurant lists now give key details: the Denomination of Origin, subzone, bodega, vintage and, most important in this region, the grape varieties.

Vintage is likely to become more important. "Most wines are currently drunk within two years," comments Alfredo Álvarez, president of the sommeliers' association, "but it is becoming clear that some of the good wines, especially those slowly fermented or matured in oak, can improve in the bottle for longer." He sells over 30 regional wines at Casa Alfredo, a combined restaurant and *vinoteca* he runs with his wife, just outside Vigo. For raw or plain shellfish he recommends the monovarietal Albariños; for the richer flavors of crab, fish and shellfish, the fuller-bodied southern wines from El Rosal or Condado del Tea.

Lluis Llorden, who buys the wines for Sibaris restaurant in Santiago, stresses that improved wine lists reflect the rising standards of the region's winemakers in the 1990s. "If the story of the 1980s was quality, that of the 1990s is the search for excellence and personality." He suggests that if you are trying Galicia's heftily flavored country dishes with their classic *ajada* of paprika, garlic and olive oil, you try the fuller inland wines such as oak-matured varietal Godello whites from Valdeorras, Ribeira Sacra's punchy young reds made with Mencía grapes, or a Ribeiro from native grapes such as the Treixadura.

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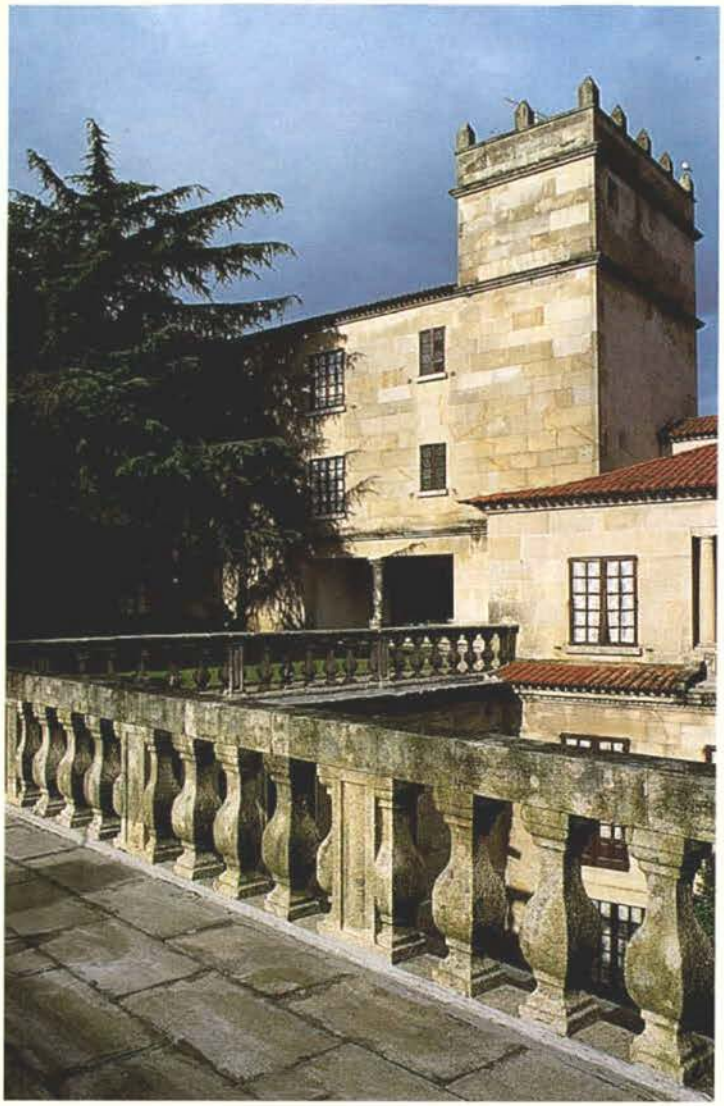


The Parador Hotel is situated right in the old quarter of Pontevedra.

PARADORES

A CITY MANOR HOUSE:

THE CASA DEL BARON

Pontevedra's wealth as a medieval port has left its mark in the city's old quarter, yet it still has a remarkably countrified air. Paved streets lined by shops and old-fashioned bars lead between stone *cruceiros*, or calvaries more often found as country crossroad-markers, and weather-beaten manor houses. One of the largest, the 18th-century Baron's House, is now a parador hotel where you can sleep and eat in historic style in the heart of the old town. The sights are within a stone's throw: to one side stands the lovely 16th-century Basilica de Santa María, where elegant twisted and notched columns fly up to ribbed and rosetted vaulting; to the other, are the pier and bridge where pilgrims crossed the river Lérez on their way to Santiago. Near here stood the shipyards where Columbus' ship, the Santa María, was built. The Basilica's delicately carved stonework was paid for by the mariners' guild, who held a monopoly on the coastal trade in fresh and salted fish, citrus fruit and wine. The last vestiges of that trade make for a splendid old two–story market. Cows' milk cheeses shaped like fat breasts and country breads are on the top floor. Downstairs flower sellers surround a spectacular array of shellfish. "Pontevedra is a farmstead which grows crabs and cockles," wrote locally born novelist Camilo José Cela, Nobel Prize winner in 1989. And much more produce from the sea, too. You can try spider and swimming crabs, baby and jumbo shrimp, clams, octopus, squid, and oysters in the parador dining room. Country and town, land and sea, food and architecture all meet here. Next to the dining room stands the old stone *lar*, or hearth, where the soup cauldron would have hung when this was a riverside farm. On the menu, alongside the shellfish, you will find *caldo gallego*, the classic Galician soup–still a staple dish in winter–and *filloas*, or pancakes, stuffed with egg custard and flavored with *aguardiente* grape spirit (see recipe on page 115). In summer, doors open onto a garden where the trickling water of a fountain provides a reminder of the river around which the city grew.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISITING BODEGAS

Although many bodegas are happy to show visitors round whenever they turn up, it's best to phone ahead to check you'll be welcome. Two tips: a detailed map is handy, as many of the bodegas are hidden in a web of country lanes, and it's a good idea to go with a Spanish speaker if you're really interested in learning about the wines. Some bodegas charge for tasting if no wine is bought.

HOW TO CONTACT BODEGAS

The Rías Baixas D.O. publishes a free pamphlet listing its wine routes (*Rutas del Vino*). It includes 40 bodegas–some with vineyard visits–who collaborate. Ribadavia tourist office helps arrange Ribeiro D.O. visits. For other areas, you need to contact the D.O. offices for a listing–there are well over 150 Galician bodegas producing D.O. wine–and then make contact direct.

DENOMINATION OF ORIGIN OFFICES

Monterrei D.O.: c/o Ayto. de Monterrei, 32618 Albarellos, Lugo. Tel/Fax: (34-88) 41 80 02
Rias Baixas D.O.: Centro de Ap de Cabanas, 36143 Salcedo, Pontevedra. Tel: (34-86) 85 48 50, Fax: (34-86) 85 45 46
Ribeira Sacra D.O.: Plaza de España, 24700 Monforte de Lemos, Lugo.
Tel: (34-82) 41 09 68;
Fax: (34-82)41 12 65
Ribeiro D.O.: Bajada de Oliveira s/n, 32400 Ribadavia, Orense Tel: (34-88) 47 10 15, Fax: (34-88) 47 13 52
Valdeorras D.O.: Ctr. Nacional 120, km 643, 32340, Villamartín, Orense Tel (34-88) 30 02 95, Fax: (34-88) 30 02 05

FEATURED BODEGAS

Monterrei D.O.:
Adegas Ladairo, O Rosal, 32613 Oimbra, Orense.
Tel/Fax: (34-88) 42 27 57
Rias Baixas D.O.:
Adegas das Eiras, 36760 El Rosal, Pontevedra..
Tel: (34-86) 62 10 01,
Fax: (34-86) 62 10 84
Bodega Palacio de Fefiñanes, Plaza de Fefiñanes, s/n, 36630 Cambados, Pontevedra.
Tel: (34-86) 54 22 04,
Fax: (34-86) 52 45 12
Bodega Pazo de Señorans, Vilanoviña-Paradela, 36616 Meis, Pontevedra.
Tel/Fax: (34-86) 71 53 73
Bodegas Salnesur, La Bouza 1, 36639 Castrelo, Pontevedra.
Tel: (34-86) 54 35 35
Fax: (34-86) 52 42 51
Lagar de Fornelos S.S., Bo. de Cruces, Fornelos, 36778 El Rosal, Pontevedra.
Tel: (34-86) 62 58 75
Fax: (34-86) 20 76 08
Pazo San Mauro, Porto, 36450 Salvatierra de Miño., Pontevedra.
Tel: (34-86) 20 41 20
Fax: (34-86) 20 76 08
Ribeira Sacra D.O.:
Jose Rodríguez Gómez, Cantón, 27423 Amandi-Sober, Lugo. Tel: (34-82) 46 05 04
Ribeiro D.O.:
Viña Meín, Lugar de Meín-San Clodio, 32427, Leiro, Orense.
Tel/Fax: (34-88) 48 84 00.

Valdeorras D.O.:
Bodegas Senén Guitián Velasco, Finca La Tapada, 32310 Rubía de Valdeorras, Orense
Tel: (34-88) 32 41 95,
Fax: (34-88) 32 41 97

WINE FIESTAS

Wine fiestas vary widely in character, but they do all give the chance to taste a very wide range of wines in one place before visiting bodegas. Check the dates with tourist offices.

Monterrei D.O.: The Fiesta of San Lázaro, on the last Sunday in March, is a wine fiesta with tastings of the previous vintage.
Portomarín: The Fiesta de Aguardiente, on Easter Sunday, has tastings of over 20 *aguardientes* with stills bubbling away.
Rias Baixas D.O.: Fiesta del Albariño, Cambados, first Sunday in August (lasts a week, with lectures, tastings and prizes for the previous vintage plus cultural events); Fiesta de Vino de Condado, Salvatierra de Miño, first Sunday in August; Fiesta de Vino de Rosal, La Guardia, August.
Ribeira Sacra D.O.: Feria de Vino de Amandi, Sober, Palm Sunday (usually last Sunday in March). These wines are hard to find, even on good Galician wine lists, so this is a rare chance to try them.
Ribeiro D.O.: Feria del Ribeiro, Ribadavia, end of April (five-day commercial fair) and Fiesta de San Martín, Ribadavia, 9th October (a traditional fiesta, with a pilgrimage, new wine and chestnuts).
Santiago de Compostela: The Cata de Vino (mid-July) is the regional tasting at which prizes are given for the best wines of the previous year.
Valdeorras D.O.: Currently no fiestas.

PRINCIPAL SIGHTS AND VISITS

Opening hours often vary between summer and winter, so it's worth double-checking with a tourist office before you set off on a visit.

LA CORUÑA PROVINCE
Santiago de Compostela: Santiago Cathedral is unmissable (Open daily, 8 a.m.-9 p.m.; museums Mon–Sat. 11 a.m.-1 p.m., 4-6 p.m., Sun. & holidays 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. & 4-7 p.m.). The Museo del Pueblo Gallego focuses on arts and crafts (Sto. Domingo de Bonaval, Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m.-1 p.m., 4-7 p.m.) and the Pazo de Gelmírez (Pl Obradoiro, Tue.-Sun. 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 4:30-7:30 p.m.) has a Romanesque kitchen. There are a dozen other art museums.

LUGO PROVINCE
Gundivos: a hamlet near Sober, in Ribeira Sacra country, with wonderful craft potters making traditional pieces, many of which–pitchers, jugs, earthenware vats and so on–are linked to the local wine.
Monforte de Lemos: the Monasterio de las Clarisas has an outstanding Museo de Arte Sacro (daily, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., 4-6 p.m.).

ORENSE PROVINCE
Allariz: the entire medieval quarter of this small town, home to the Galician court in the 12th and 13th centuries, is a historic monument and just 6 km away is the lovely country church of Sta. Marina de Aguas Santas, believed to incorporate Celtic and Roman features.
Celanova: The Benedictine Monastery of San Salvador (daily, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., 4-5 p.m. in winter, longer in summer) is outstanding and the old quarter is also worth exploring.
Manzaneda: Galicia's only ski station, close to Valdeo-rras, makes a good base for exploring the Montes de Invernadeiro. The mountains have a unique ecosystem and can be visited with a permit obtained in advance. Tel: (34-88) 44 20 08.
Monterrei: Galicia's best example of castle building is a triple-walled complex with a pilgrims' hospital, a Romanesque church, and a Renaissance palace (open daily 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 4-7 p.m.) as well as its surrounding hamlet almost intact.
Orense: the old town, close to the river, surrounds the mid-12th-century cathedral (open 8 a.m.-2 p.m. and 5-8 p.m.). Paved pedestrian streets with churches, squares and old-fashioned shops run down to the river, which keeps its Roman bridge.
Oseira: Sta. María de Oseira (open daily, 3:30-5:30 p.m.) is nicknamed Galicia's El Escorial. Cistercian monks show you round the abbey, founded in 1140; the church, chapter room and cloisters have superb ribbed vaulting. Close by, on the road to Santiago, are the ruins of another monastery, San Lourenzo de Carboeiro, architecturally fine but heavily pillaged.
Ribadavia: the medieval center can be explored with a guide from the tourist office, which keeps the churches' keys. They advise on access to another 30 Romanesque churches in surrounding villages. The Museo Etnológico, Rua Santiago (open Tue.-Sun., 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.) has well laid out displays on local arts, crafts and working life, including wine. An experimental bodega sponsored by the D.O. Ribeiro is due to open in its basement in 1997 and a museum of Galician wine is due to open in the Rectoral de San Andrés, 3 km from town, in 1997-1998. The Monasterio de San Clodio (Benedictine, 13th-18th century) in Leiro is ruined but well worth a visit; the key is in the bar. River trips on the Miño run from Arnoia to Frieira.
San Esteban de Sil: of the many Romanesque monasteries in the Sil valley, San Esteban (open Tue.-Sun., 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m.), perched above the river, is the most impressively sited if not the most sensitively restored. Boat trips there are one of the best ways of seeing the vineyards carved into the steep valley sides of the Gargantas de Sil (embark at Ponte do Sil or Augasmestas).

PONTEVEDRA PROVINCE
Armenteira: the Monasterio de Santa María, where the Cistercian monks planted vineyards, keeps a fine setting and cloister (open 10 a.m.-2 p.m., 4-7 p.m.); if the priest is there, he will also unlock the beautifully plain church.
Cambados: Sta. María Dozo (open all day) is a ruined Renaissance church that doubles as a cemetery and

contains writer Valle Inclán's grave. Santo Benito (opens for mass at 11 a.m.) on the Plaza de Fefiñanes is well worth peeking inside. A tourist train runs round the main sights in summer. The finest beach is La Lanzada, with a hermitage and supposedly magical waters.

La Guardia: on Mount Santa Tecla (open daily, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., 4-7 p.m.) you can see one of the best preserved of Galicia's estimated 5,000 Celtic *castros*, or hilltop settlements. Dating from c. 500 B.C., it has 200 circular stone dwellings on view–others are hidden–and a museum plus panoramic views. Ferries run twice daily to Portugal. Sta. María de Oya is irregularly open. Between Oya and Bayona, which keeps its cliff fortress as a parador, are sierras famed for their wild horse roundups (*a rapa das bestas*) on the second Sunday of May, first and second of June.

Oca: the Pazo de Oca (open 9 a.m. to dusk) has wonderful 18th-century gardens with lakes, garden ornaments, vistas and vine arbors planted with Albariño and Mencía varieties. By special request, you may be able to see the bodega. Tel: (34-86) 58 74 35/9. Just 5 km away is the Pazo de Ortigueira, in Ribadulla, with a fine garden and vines (open 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 3-6:30 p.m.). Tel: (34-86) 58 74 35/76 74.

