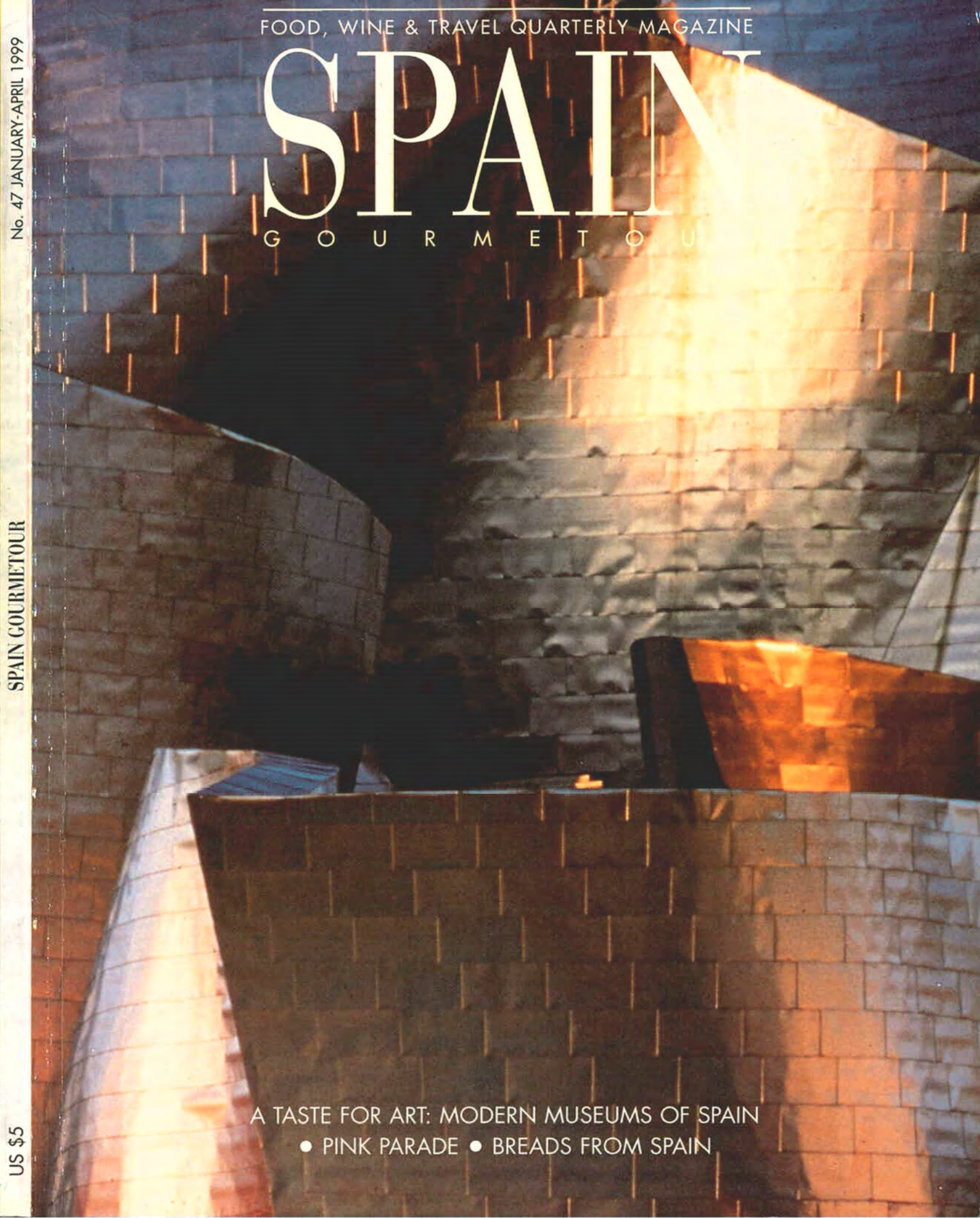
FOOD, WINE & TRAVEL QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

SPAIN

GOURMETOUR



A TASTE FOR ART: MODERN MUSEUMS OF SPAIN
• PINK PARADE • BREADS FROM SPAIN

No. 47 JANUARY-APRIL 1999

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A. CAMACHO INC.
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Director
Blanca Revenga Martínez de Pazos

Editor
Cathy Boirac

Publication Coordinators
Sonia Ortega and Bettina Krücken

Editorial Secretary
Angela Castilla

Art Direction and Design
Luis Artime Diseño

Desktop Publisher
Mabela Tamayo

Color Separations
Espacio y Punto

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Raycar, S.A.