Padrón: remarkably, the small town has two literary landmarks: the Museo de Rosalía de Castro (open Tue.-Sun., 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 4-7 p.m.), home of Galicia's greatest poet, and the Fundación de Camilo José Cela (open Tue.-Sun., 9 a.m.-2 p.m., 4-7 pm) in the birthplace of the Nobel prize–winning novelist. The Iglesia de Santiago is by the Sar bridge (open daily 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., 4-8 p.m., or fetch the key).

Tuy: the Cathedral (open 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 4-6 p.m.) is the highlight of the old town. Scenic countryside is a stone's throw away in the Parque Natural de Aloia. Every Wednesday there's a huge market (glass, food, shoes, pottery, etc.) in Valença de Miño, the walled fortress town on the other side of the river and frontier.

Vigo: early risers can visit the fish auctions, which start between 5 and 6 a.m. in the Puerto Pesquero de Berbes, and follow up by breakfasting on oysters, sold by the half-dozen outside the nearby Mercado de la Piedra (open 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.). If you cannot face the early start, the fish stalls in the local Mercado del Progreso (Canovas del Castillo s/n) are still pretty spectacular.

EATING AND GASTRONOMIC SHOPPING

MARKETS

A good starting point for gastronomic shopping in any town or city is the market, where you'll find spectacular fish and cheese stalls, local honey, country breads, hams and sausages. They open from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Monthly or weekly country market days *en route* with the best local produce are, listed alphabetically: Allariz: 1st & 15th or next day if Sun.; Arbo: Wed. & Sat., excluding holidays; Bandeira: 14th & 29th; Cambados: Wed. excluding holidays; Gondomar: 11th, 20th and 29th, excluding Feb. 28th; La Guardia: Sat.; Portonovo: Thurs.; Ribadavia: 10th & 25th or next day if Sun.; Sangenjo: Mon.; Salvatierra de Miño: Thurs.; Santiago de Compostela: Tues., Thurs. & Sun.; Silleda: Tue.; Sober: 12th; Tui: Thurs. & 24th Aug.; Verín: 3rd, 11th, 23rd or next day if Sun.

SHOPS

La Cañiza: cured hams from this village and others close by are famed for their quality and can be bought whole or in smaller chunks by weight.

Pontevedra: Os Antoxas, Calle Real 22 (open 10 a.m.-2 p.m., 5-8 p.m.) is one of a cluster of old-fashioned grocers in the area.

Santiago de Compostela: old-fashioned shops include La Casa de los Quesos, Calle Bautizados 10 (open 10 a.m.-2 p.m. & 4-8:30 p.m.) for cheeses, shrink-wrapped ham etc.; Enxebre, Rua de Azabachería 1 (open 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. & 5-9 p.m.) for country breads, wines, cheeses and cakes. Modern gourmet delicatessens include Manxares de Galicia, R do Franco 25 (open 10 a.m.-9 p.m., closed lunchtime Mon. & Tue.), which sells everything from seaweed to convent jams, and Almírez, Doctor Teijeiro 34.

Vigo: Despensa Gallega, Calle Carral 32 (open 10 a.m.-2 p.m., 4-8 p.m.) is close to the port, and sources wines, grape spirits, cheeses, honey, pottery and charcuterie, fish conserves and marrons glacés for retail and export sales. The restaurant Casa Alfredo just outside Vigo has one of Galicia's most serious wine shops, where you can taste and buy over 30 selected regional wines (Ctra. Tamega-Rems 226, 36416 Mons, open 12 a.m.-3 p.m., 8-11 p.m.).

FEATURED RESTAURANTS AND TAPAS BARS

LA CORUÑA

Santiago de Compostela: Toñi Vicente, Calle Rosalía de Castro 24. Tel: 981-59 41 00. Adventurous modern cooking by the pioneer of new Galician tastes, where novelty never kills Galician purity of flavors.

ORENSE

Ribadavia: O'Papuxa, Porta Nova de Arriba. The most central of the old cellar bodegas, where you can try wine off the barrel with local food.

Verín: Gallegos, Ctra. N525, Km 171, Verín. Tel: (34–88) 41 82 02. A roadside hotel-restaurant with bar and formal restaurant where good regional cooking is mixed into a more standard menu.

PONTEVEDRA

Combarro: Taberna Alvariñas, Rua de Cruceiro 63. Tel: (34-81) 77 20 33. Waterside stone tavern inside a fisherman's house with old and new dishes from the sea and market-gardens.

Pontevedra: O'Cortello, Calle Campillo s/n and Pulpeiro, Calle San Nicolás 7. Two old-fashioned bars in the cathedral quarter where you can try a wide range of tapas or platefuls of food with wine.

Vigo: Casa Alfredo, Tameiga 226, Autovía Vigo-Portugal, Mos. Tel: (34-86) 33 10 08. Lourdes and Alfredo Alvarez give traditional dishes a new twist and add new ones based on regional flavors in a modern setting.

Villagarcia de Arousa: El Lagar, Ctra. de Villagarcia a La Toja s/n, Villajuan. Tel: (34-86) 50 09 09. An old pazo with the atmosphere of a home, plus eccentricities to boot, in this traditional restaurant.

RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATION

Historic hotels and *casas rurales*–quality controlled houses offering bed, breakfast and sometimes dinner, like *gites*–proliferate on the coast. Inland, the casas rurales are often the only accommodation in vineyard areas.

LA CORUÑA PROVINCE

Santiago de Compostela: Hostal de Los Reyes Católicos, Pl Obradoiro 1, 15705. Tel: (34-81) 58 22 00, Fax: (34-81) 56 30 94. One of the world's great historic hotels, rebuilt inside the Renaissance pilgrims' hospital, with priceless original furniture in some of the rooms and cathedral views.

LUGO PROVINCE

O Saviñao: Torre de Vilarino, Calle Fión 47, 27548 Escairón. Tel: (34-82) 45 22 60. A winemaking country farm in an idyllic country setting.

Sober: Casa Grande de Rosende, 27466 Rosende. Tel: (34-08) 58 91 78, Fax: (34-82) 46 06 27. Wonderfully restored in 18th-century style, this pazo lies midpoint between the Ribeira Sacra and Monforte.

ORENSE PROVINCE

Ribadavia: Viña Meín, Lugar de Meín, San Clodio, 32430 Leiro. Tel: (34-88) 48 84 00. A very comfortable, newly converted farmhouse annexed to a bodega and surrounded by vines.

Verín: Parador de Monterrei. Tel: (34-88) 41 00 75, Fax: (34-88) 41 20 17. A hilltop country hotel which makes an ideal base for exploring the surrounding wine country of Monterrei or an overnight stop-off on a main route into Galicia.

PONTEVEDRA PROVINCE

Cambados: Parador del Albariño, Paseo de Cervantes s/n, 36630. Tel: (34-86) 54 22 50, Fax: (34 -86) 54 20 68. The low granite building on the sea promenade is the site of the Albariño wine fiesta and bang in the center of the Salnés wine country.

La Guardia: Convento de San Benito, Pl. de San Benito, 36780. Tel: (34-86) 61 11 66, Fax: (34-86) 61 15 17. The small converted 16th-century monastery overlooks the port and is close to the Rosal vineyards.

La Toja: Gran Hotel de La Toja, Isla de La Toja, 36991. Tel: (34-86) 73 00 25, Fax: (34-86) 73 12 01. A prestigious modern spa hotel sitting on an islet off the coast of Salnés peninsula.

Meis: Casa de Arcos, 36637, Arcos-Mosteiro. Tel: (34-86) 71 54 54. 19th-century farmhouse with its own small winery in the heart of the Salnés vineyards.

Pontevedra: Parador Casa del Barón, Calle Barón 19, 36002 Pontevedra. Tel: (34-86) 85 58 00, Fax: (34-86) 85 21 95. City-center historic hotel rebuilt around an old pazo (see page 91). Conveniently close to the coastal motorway.

Tui: Parador de San Telmo, Calle Tenencia Randulfes s/n. Tel: (34-86) 60 03 09, Fax: (34-86) 60 21 63. Wonderfully sited on the river, at midpoint between the Miño valley vineyards (Rosal and Condado del Tea), this country hotel overlooks the Portuguese fortress town of Valença. Famous for its lamprey and elvers in spring, when they can be found served in the local restaurants.

Villagarcia de Arosa: Pazo o Rial, Rial 1, 36991 Vilaxoán. Tel: (34-86) 50 70 11. Large 60-room, 16th-century pazo set in a pine glade next to the coast.

TOURIST AUTHORITY PHONE NUMBERS

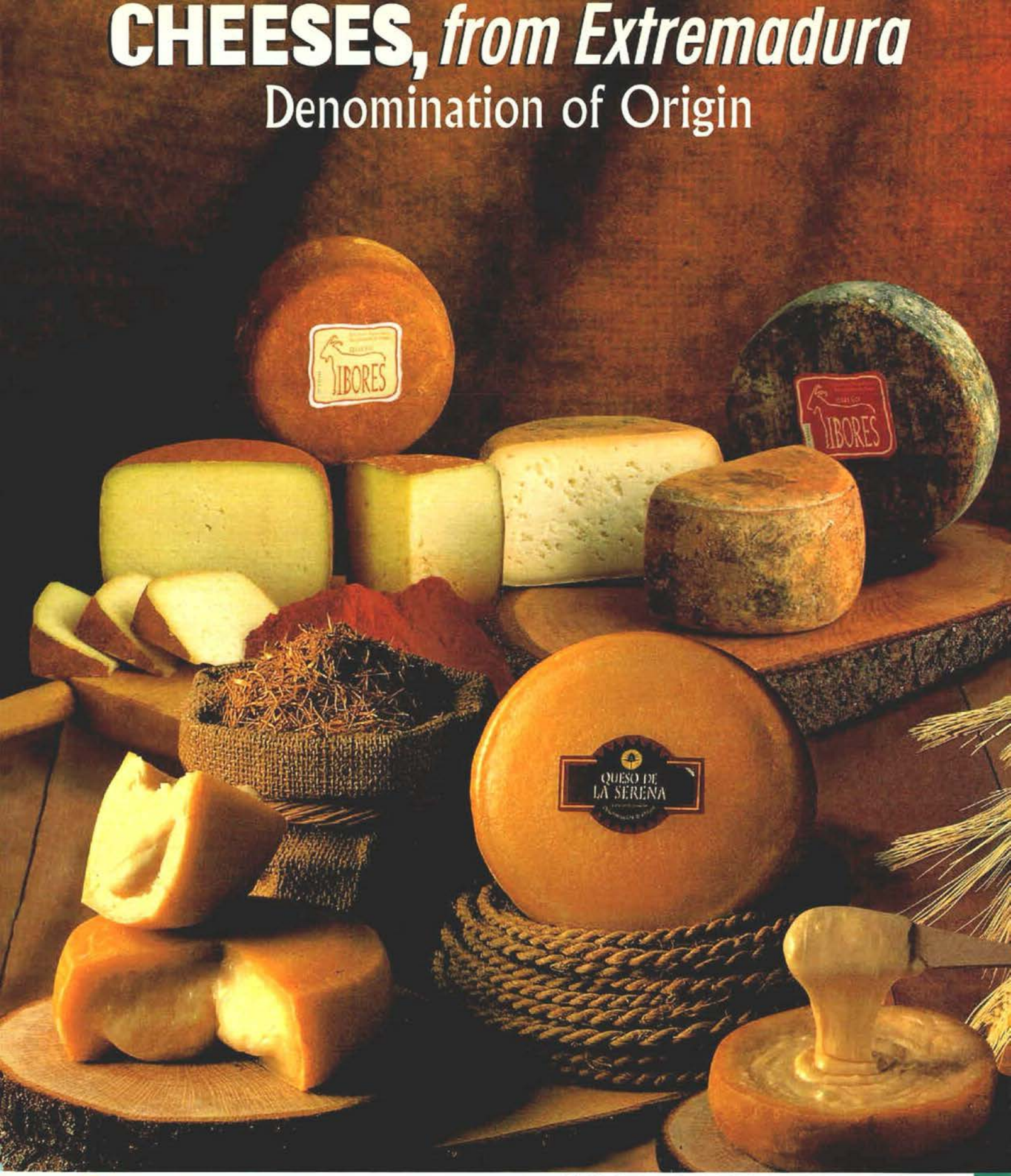
For further information on any of the above:

Cambados:
Tel: (34-86) 52 46 78
Orense:
Tel: (34-88) 37 20 20
Pontevedra:
Tel: (34-86) 85 08 14
Ribadavia:
Tel: (34-88) 47 12 75,
Fax: (34-88) 47 00 35
Santiago de Compostela:
Tel: (34-81) 58 40 81
Tui: Puente
Tel: (34-86) 60 17 89
Vigo:
Tel: (34-86) 43 05 77
Turgalicia:
Tel: (34-81) 54 25 00

N.B: Spelling has been largely standardized to Castilian but Gallego is the official language of Galicia and when you are traveling you will find it on most signposts' names as well as for names of museums, etc.

CHEESES, *from Extremadura*

Denomination of Origin



Foods from Extremadura

wholesome art

JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA

Consejería de Agricultura y Comercio

GODELLO GRAPE

THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE

Godello, a grape variety that has been cultivated for many centuries, has recently emerged, after a century in obscurity, as the great white hope for the historic wine-growing area around the river Sil, of which it is a native. Research carried out during the last ten years has revealed its qualifications as a source of the sort of high quality, distinctive white wines that the modern marketplace demands.

Text: **José Luis Hernáez Mañas**
Still Lifes: **Menchu Artime** Photos: **A. de Benito/ICEX** Translation: **Hawys Pritchard**

Godello is a European white wine variety of the Atlantic type which grows on the slopes of the tectonic channel carved by the river Sil through the mountain ranges of northwest Spain (see map on page 103). Its area of cultivation along the river banks extends from the region of El Bierzo, in Leon Province, as far as its confluence with Galicia's principal river, the Miño, near the town of Orense. In the course of its history, this variety spread towards the Duero river basin across the winegrowing area of Verín, in the south of modern-day Galicia, where it is known as Verdello. It is also found in the little region of Betanzos, near La Coruña, where its local name is Agudelo. However, in neither of these two areas has it fully recovered from the devastating effects of the phylloxera invasion of the late 19th century, and its presence there today is a mere vestige of what it once was. Godello's long history as a cultivated variety is attested to by the wide diversity of types and characteristics to be found in vines currently growing in old vineyards, with differences so marked as to warrant the definition of subvarieties. This diversity is particularly significant in the light of Godello's relatively small territorial spread and of the serious material losses inflicted by phylloxera, and can only be explained as the result of countless reproductions carried out by growers in the past to meet a whole range of different criteria imposed by time and space. This is not to mention other factors such as the appearance of spontaneous mutations in buds, to which vines are subject. All that said, Godello cannot be identified with any other variety beyond the confines of the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula.

Nº 7

Godello, an Atlantic-type variety native to the Sil Valley in northwest Spain, is grown in Leon's El Bierzo and in the Galician province of Orense.

Nº 8

Godello appears among the first vine varieties mentioned in historical documents. Its most important spread occurred during the 18th century.

Godello's production area is a Mediterranean enclave within a predominantly Atlantic climate, sheltered by mountain ridges.

A VARIETY WITH A PAST

Godello's origins are linked with the beginnings of organized viticulture in the Sil Valley during its occupation by the Romans. A victorious military campaign against the Cantabrians and Asturians of northern Spain was launched in 29 B.C. by Octavius (known as Augustus from 27 B.C. on), and concluded by Agrippa ten years later. This effected the definitive pacification of Hispania, after which, the Romans settled in the Sil Valley, creating an urban-type colonial economy on the strength of transforming the small-scale exploitation of the area's abundant gold seams and placers, into a large-scale extractive industry. During the 250 years that it exploited these resources, it was to constitute one of the Roman Empire's most important economic bases.

The Romans' gold mining technique sometimes involved undermining entire mountains, using a method they called *ruina montium*, by feeding vast quantities of water, previously re-routed along colossal hydraulic systems, into a warren of painstakingly excavated subterranean galleries. Remains of such works can still be seen in the imposing Médulas de Carrucedo in the El Bierzo region (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 37) and in the equally spectacular Montefurado Tunnel (whose name derives from the Spanish *monte perforado*), in the province of Orense, which the Romans named Auriense, *aurum* being the Latin for gold.

Strabo (58 B.C.-28 A.D.), a Romanized Greek geographer who enjoyed close connections with the court of Augustus, attributes to the Romans the introduction of organized viticulture to the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula. He noted, too, that varieties imported by the Roman colonizers from eastern areas where climatic cycles were longer, failed to ripen there. Even so, they must have cross-bred with the local wild varieties (evidence of whose exploitation is provided by archaeological finds from the Bronze Age) thereby giving rise to early forms of known varieties. This is the explanation generally propounded by experts for the origins of Atlantic varieties of European vines, of which Godello is an example.

Under the aegis of the West's first monastic order, established by El Bierzo monk San Fructuoso, a disciple of San Isidoro of Seville, who died in the year 665, the spread of Christian monastic communities was so prolific that the region bounding the provinces of Lugo and Orense, on the banks of the Sil, became known as the *Ribeira Sacra*, or Holy Riverbank. These monastic communities established numerous monasteries which, from the 12th century on, received gifts of lands from monarchs and feudal lords. These lands were, in turn, let to tenant farmers with the requirement that they pay a high proportion of the rent in wine, a stipulation that triggered a major expansion of viticulture.

Godello appears among the first vine varieties mentioned in historical documents. Its most important spread occurred during the 18th century when wine-growing in general was boosted by the growth in population, improved communications, and the removal of commercial barriers that had existed hitherto. Around 1882, the year when phylloxera penetrated the northwest of Spain, Godello occupied some 33 percent of the vineyards in the Valdeorras area of Orense Province, an interesting fact given that this was principally red wine producing territory.

FROM COLD SHOULDER TO HIGH PROFILE

In the early 1970s, northwest Spain adopted a new approach to wine producing, opting for high quality and distinctive personality in line with market trends. The main obstacle to this objective was posed by the varieties then dominating local vineyards. After the phylloxera outbreak, which was particularly virulent in this part of Spain, it had not been replanted with traditional varieties but with others from the Mediterranean area. These were more productive but, because they adapted poorly to the shorter climatic cycles typical of Atlantic climates, they failed repeatedly to fulfill their excellent potential.

The basic policies of the new approach were set out clearly: reinstating ancestral varieties, exclusive to these parts, was to be combined with the most up-to-date oenological techniques. Godello, then limited to occasional isolated vines or small clusters within old plantations and on the verge of extinction, was to be the pioneer variety in the recovery process.

In 1974, an association was set up in the wine-producing area of Valdeorras under the name of RE.VI.VAL (*Reestructuración de los Viñedos de Valdeorras*–Restructuring the Vineyards of Valdeorras), and it was this association that drew up the

basic guidelines for this process: production incentives were to be provided by companies setting higher prices for Godello, and an ambitious research project was to explore the best approaches to its cultivation and vinification.

These efforts have paid off amply. Today, Godello is a rapidly expanding variety with a sound, research-generated backup, ranging from stocks of healthy clonal selection material to precise knowledge of the most suitable cultivation techniques in specific conditions. Meanwhile, cutting-edge technology is becoming the norm in the wineries where it is vinified.

Godello's ecoclimatic environment

The ecological environment in which Godello grows is a very variable one, dictated by the accidented course of the river Sil. In general terms, the production area may be defined as a Mediterranean enclave within a predominantly Atlantic climate, sheltered by the mountain ridges which separate the provinces of Leon and Orense. Low in the valley, the climate is markedly thermal, of Mediterranean type, as is proved by the importance of olive growing there until well into the 19th century.

As one climbs higher up the valley sides, however, summer aridity is rapidly modified by the Atlantic influence, enabling the grapes to ripen in moderate temperatures and ambiental humidity. It is in just these Atlanticized zones that Godello achieves its highest quality: favorable conditions during the ripening period reduce the combustion of acids through respiration, which helps musts from the harvested grapes maintain a high acid content which contributes to their intense, individual aromatic potential.

The Denomination of Origin Bierzo, in Leon Province, includes some 60 hectares (148 acres) of Godello in regular plantations, though there are also many Godello vines scattered among the traditional vineyards. Vines are grown at altitudes of be-

Godello wines combine robust structure with delicacy of expression, with distinctive, very complex and subtle aromatic content.

AVERAGE COMPOSITION OF GODELLO WINES

Alcoholic strength	11.8
Total acidity (gr tartrates/liter)	5.3
Ph	3.14
Dry extract (gr/liter)	18.6
Glycerol (gr/liter)	5.4
Residual sugar (gr/liter)	1.8
Ash (gr/liter)	1.10
Alkalinity of Ashes	13.6
Malic acid (gr/liter)	1.65
Tartaric acid (gr/liter)	1.98
Citric acid (gr/liter)	0.35
Succinic acid (gr/liter)	0.28
Lactic acid (gr/liter)	0.17
Volatile acidity (gr acetic/liter)	0.17
Density 20/20	0.9911
Free sulfur dioxide (mg/liter)	18
Total sulfur dioxide (mg/liter)	56

Source: Galicia's Viticultural and Oenological Station.

On the brink of extinction barely twenty years ago, today Godello occupies 20 percent of the vineyards of Valdeorras.

tween 400 and 1,000 meters (1,312 and 3,280 ft), in an open, gently sloped valley. They are planted in sedimentary soils, made up chiefly of slate and sandy loam interrupted in places by Hercynian outcrops protruding from the alluvial deposits. They tend to be slightly acid and compact in texture. Climatic conditions are benign, with an average annual temperature of 12.8°C (55°F), average annual rainfall at 720 mm, and 2,700 hours of sunshine per year.

The white wines produced by this D.O. are based on the structure, acidity and aromatic verve of Godello, generally combined in multi-varietal blends with Palomino and Doña Blanca, this latter also a local native variety, though there is a marked current trend towards Godello mono-varietals.

The river Sil progresses easily towards Galicia through a chalky gorge carved out by the river itself, which flows through the D.O. Valdeorras, one of Galicia's oldest Denominations of Origin. This is where the foundations of Godello's recovery and rapid expansion were laid: there are some 250 hectares (677 acres) of Godello here in regular plantations covered by the D.O. Climatic characteristics are very similar to those in El Bierzo, with which it forms a geographical unit, though rainfall is a little higher at 800 mm a year.

The Sil, tightly channeled in places, broadening out in other stretches of its course along the deep tectonic channel created by a complex interplay of obstacles and fractures, creates complex conditions for viticulture–here flat terrain in the alluvial valley bottom, there slate substrata on the sloping valley sides (this area is Europe's biggest slate producer) punctuated by frequent outcrops of granite.

Traditionally, Valdeorras used to produce multi-varietal whites along the same lines as El Bierzo's, but Godello mono-varietals have built up spectacular momentum over the last ten years. Godello now accounts for 20 percent of the area under vine, including existing plants in traditional vineyards, a particularly significant figure given that barely 20 years ago it was on the brink of extinction.

On its way out of the Valdeorras D.O's territory, the Sil runs narrow and deep, creating with its tributaries, the rivers Xares, Bibei and Neves, narrow, deep valleys on whose almost vertical slopes vineyards are planted in terraces, known as *sucalcos*, which endow the landscape with a beauty all its own. The river's complex course, with its multiple twists and turns, creates many and varied microclimates in which the huge effort winegrowing demands is compensated for by the excellent quality achieved.

In this area, where the recently created D.O. Ribeira Sacra is based (pending confirmation), local legend lays claim to its having supplied the tables of the Roman Emperors with wine. Climatic conditions here are very variable, depending on the orientation of the hillsides, and there is also an inconsistency of soil types, with plutonic acidic rocks alternating with Silurian slates and metamorphic schist, and with detritic Myocene deposits on the valley floor. Though traditionally this area has been a producer of Mencía-based reds, Godello is gaining ground, sometimes blended with Treixadura, a native of more westerly Galicia, creating some very promising white wines.

Godello's characteristics

Godello's characteristics identify it as belonging to the Atlantic group of *Vitis vinifera* varieties. Bud-break and maturation occur early in Godello, and it adapts well to short climatic cycles, showing no preference for any particular soil type, though it reaches its best aromatic expression on dry, sandy soils as long as the average temperature during its ripening period does not exceed 25°C (77°F).

This variety has small grape clusters (190 gr/7 oz) and is highly fertile (16 clusters for every 10 buds left at winter pruning). The grape clusters are formed of small, close-packed grapes, which are green when ripe. The fruit has very fine skin, which makes it very susceptible to attacks of bunch rot (*Botrytis cinerea*), a factor which has historically limited its spread towards areas where the maritime influence is more marked.

It is a medium to high vigor variety (1.2 kg/2.6 lb of cane per pruned vine), and is a hardworking one, capable of producing 4.6 kg (10 lb) of grapes for every 1 kg (2.2 lb) of cane developed over the year and 70 gr (2.5 oz) of sugars for every 1 sq cm (0.3 sq in) of trunk section. Productivity varies within the range of 12-14,000 kg per hectare (29-34,000 lb per 2.471 acres), equivalent to 8,000 liters of wine.

Godello vines have traditionally been gobelet-trained with three or four arms, sometimes supported by vertical chestnut wood stakes, with the bunches at 40 cm (15.5 in) above the ground. Nevertheless, research

has produced a pretty precise profile of the optimum geometry for growing Godello. New plantations are using a spacing of 2.50x1.25 m (8.2x4.1 ft), with a density of 3,200 vines per hectare (2.4 acres). The vines are espalier-trained, with two horizontal arms 80 cm (31 in) from the ground.

The vines are pruned to three-bud spurs, making a total of 58,000 buds per hectare (2.4 acres). This variety has a particular tendency to produce two or more fertile shoots per bud, and it has been demonstrated that suppressing one of these produces significant improvements in quality.

The most appropriate rootstocks for this variety have been found to be 99-Richter in slaty soils, 110-Richter in sandy acid soils with underlying granitoids, and 196-17 Castel in acid soils of average texture and fertility.

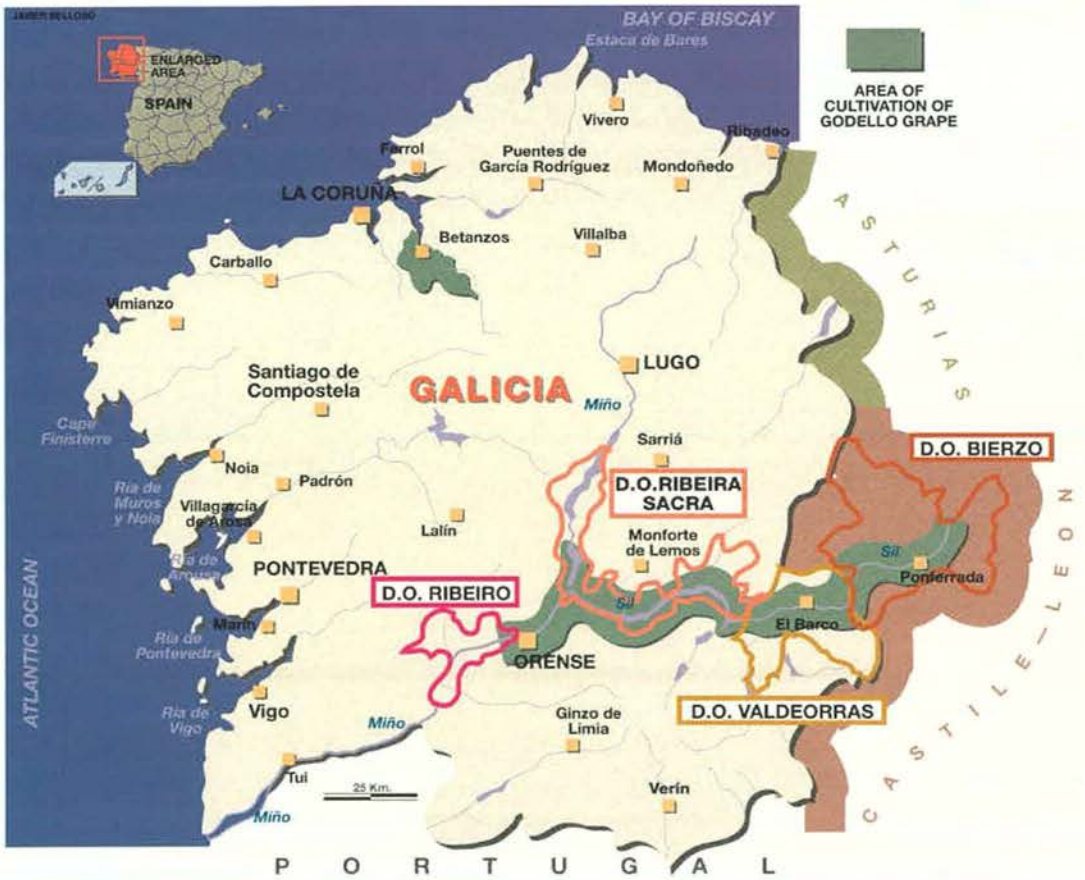
Under appropriate ecological growing conditions, Godello produces musts which combine high alcoholic strength (11.5 to 12.5°) with notable acidity (7 to 8 gr/0.25 oz of tartrate per liter) and intense, individual aromatic potential.

Godello wines, when vinified in controlled temperature conditions (18-20°C/64-68°F) during fermentation, combine robustness of structure with delicacy of expression. They are pale yellow in color, with steely, sometimes olivey tinges, and are glyceric and compact in appearance. The aromatic components are reminiscent of the source grape, with hints of green fruit in which apples of a non-specific variety predominate, though they are extremely complex and subtle. They are well-structured wines, expansive on the palate, smooth in the mouth, and slow and persistent with a long, satisfactory finish, corresponding perfectly to the typical characteristics of European Atlantic wines.

Hitherto the key ingredient in the multi-varietal whites traditional to the Sil Valley, Godello is now poised to go it alone in more ways than one. Its intrinsic high quality and individuality are now being privileged in mono-varietal wines, on which this long-established winegrowing area has opted to stake its future. Pedigree will out.

Dr. José Luis Hernáez *is an agronomist. Former president of the Regulatory Council of the Denomination of Origin Ribeiro, he is currently director of Galicia's Viticultural and Oenological Station.*

The origins of this variety are linked with the Roman occupation of the Sil Valley for the purpose of exploiting its gold mines.



LUSTAU:

A HUNDRED YEARS OF TRADITION, PRESTIGE, QUALITY

In the highly competitive world sherry market, old fashioned values of tradition, prestige and quality in family run businesses may seem like a luxury doomed to extinction. While multinationals have gained control of many of the family names in the sherry business, Emilio Lustau S.A. remains a leader among the few Spanish owned family companies in the famed sherry producing wine region of Jerez and continues to position itself at the top of the line in prestige and quality with a steady growth in exports and healthy profits. In international marketing, the name of the game is carving out the right niche and Lustau's niche is precisely top quality sherry where volume sales are not the main objective.

Today, over a century after the company's modest beginnings in 1896, Emilio Lustau S.A. has become one of sherry's great names famed for its *Solera Reserva* and *Almacenista* ranges–a collection of rare old solera sherry wines (see Glossary on page 130) that are matured in small cellars belonging to private individuals which are selected, bottled and marketed by Lustau. Each Almacenista–a word which comes from the old Moorish word *al majzan*, literally, "deposit" and now meaning "stockholder"–is given credit on the bottle for their particular sherry, its origin, style, and number of butts of the solera or reserve stock from which the wine is drawn off. Revered wine gurus such as Robert Parker gave these Almacenista wines spectacularly high ratings in the 1980s classifying them among the finest sherry wines ever obtained. With ratings like these, Lustau sherries have become among the most sought after wines in American specialty shops.

To celebrate it's centennial last year, Lustau launched limited quantities of four very rare sherries which promise to become collector's items. They are the Amontillado Bodega Vieja, Oloroso del Tonel and two dessert wines: Moscatel Las Cruces and Pedro Ximénez Murillo. (See box.) Last August, Lustau won one of the

Text: **Ana Westley**

Photos: **Lustau/ICEX**

IN FUTURE YEARS, LUSTAU PLANS TO INCREASE SALES IN THE AREAS OF FINE RESTAURANTS AND SPECIALTY WINE SHOPS FOR CONNOISSEURS AND EXPLORE OTHER ASIAN MARKETS IN ADDITION TO JAPAN.

only three Grand Gold Medals (Concours Mondial de Bruxelles) for its Lustau Emilín Moscatel Superior Sherry, a first for a Spanish wine.

BEGINNINGS, TRADITIONS, AND INNOVATIONS

The beginnings of the House of Lustau in 1896 were quite modest. Founder Don José Ruiz-Berdejo began by cultivating the vines of the family estate of Nuestra Señora de la Esperanza in the Raboatún district on the outskirts of Jerez. Like many other vineyard owners of the time, he stored the wines in his vineyard house to be sold later to the big exporting companies. He was himself an almacenista, maturing and selling "from bodega to bodega," a time honored tradition in Jerez.

In the 1940s the family business was taken over by his son-in-law Emilio Lustau who expanded the wine cellar installations to the ancient heart of the old city, in buildings which actually formed a part of the historic Moorish walls of the city. In these bodegas, the old Moorish arches through the wall still exist. Throughout the next decades the company, now known as Emilio Lustau S.A., continued to expand with more bodegas, wine cooling and bottling installations.

In the 1980s, Lustau became one of the more innovative companies in the Jerez region under the management of the late Don Rafael Balao, who is considered today as the "soul" behind Lustau's strategy to become "The Definitive Quality Sherry House," the company motto. Don Rafael, who died in 1993, was behind the collection of Almacenista sherries, choosing only the finest of rare and marvelous wines held by selected stockholders.

In the same decade, the Lustau Solera Reserva range of its own fine old sherries was also created, using stocks that had been held by Lustau since its own beginnings as an Almacenista. Other innovations and strategies included the placing of Landed Age Sherry Parcels of maturing wine in butts in a cool and damp British atmosphere that reproduced the conditions of wine storage cellars in London from the days when English wine merchants received their sherry wholesale in butts which were stored in damp dark cellars. There the wine further matured in the cool humidity of the English climate which seemed to soften and give it an even more elegant finish preferred by English sherry fanciers.

Under Don Rafael's management, Lustau revived another old tradition of blending rich, sweet sherry wines to obtain the East India Solera that became popular in the 19th century and was matured in butts or casks of wine that were stored on ships that ran tropical trade routes. In this case, Lustau has reproduced a warm, humid environment in bodegas close to the salty sea mist of the ocean.

In 1986, Lustau set aside stocks for a single vintage sherry, Vendimia Cream, termed a "fascinating rarity" by wine critics as it is made from a single grape harvest rather than from blending. The first year was released in 1992.

GLOBAL SHERRY STOCKS

PROPIETOR	STOCKS IN BUTTS (1 BUTT=500 LITERS)	% OF TOTALS	LUSTAU/CABALLERO % OF TOTALS
SHERRY EXPORTERS	500, 000	86	4.35 (25,000 BUTTS)
ALMACENISTAS (STOCKHOLDERS)	76,000	14	2.60 (15,000 BUTTS)
TOTALS	**576,000**	**100.00**	**6.95**

Source: Emilio Lustau S.A.

LUSTAU JOINS LUIS CABALLERO

Nevertheless, innovation and obsession with quality alone were not yet profitable for the company. The time was right for large scale financial backing to develop and expand. In 1990, Luis Caballero S.A., a large Spanish family owned company famed for its sherry finos and spirits (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 25), took over ownership of Lustau.

"When we bought Lustau, it was not producing a profit," recalled Luis Caballero, the 6th generation president of the group which produces Spain's largest selling liqueur, Ponche Caballero.

"Lustau was on the right track with the Almacenista range of top quality sherries, but there was not enough volume to make a profitable business and the company had excessive fixed assets–too much money tied up in fine old wine stocks without the financial capacity for expansion and major investments," he explained in an interview. With the financial backing of a solid Spanish holding company with consolidated yearly sales that are currently over 10 billion pesetas (77 million U.S. dollars), Lustau's fortunes were to make a complete turnaround. Through a policy of rationalization, all the sherry wines of the Caballero Group were grouped together under the Lustau banner in Lustau S.A.-Wine Division. The Lustau Almacenista sherry and Solera Reserva wines could now take advantage of an economy of scale integrated into a large group. Don Rafael's dedication to quality, tradition, and prestige could flourish with financial backing and the addition of Caballero Group's famed fino

BRAND BUILDING IS AN IMPORTANT PILLAR FOR SUCCESS IN A QUALITY MARKET, ACCORDING TO MR. CABALLERO, AND FAMILY RUN COMPANIES TEND TO HAVE A "MORE TRANSCENDENT IDEA OF INVESTMENT IN BRAND BUILDING."

wines of El Puerto de Santa María, now the basis of Lustau fino production.

Discounting the Caballero sherry sales, the original wine products of Lustau today show healthy profits of 80 million pesetas (615,000 U.S. dollars). All together, the Lustau Wine Division expects before tax, profits of 175.2 million pesetas (1.3 million U.S. dollars) for 1996 (compared to 150 million pesetas/1.15 million U.S. dollars for 1995). Sales for 1997 are expected to reach 1.6 billion pesetas (12.307 million U.S. dollars), up 20 percent from the previous year. Consolidated after tax profits for the entire Caballero group amounted to 560 million pesetas (4.3 million U.S. dollars) in 1995 and are estimated to increase to around 600 million pesetas (4.6 million U.S. dollars) in 1996. As with most other sherry producers, most of Lustau's production is exported.

Although Mr. Caballero firmly believes that the art of making superb sherry can never be a mass production business, Lustau's goal is to promote the use of sherry to accompany meals. "Outside of Jerez, both in Spain and abroad, customers associate sherry as something to savor before and after a meal," Mr. Caballero explained. In the Jerez region itself and in nearby Seville, sherry is quaffed before, during, and after a meal. Caballero's Puerto Fino, included under the Lustau banner, is one of the star sherry brands that the group hopes to promote as an exquisite wine to accompany almost any meal. To the process of *crianza* or traditional sherry blending for this Fino matured next to the sea in El Puerto de Santa María, Lustau has added a remarkable innovation which they like to refer to as the Double *Flor*.

PUERTO FINO'S UNIQUE FLOR DEVELOPMENT

The novelty of Lustau's Puerto Fino is that once the wine has undergone six years of development under flor (a veil of yeast) through the solera system of traditional blending, one year old wine with one year old yeast is added. In effect, the matured wine returns partially to the first step in the aging process for three months just before bottling, thereby retrieving the freshness of the early stages of the flor. The technique, unique to Lustau, lightens the wine even further. "The quality of age and the attractiveness of youth blend together in this fino," Mr. Caballero described poetically. The end effect is a much lighter fino which preserves the freshness of the wine in the bottle while retaining the magic of the sherry aging and blending process. Critics have hailed Puerto Fino as the "most reliable and freshest fino on the market." The method needs a minimum of 9,000 butts to carry out and has only been in the market for the past four years with an annual production of 70,000 cases of Puerto Fino, 80 percent of which is exported.

Currently all of Lustau's wine growing under flor total some 15,000 butts, including the Puerto Fino butts, and are stored in El Puerto de Santa María bodegas as the humid air is conducive to thicker flor yeast layers and therefore drier crisper fino sherry. To stroll through one of these huge bodegas through a dark sea of butts stacked 3 and 4 levels high is an experience in itself. A pungent sherry aroma permeates the dark air interrupted by shafts of light softly streaming through windows high in the wall. The bodegas with their arched ceilings are frequently called the cathedrals of wine and truly invoke a sense of awe or reverence for the biological but seemingly miraculous aging process that is silently taking place inside the endless aisles of butts.

Puerto Fino is the light and dry sherry that Lustau hopes to encourage as a perfect table wine for a good meal. "The days of thinking that finos are only aperitif wines are over," Mr. Caballero predicted confidently. Not withstanding, he clarified that sherry should not aim to become a product of massive consumption. Quality, he

EMILIO LUSTAU S.A.-WINE DIVISION (LUIS CABALLERO GROUP)

SALES 1996

AREAS	LITERS
U.K.	2,862,479
HOLLAND	265,248
GERMANY	265,692
REST OF E.C.	84,349
U.S.A.	120,373
REMAINING SALES	131,340
	3,729,481

Source: Emilio Lustau S.A.

1996 SALES IN PESETAS AND U.S. DOLLARS

EMILIO LUSTAU S.A.	844,858,000 PTS/ 6.5 MILLION U.S. DOLLARS
LUIS CABALLERO S.A.	485,117,383 PTS/ 3.7 MILLION U.S. DOLLARS
TOTAL	1,329,975,383 PTS/ 10.2 MILLION U.S. DOLLARS

Source: Emilio Lustau S.A.

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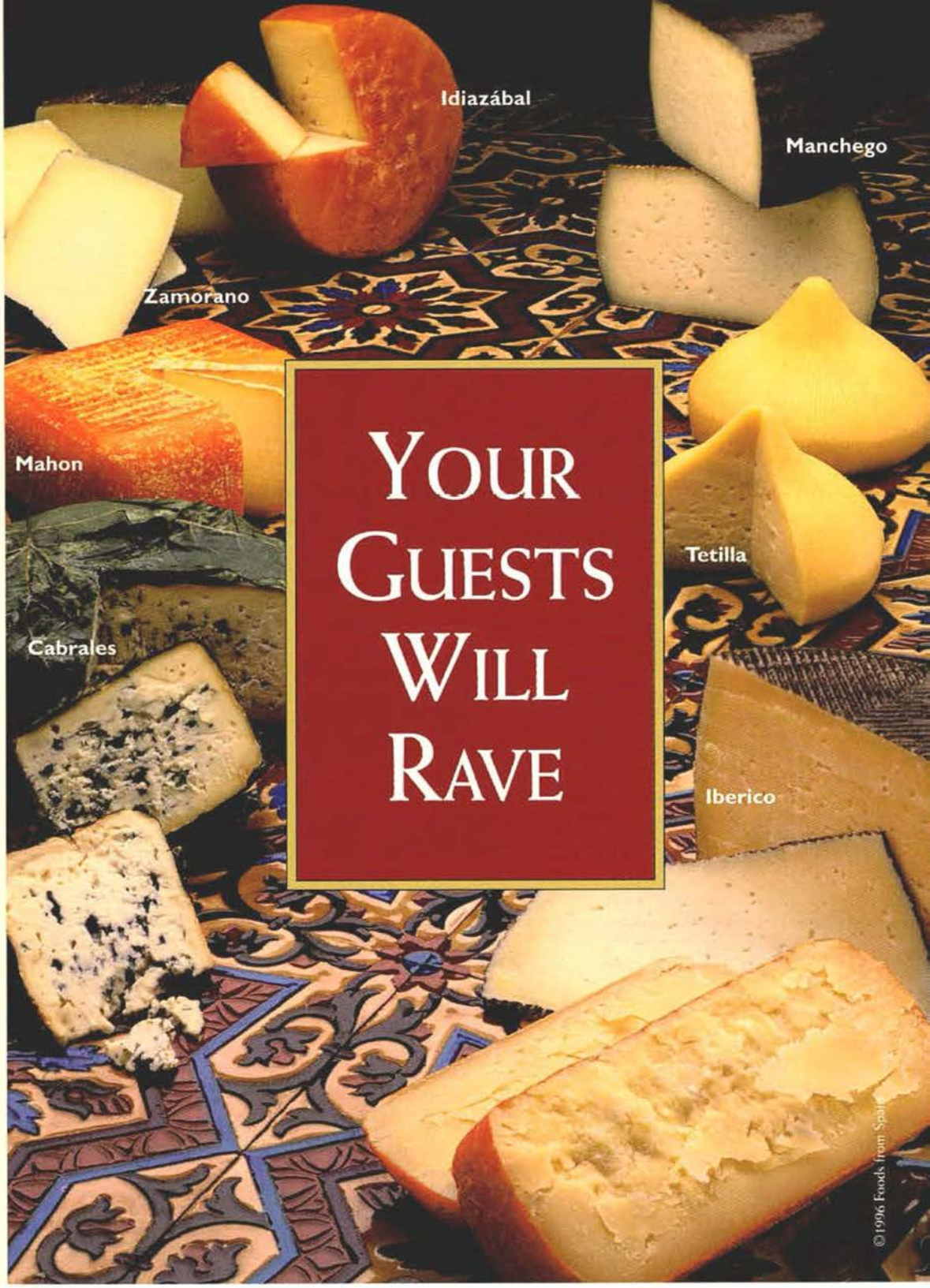

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Smooth, unique flavor. Excellent with a young red wine.

Cabrales
Lush and complex. Wonderful with fruits, salads and meats.

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Sharp. Ideal for grating.

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believes, is more important than quantity. The sherry sector in Jerez has had to learn this the hard way with heavy restructuring during the 1980s in which vineyards were reduced by half. Lustau has found its niche for high quality sherries as exports continue to grow steadily in Europe and in the difficult U.S. and Japanese markets. "We believe that our future is in the elite markets in the U.S., Germany, and Japan," he affirmed. Exports of Lustau Brandy de Jerez, under the brand name "Señor Lustau" are commercialized on a very small scale.

Together with two other prestigious Spanish wine companies, Vega Sicilia S.A., and La Rioja Alta S.A., Lustau joined Europvin Iberia Consortium (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 35) which has a cooperation agreement with an associated office in Bordeaux and Tokyo. Aiming at the top of the line quality markets outside Europe, the three wine companies share several common characteristics and policies: small production figures where volume sales are not the main objective, little or no direct advertising, a passion for long term aging processes in oak casks, and an obsession with high quality standards and tradition.

ALMACENISTAS AND THEIR LABOR OF LOVE

The collection of Almacenista wines gives sherry fanciers the opportunity to savor superb rare wines that only natives from Jerez would have the opportunity to try. Lustau provides the Almacenistas with technical assistance and supplies quality wines to replenish their Soleras. These small Soleras are literally a labor of love for many almacenistas who generally make a living in other walks of life as professionals or businessmen but continue to store and blend wines in a time honored tradition handed down from one generation to another. "Lustau understood that it would be a tragedy to lose some of these very superb rare sherries in larger blends," Manuel Arcila, Lustau's General Manager commented on a winter visit to the Lustau wine cellars. Lustau buys a set amount of each Almacenista's small production. The rest is usually for the family's own consumption or to be given to friends.

On a rare rainy day before Christmas, this writer was treated to a visit to the bodega of Almacenista Juan García Jarana. In the cool wine cellar with a total of 400 butts of different sherries, family and employees were painstakingly labeling bottles by hand for Christmas presents to friends.

Of all the wines in this bodega, Lustau has chosen their Oloroso de Jerez Pata de Gallina 1/38. The bottom number of the fraction on each Almacenista sherry refers to the total number of butts of that particular Solera. Today in Jerez there remain only about 40 almacenistas, 17 of whom have relationships with Lustau. Quality is assured and tradition kept alive. The almacenista collections are among the most expensive of Lustau wines due to the small scale of production and artisan elaboration. When all the Lustau sherries are lined up in wine glasses by color, the portfolio is an exquisite range of a rainbow of colors from pale straw yellow to the deep browns and auburns of the sweet wines and brandies.

FORMULAS FOR SUCCESS

In future years, Lustau plans to increase sales in the areas of fine restaurants and specialty wine shops for the connoisseurs and explore other Asian markets in addition to Japan. This year, 1997, is to be the "Year of Restaurants" in the U.S. with training programs for restaurant staffs in New York, Massachusetts, Chicago, and Florida, according to Mr. Arcila.

Brand building is another important pillar for success in a quality market, according to Mr. Caballero, and family run companies tend to have a "more transcendent idea of investment in brand building," he affirmed. "There is a soul to the business that is more important than short term interests," he noted. Family run companies, he believes, also have the advantage of being more agile, not bogged down by the bureaucracy of multinationals. This means decisions are made quicker, and management is very efficient. Nevertheless, Mr. Caballero, or Don Luis, as he is known in Jerez, insists that professional management is vital to family run businesses. Family members are on the board but not in the business if they are not professionals. Long term policies, an efficient and motivated team of management, autofinancing and full support of shareholders are also included in Mr. Caballero's formula for success.

Ana Westley *is a freelance writer based in Madrid where she has lived for over 25 years. She was the Spain correspondent for* The New York Times *from 1992 to 1995 and previously was the correspondent for various American publications including* The Wall Street Journal, Businessweek, *and* The Boston Globe, *among others. She continues to be a regular contributor to Special Sections of the* International Herald Tribune.

LUSTAU: Centenary Selection

To celebrate the centenary of the founding of Emilio Lustau, four rare sherries have been selected for special bottling. They will be available in limited quantities. These wines have matured in the Lustau bodegas set in the ancient city wall of Jerez de la Frontera.

Amontillado Bodega Vieja
A classic Amontillado, with a touch of sweetness, from a solera of the Bodega Vieja. A wine of great balance and age.

Oloroso del Tonel
Fragrant and intense, again with a touch of sweetness and with a dark gold color, this wine is very concentrated on the palate.

Moscatel Las Cruces
100 percent produced from the Moscatel grape variety, the wine takes its name from the vineyard Las Cruces in Chipiona. It is aged for many years in a solera in the Jerez bodegas. Ideal as a dessert wine.

Pedro Ximénez Murillo
From the grape variety of the same name, the wine is rich, velvety and soft on the palate, very dark and viscous, with full fruit aromas. Aged in the Bodega Murillo for many years. A perfect dessert wine.

Source: Emilio Lustau S.A.

Spanish Flavor All Over The World

This time, my travels on the trail of Spanish food news have taken me well beyond the shores of Spain itself, as far as London, Tokyo, and the little Californian town of St. Helena. Who would have thought just a few years ago that we should be talking about Spanish potato omelet and *bacalao a la vizcaína* (Basque-style cod), olive oil and Canary Island cheeses in a leading Japanese cookery school, The Hattory Ryory? And who would have thought that in the American Culinary Institute at Greystone, twenty executive chefs would apply themselves to preparing *longaniza* and *butifarra* sausages in the time-honored Catalan and Navarrese way?

The impressive food hall of Harvey Nichols' department store in London's smart Knightsbridge district has, justifiably, become one of the places to shop. The store's discerning buyers of cheese, oil, vinegar and gourmet specialties have naturally included quality Spanish products on its shelves. Sherry vinegar, La Vera *pimentón*, extra-virgin olive oils from Andalusia and Catalonia, canned fish from Cantabria, charcuterie, rice of specific varieties and provenance and, particularly, many Denomination of Origin Spanish cheeses all contribute a little zing to the lives of British shoppers who are starting to discover that the Mediterranean reaches as far as Spain, an interesting and unknown territory from the gastronomic point of view. **Harvey Nichols Food Halls, 109-125 Knightsbridge, London SW1 X7RY**
Tel: (44-171) 235 50 00

Other retail chains, such as Tesco, Sainsbury's and the famous Marks and Spencer have also been stocking Spanish *jamón serrano* (cured ham), red, white and rosé wines from Rioja and the Penedés and, of course, sherry, for quite some time. Talking of Marks and Spencer, I can think of nothing more delightful than a tasting of Spanish sweet wines with some of the little cakes that M&S produces. The idea is a simple one: all you need is a *cava* of the type known as "medium dry," namely with just that bit of sugar that makes them delicious and suitable for drinking with desserts; a small-grape Moscatel, such as Navarre's innovative wineries are launching (the state-of-the-art as far as winemaking is concerned), light, with beautifully balanced fruit, acidity and sugar; a Moscatel de Valencia, with a bit more alcohol than the modern Navarre ones–the Mediterranean type of muscatel that smells and tastes distinctly of the grape from which it is made. And of course, my list could not be complete without a selection of sweet sherries. I'm going to recommend three here: First, a wine made especially with the British palate in view, known as Pale Cream; then, a sweet Oloroso, complex and magical; and finally, a Pedro Ximénez, very sweet, delicious, dark and tantalizing. With the cava, I suggest a tart of autumn fruits, such as raspberries or gooseberries; with the light Navarre Moscatel, traditional Christmas mince pies (this wine is equally irresistible with one of those powerful blue cheeses made up on the Cantabrian coast, especially Picos de Europa or "Picos Blue"). The Valencia Moscatel, a more serious wine with rather more body and a long and penetrating flavor, is excellent with orange or lemon cakes of the lemon meringue pie type, while the Pale Cream sherry is gorgeous with all sorts of fresh fruit such as grapes, cherries or peaches, especially made into a fruit salad to which a little of this wine has been added. My great discovery of the year has been the combination of very old, sweet Oloroso with dark, bitter chocolate cake–irresistible. If you don't believe me, just try it. **Marks & Spencer, 173 Oxford St., London W1R 1PR**
Tel: (44-171) 437 77 22

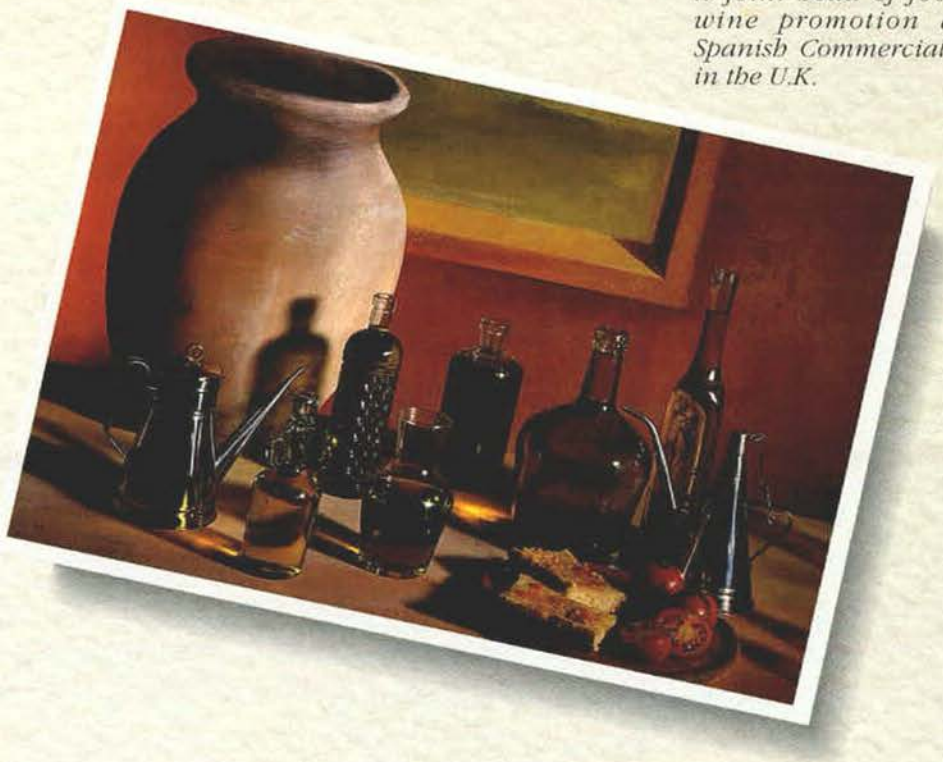
And from London to Tokyo. As part of the program promoting olive oil that the International Olive Oil Council has been conducting in various countries around the world, a large group of speakers and cooks from Spain took over a Japanese kitchen and presented their audience of Japanese food professionals with a series of talks and tastings of products, dishes, and wines from all over Spain. I had the good fortune to share the microphone with important academic and gastronomic figures such as Lourdes March, Clara María de Amezúa and Jerónimo Díaz, the great expert on Spanish olive oil, who taught us to distinguish the characteristics of Spain's principal olive varieties: Arbequina, Picual and Hojiblanca among others. The dinners and cooking classes were produced under the direction of four superb chefs: Kenjiro Sato (Suntory Madrid), Norberto Jorge (Casa Benigna, Madrid), Pedro Larumbe (Restaurante ABC, Madrid) and Adolfo Muñoz (Casa Adolfo, Toledo).
The Institute of Hattory Cooking, 5-24-4 Sendagaya, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo
Tel: (81-3) 3354 4368

The Spanish Commercial Office in Tokyo made the most of the occasion by organizing in parallel a presentation of Spanish gourmet products which gave me the chance in a spare moment to catch up with many interesting new ones, including sweet-sour vinegar, chocolates, a whole range of sauces and preserves, olive oil, and honey. In the beautiful setting of Hornachuelos, in the Sierra de Córdoba mountains, the Martínez

family (relations of the Núñez de Prado olive oil producers) have sited beehives which produce a mountain honey of unique flavor, texture and delicacy, complex and delicious in flavor and dark, completely natural and beautiful in color. Hornachuelos consists of Mediterranean woodland which extends over more than 7,500 hectares (818,500 acres), where the predominant flora are lavender, rosemary, thyme, heather and wild flowers, so it is hardly surprising that the local bees produce such marvelous honey. **Miel de Sierra Certificada Biológica Núñez de Prado, Cervantes 15, 14850 Baena (Córdoba)**
Tel: (34-57) 670 141
There were also other products from Andalusia that caught the attention of gastronomes and importers. Since time immemorial, the province of Huelva has been a source of products derived from the tuna, that magnificent fish prized by the Phoenicians and Romans, not to mention the rest of us who love good eating. This presentation included two products made according to a secret formula by **Carnes Marinas Calmar, S.A.L., Apdo 140, 21410 Isla Cristina (Huelva). Tel/Fax: (34-59) 318 193**, both of which tasted marvelous: *jamón de mar* (literally "ham of the sea") and *ventresca* (made from the belly cut). I must admit that I couldn't choose between the two, and I fear that both exotic *mojama* (salted, air-cured tuna) and smoked salmon are about to be challenged by two serious new competitors on both the Spanish and international markets, including the U.S. market which is always so open to new gastronomic experiences.

In the last ten years, the state of California has not only become the mecca for food and wine writers who head there in search of its optimistic attitude and its cutting-edge position in the world of food and wine. Barely two years ago, the American Culinary Institute in Greystone, on the outskirts of the little town of St. Helena in the Napa Valley, opened its doors to cookery students and chefs with an interest in the gastronomy of the year 2000. Today, it is considered to be one of the world's leading professional training centers. Spain, in recognition and support of the Culinary Institute's activities, has now made its second visit there, giving cooking and culture courses to California's executive chefs. From 1997 on, regional Spanish cuisine will be included on the center's official curriculum.
Some weeks ago, Manuel Zarzoso (a teacher at the Tarrasa School of Catering in Catalonia) and I, enjoyed a wonderful week in Greystone in the company of 22 Californians dressed in white jackets and tall starched hats, avid to be taught about the authentic cuisines of Spain, both traditional and modern, and its oils, wines, cheeses, pimentón and peppers, saffron and sherry vinegars. They learned to clean fish and shellfish as the Basques and Catalans do, that *romesco* sauce has hundreds of facets, how to make quince *alioli*, and to understand why authentic Spanish rice dishes have to be made with Spanish rice varieties such as Bahía and Calasparra. With over sixty recipes on the program, we had the opportunity to cook with hundreds of Spanish ingredients, especially the famous little red peppers from Navarre known as *pimiento del piquillo*, and we enjoyed peppers produced by Conservas Bajamar, Conservas Pincha, Conservas Viter and Conservas Dantza.
The Culinary Institute of America at Greystone, 2555 Main St., St. Helena, California 94574
Tel: (1-707) 967 11 00

María José Sevilla *is an expert in Spanish gastronomy, the author of several books and a BBC TV program on the subject, and is joint head of food and wine promotion at the Spanish Commercial Office in the U.K.*



RECIPES FROM GALICIA

Recipes selected by Vicky Hayward

Scallops Baked in Their Shells

The Ogaretxa sisters have been cooking in their childhood home, the 11th-century *pazo*, El Lagar, for over 30 years (see page 94). A huge log fire roars away in the stone chimney in winter. Vegetables for salads, soups and the stewpot grow in the kitchen-garden at the back. Ask the Ogaretxas what to eat with Albariño and, like everyone else locally, they will say shellfish: raw oysters, *salpicón* (a dressed salad) of chopped shellfish with hard-boiled egg and parsley, or these sweet-fleshed scallops baked in their shells.

SERVES 6 (as a first course):
6 fat scallops on the half-shell
6 heaped tbsp grated fresh breadcrumbs
Dribble of olive oil
Juice of 1/2 lemon
About 1 tsp sea salt

Wash the scallops well. On the coast people do this in a bucket of seawater. Scatter the breadcrumbs and a pinch of salt over the scallops, dribble over the olive oil and a few drops of lemon juice, then pop into a hot oven. Fat scallops take about 10 minutes, but start checking earlier with a toothpick stabbed into the white flesh for tenderness. Ramón Vieites, a cellarman at Pazo de Fefiñanes, told me his family makes this even more simply, putting the washed scallops into a flameproof dish over direct heat for 4-5 minutes with nothing more than a little olive oil. **Recommended wine:** A monovarietal Albariño from D.O. Rías Baixas or Ribeira Sacra. Its light, sometimes almost lemony, acidity balances the sweetness of the scallops and neither food nor wine overpowers the other's subtlety. The Ogaretxa sisters recommend serving the wine not too chilled, just below room temperature, to bring out all its aromas and flavors.

Roast Beef

A quick, simple recipe from the Ribeiro wine country, with an overnight wine marinade and roasted green peppers from Arnoia showing its origins. Arnoia's green peppers are so appreciated in the region that they have a three-day fiesta dedicated to them. The recipe comes from Visitación Simón Vázquez, who cooks for guests at the Viña Meín vineyard as well as her own family. She uses their white wine, but you could equally well use red.

SERVES 6:
1 1/2 kilos of roasting beef, in one piece
2 tbsp olive oil
3 glasses of white wine
2 onions, skinned and quartered
2 carrots, skinned
6 large green peppers
18 small new potatoes (or 5 larger ones, skinned and quartered)

FOR THE MARINADE:
1 tsp rock or sea salt
2 glasses of white wine
4 tbsp fruity olive oil
2 garlic cloves, skinned and chopped
A few parsley leaves, roughly chopped

The evening before cooking, make up the marinade, dissolving the salt in the wine, and pour over the meat. Leave overnight in a cool place, turning once or twice and spooning over the marinade.
For roasting, preheat the oven to 250°C (475°F), gas mark 9. Wipe the meat dry, seal it briefly in 1 tbsp olive oil and transfer it to a lightly oiled roasting dish. Pour the white wine over the meat and surround it with the onions, carrots and peppers (unsalted). Roast for 15 minutes, then turn the oven down to 200°C (400°F), gas mark 6. When the carrots and onions are tender, remove and keep to one side. Put the prepared potatoes in an oiled dish and into the oven on a lower shelf. When the meat is done–probably after 1 1/4 hours, but check before-remove it and leave to rest. Meanwhile, skim and discard the fat from the roasting juices and blend them with the carrots and onions to make the gravy. Slice the meat, pour the gravy over it and serve surrounded by the peppers, sprinkling them lightly with salt before serving.
Recommended wine: A well-structured D.O. Ribeiro goes well with this–either one of the aromatic fruity whites with body or a smooth young red. A white or young red wine from the eastern Galician regions, either Valdeorras or Monterrei, would also be a good match.

Boiled Beef and Potaoes whit Paprika

Ribeira Sacra wines are drunk locally with down-to-earth country dishes: ham boiled with turnip greens or potatoes with *chorizo* sausage. This is another such dish from farmhouse Galician cooking with its plain boiled flavors typically finished off by a combination of salt, spicy paprika and fatback.

SERVES 8:
2 kg braising beef (e.g. flank)
Sea salt, to taste
800 gr potatoes,
peeled and cut into chunks
100 gr pork fat (traditionally *unto*,
salted fat, but fatback will do fine)
1-2 tsp spicy hot paprika,
to taste
Sea salt, to taste

Cut the meat into lean serving pieces of about 200 grams each. Cut the fatback into fine slices and lay it over the meat. Cover with water, sprinkle lightly with salt and braise slowly. When the meat is almost ready–tender enough to stick a fork into it–add the potatoes and leave to boil until they are cooked and the sauce has thickened slightly. Put the meat in the center of a heated serving dish, surround with the potatoes and sprinkle generously with spicy paprika and chunky salt crystals (quantities are a matter of taste).
Recommended wine: A Ribeira Sacra wine. Lluis Llorden of Sibaris Restaurant in Santiago, comments that although these are young raspberry-red wines, the Mencía grape gives them a lively persistence and clean-nosed tenaciousness which goes well with the strong flavors of Galicia's country cooking. An alternative would be a D.O. Valdeorras, Godello varietal white, fermented in wood, which has fruity aromas and a slightly bitter elegance good with the spicy paprika.

Braised Partridge with Mushrooms and Chestnuts

Nearly half of Spain's chestnuts are grown in Galicia's inland provinces. Many go to make marrons glacés and luxury preserves, such as chestnuts in honey, but they are also sold fresh for cooking and eating at home. They may be served simmered in sugary milk as a pudding, or in the mountain areas they often turn up cooked with game. Here is a

dish from a roadside restaurant, Gallego near Verín. Its reputation for good seasonal cooking is built around imaginative use of local ingredients from the Monterrei Valley, such as the local wild mushrooms, partridge, and white wine in this juicy casserole.

SERVES 6:

6 partridges, cleaned, trussed and dusted with flour
2 glasses of fruity olive oil
1 large onion, roughly chopped
2 cloves of garlic, chopped
1 medium carrot, sliced
1 bay leaf
Fresh parsley
Large pinch each of dried oregano and thyme
Small pinch of saffron threads
4 slices of pork belly or bacon
2 glasses of consommé
1/2 bottle of white Monterrei wine
100 gr cooked and peeled chestnuts (you can use frozen)
250 gr wild mushrooms
1 dried, spicy-hot pepper
White pepper
Salt

Dust the partridges lightly with flour. Heat the olive oil in a flameproof dish–preferably earthenware, if you have it–and sauté the birds. When golden and well sealed, add the roughly chopped onion, garlic, carrot, herbs and spices.

Cover the partridges with the belly of pork, add the consommé and bring to a boil. Simmer gently for another 45 minutes, removing the lid to reduce the sauce at the end of cooking if necessary. Five minutes before the end of cooking–or just before you want to serve the partridges–stir in the chestnuts and simmer to heat them through.

Recommended wine: A D.O. Monterrei, the same white as used for cooking, would be the obvious choice. They are dry, pale or straw yellow wines with fresh primary aromas and plenty of bite to go with a gamy dish.

Monkfish and Zucchini Salad

Galician chefs remain overwhelmingly true to their regional roots, even the younger generation who are breathing new life into dishes made with local produce. Grilled scallops with lemon and asparagus puree, fried oysters dipped in cornmeal, or sole in Albariño sauce are just a few examples of the modern ideas that crop up on today's restaurant menus. Many such dishes, which keep the emphasis on clean flavors, are tailor-made to bring out the best in the finer new regional wines and they combine well. Here is one such dish from Toñi Vicente, the female chef who pioneered modern Galician cooking. Although it comes from the menu of her restaurant Sibaris, in Santiago, it is equally easily made and served at home.

SERVES 4:
600 gr monkfish, preferably cut from the boneless tail, trimmed of membrane
500 gr zucchini
1 clove of garlic, skinned and finely chopped
1 tsp chopped fresh basil leaves
Pinch of sea salt
6 scallops
1 shallot, trimmed and chopped
50 ml virgin olive oil
1 tsp good quality red wine vinegar
Pepper

Cut the monkfish across the grain into 1-cm thick slices; there should be 3-4 slices per person. Cut the zucchini into julienne matchsticks and toss them with the garlic and basil. Pour just a teaspoon of olive oil into a heavy-based frying pan (copper-bottomed if you have it), place over very high heat and toss the zucchini with a pinch of salt for one or two minutes till golden brown. Remove and divide between four serving plates. Add another teaspoon of oil to the pan, sauté the monkfish and scallops quickly till just cooked, and arrange them on top of the zucchini. Add the remaining olive oil, the shallot and wine vinegar in the pan, swish around and pour over the salads–just half a dessertspoonful or so for each. Finish by milling a little black pepper over the vegetables.

Recommended wine: This is an excellent dish to make if you have a very good bottle of Albariño; the sweet green vegetable and basil echo the complexity in the fragile, fruity aromas and flavors of such a wine. Equally, you might like to try an Albariño made from cold-macerated grapes, which gives a very tangy freshness that goes well with the slight bite of the wine vinegar.

Custard-filled Pancakes with *Aguardiente*

These pancakes, or *filloas*, are one of the most traditional Galician puddings and may be made with wheat or rye flour. At home these are usually left unfilled and simply sweetened with sugar or honey. The recipe here, from Pedro Infante, chef at the Pontevedra parador, is a long-standing favorite there.

SERVES 8:
1 liter milk
400 gr plain flour
6 eggs
1/2 glass of brandy
Pinch of salt
Lump of pork fat

TO FINISH:
Aguardiente, a generous splash
Sugar, to sprinkle over the top

FOR THE CUSTARD FILLING:
1 liter milk
A curl of lemon zest
Pinch of cinnamon or 1/2 cinnamon stick
8 egg yolks
200 gr sugar
100 gr cornstarch
Vanilla extract to taste

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Mix all the pancake ingredients to make a liquid batter and leave to rest. Meanwhile, make the custard. In a 1-liter bowl, mix the egg yolks with the sugar and cornstarch. Heat the milk slowly with the lemon zest and cinnamon and, when it comes to a boil, remove the milk from the heat. Stir into the egg yolks, pour the mixture back into the pan and put over low heat, stirring all the time, until the custard thickens. Flavor with vanilla extract if you wish. Pour into a flat plate to cool while you make the pancakes.
Sieve the rested batter to remove lumps. Heat a heavy-bottomed frying pan over high heat with the pork fat till it runs and begin to make thin pancakes, frying them till golden on each side. Pile them up, separating them with grease-proof or waxed paper. When they are cool, fill with a few spoonfuls of custard and sprinkle with a little aguardiente.

PULSES

Recipes selected by Lourdes March
Wines selected by María Jesús Gil de Antuñano

The following recipes for pulses have been selected to cover both traditional Spanish recipes—most of which are substantial, stew-type dishes, with the exception of the Andalusian-style spinach that is often served in the *tapas* bars of Seville—and more modern, lighter methods of preparation. Where the ingredients mention cooked pulses, ready-cooked bottled products may be used if you prefer not to soak and cook them yourself.

TRADITIONAL RECIPES
Shelled Beans with Clams

SERVES 4:
500 gr dried shelled beans, soaked overnight
300 gr clams
1 onion, peeled
1 garlic clove, peeled
1 tbsp breadcrumbs
1 bay leaf
1 sprig of parsley
1 pinch of saffron
100 ml olive oil
Salt

Drain the beans and place in a large pan. Add the onion, garlic, bay leaf, parsley and oil. Cover with cold water and bring to a boil, then simmer, partly covered, checking that the beans are at all times covered with water.
Wash the clams, place in a separate pan with just a little water, cover and cook over a medium heat until the steam opens them up. Remove the empty half shells, drain the stock and leave to cool.
When the beans are practically cooked, add the clams, breadcrumbs, crushed saffron and the cold clam stock. Gently shake the pan to blend the ingredients and continue to cook over a low heat for a further 10 minutes. Season with salt and leave to rest for a few minutes before serving.
Recommended wine: A young red wine such as a Rioja Alavesa from the D.O.Ca. Rioja. (The Rioja Alavesa belongs to the D.O.Ca. Rioja but is located within the Basque Country.)
This recipe can be considered to be a combination of two dishes that normally stand on their own—on the one hand a bean stew and, on the other, sailor-style clams. It therefore needs to be accompanied by a wine that is not too complex but is fresh enough to balance the texture of the beans without overwhelming the taste of the clams that are the

GONZALEZ BYASS

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focal point of the dish. One of the young red wines produced in the Rioja Alavesa by the procedure known as *maceración carbónica** would be just the thing.

* Carbonic maceration is the method traditionally used for preparing young wines in the Rioja Alavesa. The grapes are not pressed but placed directly in a tank with a small opening at the base and left until the must ferments inside the grapes, making them burst open. The must then drops through to another tank below.

Spinach Andalusian Style

SERVES 4:

350 gr cooked chickpeas
1 kg fresh spinach
4 garlic cloves, peeled
2 slices bread
2 hard-boiled eggs (optional)
1 tsp sweet paprika
1 pinch of ground cummin
A few drops of vinegar
100 ml olive oil
Salt

GARNISH: Fried triangles of crusty bread

Wash the spinach and chop. Blanch in boiling, salted water for eight minutes. Drain and set aside.
Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the 2 slices of bread and the garlic cloves. Remove the pan from the heat, take out the bread and garlic and crush them together in a mortar.
Return the pan to the heat, place in it the crushed bread and garlic mixture with the paprika and cummin. Stir, then add the drained spinach and the chickpeas. Add the vinegar and a little of the stock from the chickpeas, check for salt and heat together for a few minutes.
Remove from the heat and serve in individual earthenware dishes, decorated with the finely chopped hard-boiled eggs and with two pieces of fried bread on each dish.
Recommended wine: Manzanilla, D.O. Jerez-Xérès-Sherry y Manzanil de Sanlúcar de Barrameda.
This dish couldn't be more Andalusian and would be a typical offering in any of the Seville tapas bars, served with a spectacular Manzanilla from Sanlúcar. If such a generous aperitif is not available, try a Rueda Superior from 100 percent Verdejo grapes. This has sufficient structure to be a splendid partner for the cooked chickpeas with their spinach accompaniment.

Lentils from Upper Aragon

SERVES 4:

400 gr lentils, soaked overnight
1 serrano ham bone
200 gr blood sausage
2 leeks, chopped
1 onion, peeled and chopped
1 tomato, peeled and chopped
150 gr mushrooms, chopped and sprinkled with the juice of half a lemon
100 ml olive oil
100 ml muscatel wine
1 tsp dry aniseed liqueur
Salt

Place the lentils in a pan with water to cover, the ham bone and a little salt and cook over a medium heat.
Meanwhile, heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the leeks and the onion. When they begin to turn brown, add the tomato, cook over a medium heat for 10 minutes then add the mushrooms and the blood sausage and cook for a further 10 minutes.
When the lentils are cooked, add the fried mixture, check for salt and cook for a further 10 minutes.

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Before removing from the heat, sprinkle with the aniseed liqueur and the muscatel wine. Serve immediately.

Recommended wine: Red Garnacha, D.O. Cariñena or Campo de Borja.

There is no more biblical meal than a dish of lentils, and this recipe brings together the smoothness of the pulses with the sturdiness of the other ingredients and the potency of the aniseed liqueur that gives the finishing touch. The best accompaniment is a young red Garnacha wine from the D.O. Cariñena or Campo de Borja, as the Garnacha grape has an incomparable aroma when young. Its smoothness and quality bring out all the flavor of this traditional Aragonese dish.

Cocido Madrileño

SERVES 6:

500 gr chickpeas, soaked overnight
500 gr lean stewing beef
400 gr boiling fowl
100 gr salted pork belly
100 gr serrano ham
2 *chorizos* (200 gr)
2 blood sausages (200 gr)
1 salted pig's trotter, soaked overnight
250 gr green runner beans, topped and tailed
250 gr cabbage, cut in wedges
300 gr Swiss chard, washed
6 small potatoes, peeled (600 gr)
Half a small onion (100 gr) spiked with a clove
70 gr fine noodles for soup
1 garlic clove, peeled
2 pinches of saffron
4 tbsp olive oil
Salt
Tomato sauce to accompany

Measure three liters of cold water into a wide-based pan, place over the heat and add the meat, boiling fowl, bacon and ham (the water must cover all the ingredients). Remove any foam forming with a slotted spoon. When it comes to a boil, add the chickpeas and the pig's trotter. When it begins to boil again, add the onion and salt, lower the heat and simmer for about three hours.

In a separate pan, boil the vegetables with the chorizos for 30 minutes. Add the potatoes and saffron and cook for a further 20 minutes. Boil the blood sausages in another pan taking care to keep them whole.

Strain the stocks together into a single pan, check for salt and prepare the broth with the noodles.

Sauté the cooked and drained vegetables with the oil and garlic in a frying pan. Arrange on a serving dish with the chorizos, blood sausages and whole potatoes. Drain the chickpeas and add to the dish (if large enough, otherwise on a separate dish), with the meat cut in small pieces on top and pieces of ham, bacon, chicken and pig's trotter around the edges.

A tomato sauce can be served separately or the whole dish can be dressed with olive oil.

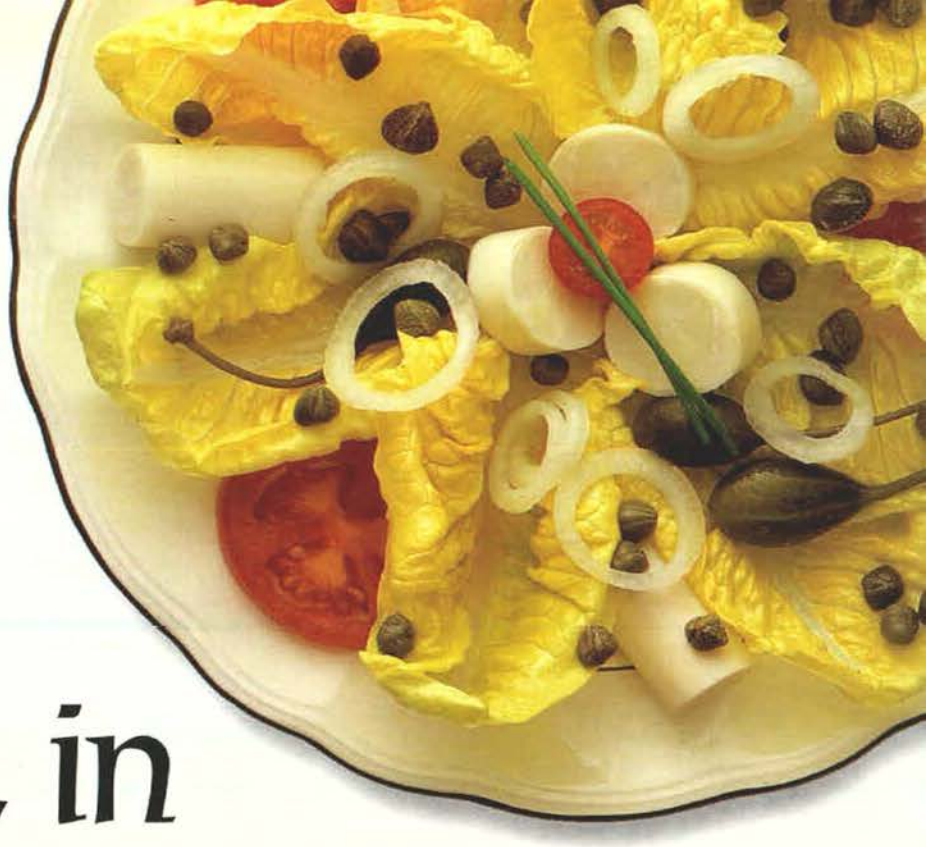
Recommended wine: Red Arganda, D.O. Vinos de Madrid.

The locals would have no doubt as to the best wine–either a red wine from the subzone of Arganda, within the D.O. Vinos de Madrid, or a light red *clarete* wine from Valdepeñas. But if these are not easy to find, a simpler choice, but no less interesting, would be an aromatic young red Garnacha wine from Navarre or a young, fruity Rioja made from Tempranillo grapes. All would blend perfectly with the creaminess of the chickpeas, enhancing the flavor of the different meats in the stew.

NEW IDEAS
Mediterranean Salad

SERVES 4:

400 gr white haricot beans, cooked and drained
150 gr tuna fish crumbs in oil
2 finely chopped spring onions
150 gr green and black olives, pitted and chopped
100 gr canned red pepper, cut in squares
Zest of 1 lemon
4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2 tbsp white wine vinegar
2 tbsp chopped parsley
Salt



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Place the drained beans in a salad bowl and add the spring onions, olives and pepper.
Beat the oil with the vinegar, add the lemon zest and the tuna fish and pour over the beans. Mix with care and leave to settle. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.
Recommended wine: Young red wine, D.O. Jumilla.
Although a simple salad, this dish has sufficient consistency to go well with a young red wine made from the star variety of the Jumilla region, the Monastrell grape, which gives magnificent, well-rounded young wines, with a delicate aroma of forest fruits. Along the same lines, another good partner would be an intense rosé wine from the same D.O. Jumilla, but not a light wine, as this might be obscured by the salad.

Stuffed Eggplants

SERVES 4:
4 medium-sized eggplants (800 gr)
2 ripe tomatoes (1 peeled and chopped, 1 sliced)
1 onion, peeled and chopped
150 gr lentils, cooked and drained
150 gr long-grain rice, cooked
150 gr minced meat
4 tbsp tomato sauce
1 tsp oregano
2 tbsp lemon juice
4 tbsp olive oil
1/2 liter water
Salt

Wash the eggplants, dry them, cut off the top and scoop out the flesh. Cut a slice off the bottom to make a flat base.
Heat the oil in a frying pan and gently fry the onion for 5 minutes. Add the chopped tomato, fry for a further 5 minutes then add the minced meat. Stir over a medium heat for a few minutes, then add the lentils, rice, tomato sauce, oregano and a little salt.
Fill the eggplants with this mixture, top with a slice of tomato and stand upright in a deep pan. Add half a liter of water and a little salt, cover and cook slowly for 30 minutes. Sprinkle with the lemon juice, cook for a further 15 minutes and serve.
Recommended wine: Young red, D.O. Somontano.
Although the title of the recipe indicates a vegetable dish, the heartiness of the filling means that the best accompaniment is a red wine with body and structure but also acidity to contrast with the texture of the pulses and the minced meat. A young Somontano wine from Aragon made from Tempranillo grapes gives freshness and fullness to the combined flavors of this dish.

Salmon with Saffron Sauce

SERVES 4:
800 gr fresh salmon fillets
200 gr cooked chickpeas
1 onion, peeled and finely chopped
1 garlic clove, peeled and chopped
200 ml fish stock
1 pinch saffron
6 tbsp olive oil
Salt

Heat 4 tbsp olive oil in a frying pan and gently fry the garlic and onion. Add 50 gr of cooked chickpeas, 200 ml of fish stock or the chickpea cooking stock and the saffron. Leave to cook for 2 minutes then beat in the blender.
Pour this sauce into a large frying pan, test for salt and gently cook the salmon in it for about 10 minutes, depending on the thickness of the fillets. Drain the rest of the chickpeas, sauté in 2 tbsp olive oil and serve with the salmon.

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The tenth Show occupied a total area of 19,000 sq. m. among the 458 companies which are exhibiting –of which 40% were from the food sub-sector and 51% from the drinks sub-sector. Throughout the four exhibition days more than 31,000 professionals visited the show.

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Recommended wine: White Chardonnay, D.O. Navarra.
The delicacy of the saffron-flavored sauce, the creaminess of the salmon with the chickpeas and the sweetness of the onion make this the ideal dish to partner an aromatic, cask-aged white wine, such as a Navarran Chardonnay. Other good matches would be a Rueda white aged for one year in the bottle or a delicate, one-year-old Albariño, D.O. Rías Baixas.

Chicken with Kidney Beans

SERVES 4:
4 chicken breasts (600 gr)
400 gr cooked red kidney beans
1 onion, peeled and chopped
2 natural yogurts
6 tbsp tomato sauce
1 tbsp flour
1 tbsp sugar
1 tbsp vinegar
2 tsp vinegar
2 tsp paprika
1 pinch of chili powder
4 tbsp olive oil
Salt

Season the chicken breasts with a little salt and half the paprika. Coat with flour and set aside.
Mix the yogurt with the tomato sauce. Drain the beans and place in a large pan.
Heat the oil in a frying pan and brown the chicken breasts. Remove and place on top of the beans. In the same oil, gently sauté the onion for 5 minutes. Add the sugar and stir until dissolved. Add the paprika, chili powder and vinegar while stirring. Add the yogurt and tomato sauce mixture. Bring to a boil then pour over the chicken and beans. Try for salt. Bring to a boil, simmer over a low heat for 10 minutes then serve.
Recommended wine: Young red, D.O. Toro.
This nourishing dish, with both animal and vegetable proteins and a thick and tasty sauce, would go perfectly with a young "Toro" wine. The unusual Tinta de Toro grape variety gives a wine with a magnificent purplish color, intense aromas and a full flavor that enable it to stand in its own right alongside red kidney beans with white meat.

EL RACÓ DE CAN FABES

Spain is one of the finest countries in the world for those who enjoy the pleasures of the table. Over the years, this magazine has discussed how Spain's extremely varied regional cuisine reflects the blending of different cultures, carefully nurtured traditions, and the richness of the country's produce. In 1997, Gourmetour has decided to focus on three philosophers of the Spanish kitchen, holders, each of them, of the coveted three-star Michelin Award. It has decided to meet three outstanding artists who have set new standards for the Spanish table.
In the first article of this series, Tom Burns sat down with Santi Santamaría, owner-chef of the Racó de Can Fabes in San Celoni, north of Barcelona, to find out how and why he has revolutionized traditional Catalan cooking.

Text: **Tom Burns**
Photo: **A. de Benito/Sobremesa**

You would think that the starting point of a conversation with an acknowledged master chef would be food. If the top cook you are talking to is Santi Santamaría, the owner-chef of the Racó de Can Fabes, you would be wrong. In this case you start off talking about background, about origins, about Catalonia and then, gradually, you move on to his philosophy of cooking. "Cooking is about recovering traditions," is one of the many points he made to me that stick in my mind.
As a child Santi Santamaría used to watch his father's cows being milked in the shed that adjoined his family's house in San Celoni. As a young man in the 1970s, he turned the cow shed into a cultural center for people like himself who were deeply committed to Catalonia's politics. Protest singers came to give songs, writers gave readings and artists hung their work. Santi began to cook food for his widening circle of friends.
In the 1980s, the tensions of the previous decade were a receding memory but the friends kept coming to the cow shed. They were now drawn not by political conspiracies, but by the increasing brilliance of Santi's cuisine. In 1987, a different sort of client turned up in the shape of a Michelin Guide restaurant inspector. The cooking at what Santi had called Racó de Can Fabes, after the family farmhouse, ceased overnight to be a shared secret among friends from his politically active days. The cow shed-turned-restaurant was awarded a Michelin star.
"My friends say they paid for my apprenticeship and they are dead right," says Santi.

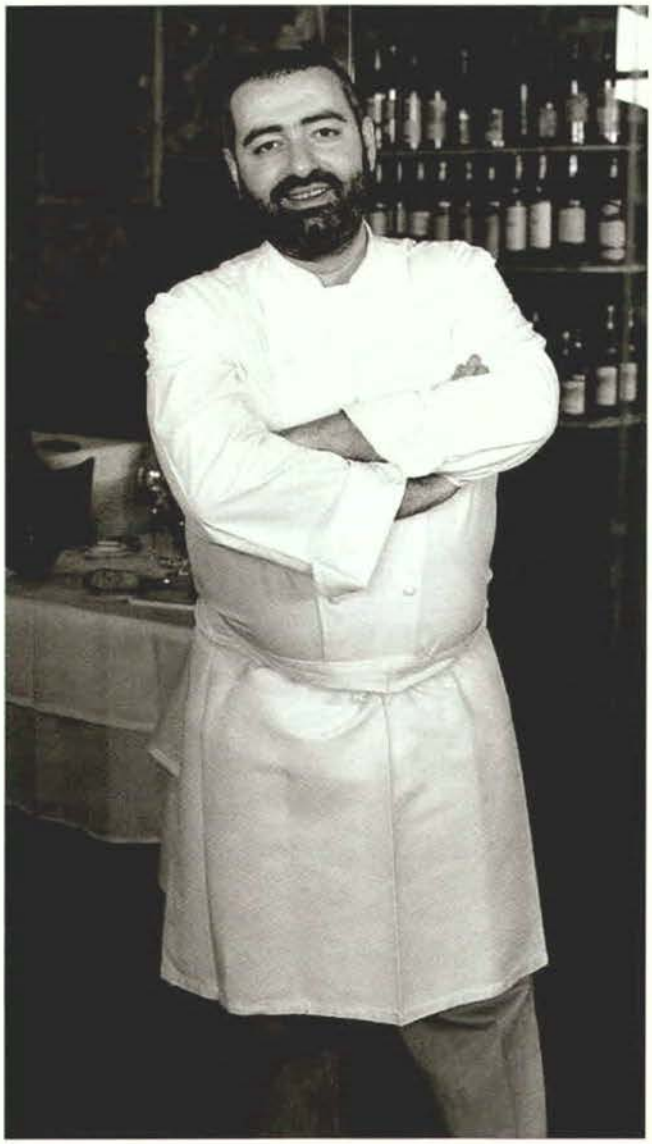
Payès stock

As owner-chef of Racó de Can Fabes, Santi's career took off like the meteorite that he had been awarded. In 1989, his restaurant received a second Michelin star and in 1993 Santi reached the pinnacle of his profession when he gained a third star. "I predicted after the first star that Santi would rise fast up the Michelin ladder," says Madrid food critic Víctor de la Serna who writes under the name of Fernando Point. "Santi is a seriously interesting and ambitious chef."
Santi's background gives several clues to what he does and why he does it. "My origins are humble and I have wanted to go forward and raise myself up. I come from absolute payès stock," he says using the Catalan word for the small peasant farmer. His progressive politics were a mirror image of the self improvement he sought for himself. But he is very far from being an upwardly mobile individual who breaks with his past.
He is, first and foremost, tied to his roots in San Celoni, which nestles in the folds of the Montseny Sierra, north of Barcelona. "I believe in reference points because we are products of our history."
His origins, together with his commitment to improvement, are expressed in his cooking. Santi starts from traditional peasant cooking, often working back through old recipe books and the folk memories of his grandparents' generation, to rediscover how food was cooked in a rural payès society. These findings are his reference points and he develops them by applying to such half-forgotten fare, the modern skills of a highly professional cook.
He has, like great chefs the world over, a boundless admiration for the top French masters of his profession. He learned from them–the French border is an hour's drive from San Celoni–the skills he required to take payès cooking forward into a new age.

The author-chef

In the way that the poets who, in the cow shed's cultural center days, extolled the values and the beauty of Catalonia, Santi explains the love of his homeland and of his birthplace through the food he creates. "Cooking is sentiment and at the same time it is rationalization and technique," he says. "I communicate

For Santi Santamaría, cooking is sentiment and at the same time it is rationalization and technique.



by cooking and there is no great cooking unless it is backed up by ideology. Without ideology it is simply a matter of manual skills, great skills, but mere skills nonetheless."

Santi Santamaría admires rationality, which he learned about during his tours of the great French kitchens, and he has mastered the techniques of his profession, but of the three factors that, in his definition make up cooking, it is clear that "sentiment," a word that he often uses, is the most important. This to him means authenticity. "Sentiment can never be false or pretended and what we have to do is to insist on what is authentic."

But sentiment alone is not enough. "Top cuisine has to have an element of creativity, that is essential. Like every work of quality, it requires creativity because if it is not creative it is not art," he explains.

With Santi Santamaría, one is talking to an artist who is creating what he calls an "author's cuisine." He is writing his own recipes and he is testing them on his public. He is on a level with the composer who plays his own music and with the film director who writes his own scripts. Santi is expressing himself and communicating with others by using his pans and his stove; he does so in the same manner that a painter communicates with his brushes and his canvas.

In the manner of all artists, Santi demands complicity. He wants to hold the attention of others and to transmit to them his "sentiment." He demands "a predisposition on the part of the person coming to my restaurant that makes that person want to find out about what I am doing and why am doing it."

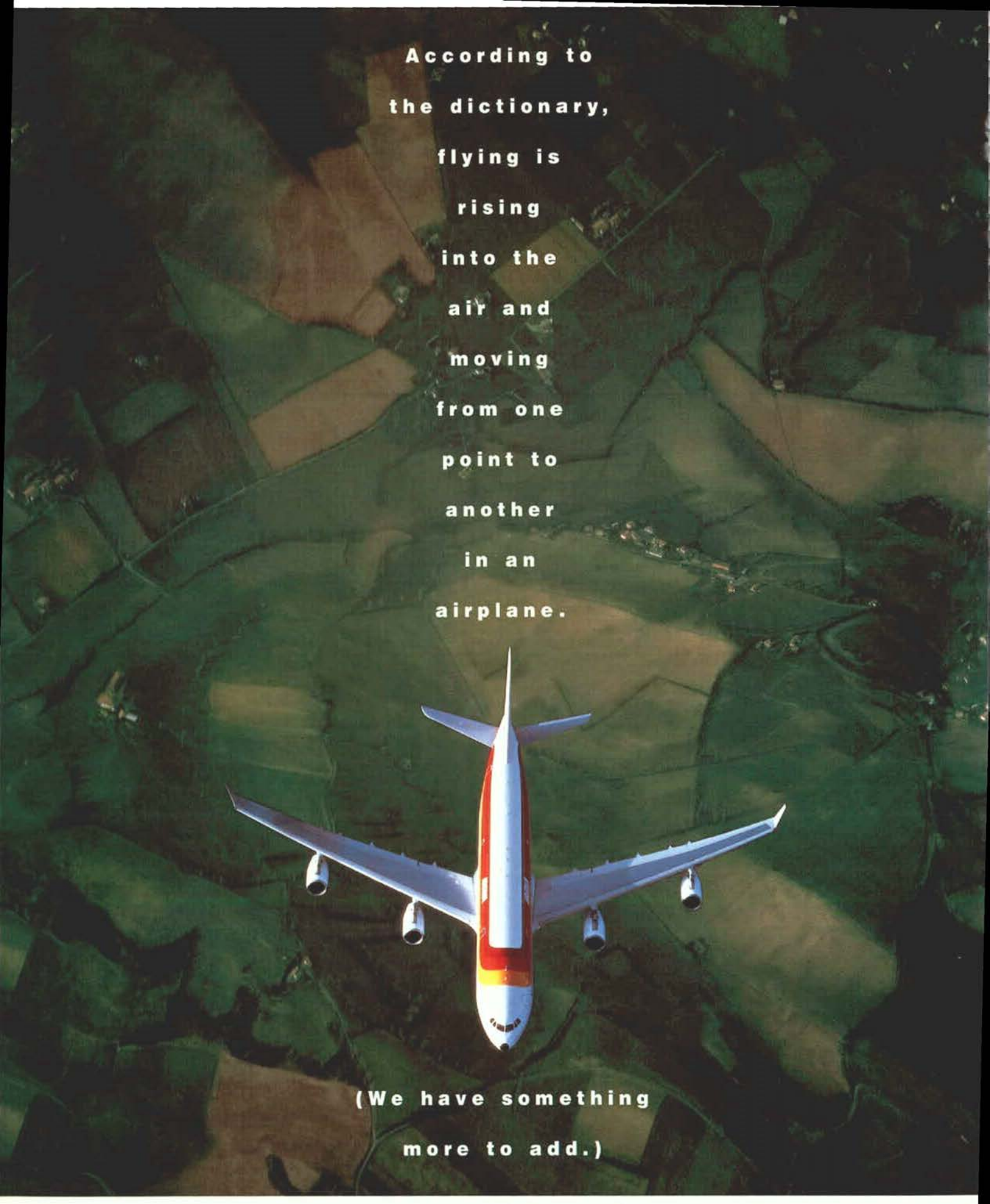
Sticking to his roots

Those who go to his restaurant have to travel for 50-odd kilometers (28 miles) up the A-7 motorway that links Barcelona to the French border and take exit 11 which is the one that leads them to San Celoni, just off the motorway. It is an odd place to find a three-star Michelin restaurant for it is an unprepossessing town, and the Racó de Can Fabes, near its center, is reached through narrow, little streets. An immediate surprise is that the restaurant is a fine stone building that has survived property speculators.

Santi won't budge from San Celoni. He won't move to Barcelona to be closer to his growing legion of admirers and he quotes the Catalan artist Joan Miró to make his point: "To be universal, you have to be local." What he has done is to stand by the farmhouse, with its adjoining cow shed, that his great-great-grandparents built in what was then the outskirts of San Celoni.

The town may have degenerated towards ugliness in its expansion but its setting, up against the Montseny Sierra, is stunning. "People can move, panoramas can't," says Santi. "I'm more and more convinced about that." The message is clear enough. If you want to eat what he produces in his kitchen, you have to travel to San Celoni.

There are aesthetic reasons, obviously, or sentimental ones as Santi would say, for sticking by the Montseny peak, by its rolling woodlands and its shaded walks. Santi knows all the hidden trails of the Sierra for he constantly treks them when he takes time off from his pots and



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pans. But there are practical reasons, too, for staying in San Celoni.

The market town supplies much of what Santi needs and he uses a network of payès farmers who grew up with his father. All chefs get to know their wholesalers but Santi goes several steps further for he knows the plot of land where the vegetables are grown and he knows the farmyard where the suckling pigs were born. If you are determined to be authentic you stick close to your primary products and Santi has the cabbage plot and the pig sty virtually on his own back door.

His major love is the Montseny, and the Sierra supplies him with game, with herbs, with truffles and with fungi. One of his pet hates is the city dwellers who drive up to the Sierra to picnic and destroy the environment as if they were an invading army. They thoughtlessly tear off branches of holly for their Christmas decorations, he complains, and they uproot mushrooms, this being a major sin in Santi's world. "In order to pick mushrooms you first have to know your fungi and these people don't," he says. "Then you cut them halfway down the stem with a sharp knife and cover up what's left of the stem that remains with soil. You put the fungi in a wicker basket, never in a plastic bag."

Mediterranean friendliness

People who negotiate San Celoni's narrow streets will find a succession of surprises at the Racó de Can Fabes. The main one is the friendliness of the restaurant. This is important because three-star Michelin restaurants, not to mention a lot of pretentious eating houses that have no stars at all and don't deserve to, tend to be threatening. "I don't think anyone is frightened about walking in here," says Santi and this is something of an understatement. The place is positively welcoming.

The decor of the spruced-up cow shed with its original beams is of the highest taste–Santi would point out that it is very "authentic" and he is right–the service is superb and the presentation of the dishes, together with the magnificently stocked wine cellar, matches the excellence of the cuisine. But there is nothing stilted about the place. You don't, for example, have to dress up to eat there although if you do, you do not feel uncomfortable.

The atmosphere of Racó de Can Fabes is probably a hangover from its informal arts center days. It also reflects Santi's strongly held view about the Mediterranean culture that shapes what he calls a "cuisine of the sun," an open air and full of light approach to food.

"Mediterranean cuisine goes beyond products such as olive oil, fish, pulses, herbs, vegetables and the rest," he says. "All of that is created by the climate but the climate also shapes the behavior of people and people become more open and communicative under the Mediterranean sun. It is an out-of-doors culture and its good food table is set out in a relaxed atmosphere."

One of Santi's firmly held views is that a meal is a celebration that should be shared among friends and that it should be fun. "I want people to leave the restaurant feeling that they have had a really good time." If the experience of eating food is not enjoyable then something has gone seriously wrong.

Refined rusticity

What is very clear is that the Racó de Can Fabes creates a considerable feel good factor among its customers. People leave the restaurant making a mental note to return. Santi reckons that around 50 percent of his clients are "regulars" and many of these are friends from the earliest cow shed days.

One friend in particular, the artist Antoni Tàpies who has a country house in the Montseny, presented Santi with an abstract that consists of bold brush strokes making an interlocking "S" for Santi and "A" for Santi's wife Àngels Serra. The union of the two initials suggests the Montseny; Santi hung the picture on a wall of his restaurant and ordered reproductions which now appear on the cover of the restaurant's menu.

The abstract tells a lot about what Santi holds dear. It incorporates Àngels, a teacher who totally backed his decision to abandon a career as an industrial designer and concentrate wholly on Racó de Can Fabes. It highlights the Montseny and all that its Sierra represents to those who are passionate about Catalonia. And it is also a testimony to friendship which is something that Santi values highly.

Tàpies is far from being alone in recognizing that Santi Santamaría has created an entirely individual style as he experiments and creates within clearly defined reference points that speak of roots, of authenticity, of tradition.

Take for example the basic terrine of fish and the *fumet*, fish stock, that were ever-present from time immemorial in the homes of humble fishermen who never, as is the rule in primitive societies, threw anything away. Santi uses these traditions and transforms them into a dish of great delicacy by encasing the terrine in a gelée of fumet flavored by the Montseny's herbs.

Or take the shellfish that he serves gently warmed and covered in an extraordinary and deceptively simple parsley- and garlic-based vinaigrette that brings out the full flavor of an intensely aromatic virgin olive oil.

Or take the *sofregit*, known as *sofrito* in Spanish, the pepper, tomato and onion mix that is gently fried in olive oil and is one of the Mediterranean's oldest and most classic sauces. Santi mixes fungi into it and blends it into a sophisticated and sublimely subtle confiture. Or the suckling pig, the festive dish of payès society. Santi roasts a rack of ribs, using some magical skill of his own, into unprecedented mouthwatering crackliness.

How does he actually define what he does? To answer he comes up with paradoxes such as "refined rusticity" and "rustic refinement." The truth is that his food has to tasted just like sentiment has to be experienced.

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GLOSSARY

WINE AGING TERMS

Crianza. This term is reserved for wines aged in the wood and bottle for at least 2 years, 6 months of which must be in oak casks. (Note - in several regions the minimum time in cask is 12 months.)

Reserva. There are two types of standard for the use of this designation. Red wines must age for a minimum of 36 months in the wood and bottle, at least 12 of them in oak casks. For rosé and white wines, the minimum period is 24 months, 6 of them in oak casks.

Gran Reserva. This term is used exclusively for red and claret wines that have aged for at least 24 months in oak casks followed by at least 36 months in the bottle. For white and rosé wines, the minimum period is 48 months of which a minimum of 6 months must be in the wood.

Notes:

1. Many Denominations insist that the oak casks must be no more than 225 liters, however, national legislation allows oak casks up to 1000 liters.

2. Wines are often kept in vats for a few months prior to aging in casks, so the arithmetic varies for each one.

3. Many *bodegas* age their wines for more than the stipulated minimum periods.

SHERRY

The aging system for sherry is the Solera System, which is made up of a number of stages through which the younger wines pass, acquiring the characteristics of the older wines, thus ensuring the continuity of style. The butts (oak casks of 500 liters each) in the earlier stages are known as *criaderas*, and the last and oldest butts in the system are the Solera stage from which the wine is taken for bottling. The Solera stage is topped up from the next oldest stage (the first and oldest *criadera*) and that in turn is topped up from the next oldest. There is no stipulated number of stages, but four to six would be the average. No more than thirty per cent of the wine may be removed from the Solera in any one year.

CAVA

This is the Denomination of Origin for sparkling wines produced by the traditional method, that is to say, that the secondary fermentation takes place in the same bottle in which it is sold. The *cava* demarcated region is in several zones, the most important of which is Catalonia. The others are Aragon, Navarre, La Rioja, Castile-Leon, Extremadura and Valencia. The Cava Denomination should not be confused with other denominations that might be associated with the provinces in which *cava* is produced.

The minimum aging period for *cava* wines is 9 months in the bottle, though many spend between 18 months and 3 years, and a few up to 5 years.

QUICK CONVERSION

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

Fluid Measures
METRIC/ BRITISH STANDARD

10 milliliters = 1/3 ounce
50 milliliters = 1 3/4 ounces
100 milliliters = 3 1/2 ounces
250 milliliters = 8 1/2 ounces
500 milliliters = 17 1/2 ounces
1 liter = 1 3/4 pints
1 teaspoon = 5 milliliters
1 tablespoon = 18 milliliters
1 ounce = 28 milliliters
1 pint = 570 milliliters
1 quart = 1.14 liters
1 gallon = 4 1/4 liters

Fluid Measures
METRIC/U.S. STANDARD

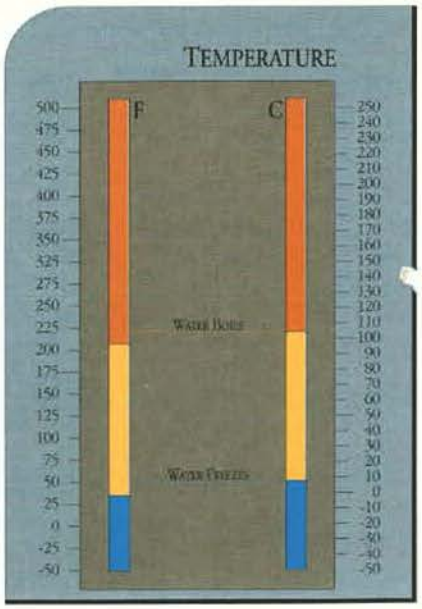
10 milliliters = 2 teaspoons
50 milliliters = 3 tablespoons
100 milliliters = 3 1/2 ounces
250 milliliters = 1 cup + 1 tablespoon
500 milliliters = 1 pint + 2 tablespoons
1 liter = 1 quart + 3 tablespoons
1 teaspoon = 5 milliliters
1 tablespoon = 15 milliliters
1 ounce = 30 milliliters
1 cup = 235 milliliters
1 pint = 475 milliliters
1 quart = 850 liters
1 gallon = 3 3/4 liters

Weight
METRIC/OUNCES & POUNDS

10 grams = 1/3 ounce
50 grams = 1 3/4 ounces
100 grams = 3 1/2 ounces
250 grams = 8 3/4 ounces
500 grams = 1 pound + 1 1/2 ounces
1 kilo = 2 pounds + 3 1/4 ounces
1/2 ounce = 14 grams
1 ounce = 28 grams
1/4 pound = 110 grams
1/2 pound = 230 grams
1 pound = 450 grams

Oven Temperature

TEMPERATURE	DIAL NUMBER
Very slow = 250°F/120°C	= 1/4
Slow = 300°F/150°C	= 1
Moderate = 350°F/180°C	= 4
Hot = 400°F/200°C	= 6
Very hot = 450°F/230°C	= 8



Bodegas Bilbainas was established as a company in 1901, though its history goes back as far as 1859.
It owns an estate of 260 hectares of vineyards surrounding the bodega itself in Haro, the heart of Rioja Alta. The grape varieties grown include Tempranillo, Garnacha, Graciano and Mazuelo.
The red wine VIÑA POMAL comes from an exceptional vineyard of 100 hectares on the state of Bodegas Bilbainas in Haro, Spain.

VIÑA POMAL RESERVA 1989 comprises 80% Tempranillo, 10% Garnacha and the remaining 10% almost equal proportions of Graciano and Mazuelo grapes.

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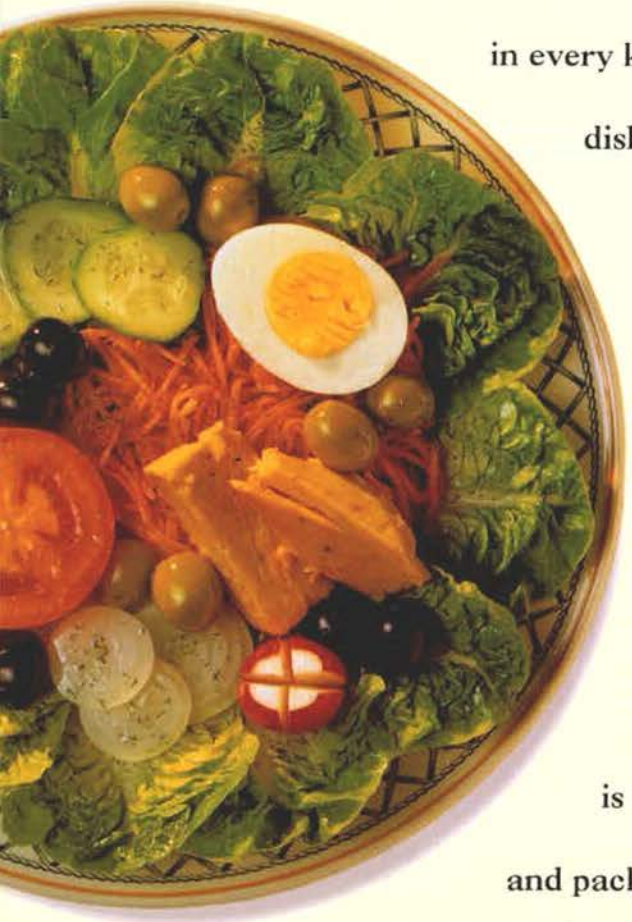

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