Advertising
CEDISA, Almirante, 21
28004 Madrid
Tel: (34) 913 080 644
Fax: (34) 913 105 141

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ICEX
State Secretariat for Trade, Tourism, and Small and Medium Enterprises, Ministry of Economy and Finance
Pº de la Castellana, 14
28046 Madrid
Tel: (34) 913 496 243
Fax: (34) 914 358 876
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January-April1999

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Spain Gourmetour is a journal published by the Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade (ICEX) of the State Secretariat for Trade, Tourism, and Small and Medium Enterprises, Ministry of Economy and Finance to promote Spain's food and wines, as well as its cuisine and culture. The magazine is issued three times a year in English, French, and German, and is distributed free of charge to professionals in the sector. If you want to subscribe to Spain Gourmetour, please contact the Spanish Embassy Commercial Offices (see list on page 11).

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Junta de Castilla y León

RuedA

Caja Duero

Dear readers,

We begin the last year of this millennium with four new series, some of which look back into the past and some with their sights set on the future. The title theme of this issue—"A Taste for Art"—is the first part of a series on Spain's modern museums and some of the restaurants to be found in the vicinity. Kicking off the series, we have the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao and the National Museum of Roman Art in Mérida, both of which boast a modern architectural style. "Spain's Culinary Delegation on Four Continents" is the subject of the second new series, inviting readers to enjoy genuine Spanish cuisine at home in their own countries. We shall also be looking back on "A Lifetime Devoted to Wine," in which we shall be introducing some of the best-versed veterans in the world of Spanish wine. To round it all off, we shall be "Peering Into the Past" in our new series on three of Spain's historical archives, which, in turn, will give us an insight into the history of Aragon, Spain's overseas colonies, and the Spanish crown.

Our wine article promises us a rosy view of a wine type which, despite its protracted elaboration process, receives less acknowledgement than any other: rosé wine. Our "Pink Parade" will introduce readers to fresh, new wines which—no longer pressed only from the traditional Garnacha grape—are making their mark with the help of other grape varieties and which offer an excellent accompaniment to the widest possible range of dishes.

The transformation of dried meat, once primarily used as a food for survival purposes, into delicate *cecina de León*, which makes the mouths of many a contemporary gourmet water, is the subject of an article about the rediscovery of a product which has a long tradition in the province of León.

The beginning of a new millennium may be enough to let us slide into pensive reverie if we look only towards the future and forget the achievements of that slow, but continual evolutionary process which is mankind's cultural heritage. Spain contributes 29 world heritage sites, selected by UNESCO, starting with the 10-15,000-year-old prehistoric cave paintings in Altamira, moving on to the 9th-century pre-Romanesque churches of Oviedo, the Alhambra in Granada or the Córdoba mosque—which were built during the eight hundred years of Muslim domination in Spain—not to mention countless examples of cities and monuments from the Middle Ages right up to our own day. Our environmental future is also protected by UNESCO as it includes natural areas such as the Garajonay National Park on the Canary Island of Gomera, which has preserved its flora since the Tertiary Period and which, if we are capable of protecting the assets we have inherited, will continue to do so for many years to come.

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LASTING IMPRESSIONS

SONIA ORTEGA

• For a thousand years, pilgrims from all over Europe have been traveling to Santiago de Compostela, the town where tradition has it that the apostle St. James is buried. When 25 July, St. James' Day, falls on a Sunday, the Christian calendar considers it a holy, or St. James' Year. This cause for religious celebration has become more than just a matter of faith. The Road to Santiago, the great pilgrim's route that for centuries represented a continous flow of culture, has recently been flourishing. Perhaps in line with the fashion for trekking, the 800 km (500 miles) of the Spanish part of the Road to Santiago—from the French border to Galicia, through Aragon, Navarre, La Rioja and Castile-León—is now traveled by people of all ages, types, and nationalities, some pilgrims and some just travelers. Proof of this revival is the number of books that have been published in recent times on the subject. This year, being a Holy Year, is no exception. For instance, El País-Aguilar has published three: The first, **El camino de Santiago a pie** (The Road to Santiago on Foot), is a handy guide book giving all the necessary information for walking the 800 kms in 29 stages. Apart from its very practical details—advice, maps, hostels, where to eat, etc.—there are always brief but interesting comments on the villages and monuments along the way. This is a very useful publication written by an expert traveler, Paco Nadal.
Ultreia adopts a more relaxed approach. It tells of the atmosphere to be found on the Road to Santiago and of the stories, legends, and customs that have grown up around it. The author is Luis Carandell, a veteran journalist and travel writer who always pens in something of his sense of humor and here not only describes the physical beauty of the Road but also enjoys telling stories of past and present pilgrims. The best companion for this armchair pilgrimage would be the book of vivid photographs by Xurxo Lobato, **La flecha amarilla** (The Yellow Arrow, the signal which marks the way), which offers memorable images of the Road. Once in Galicia, **Los caminos de Santiago. Guía Repsol Galicia** reveals the many roads in this region that lead to Santiago—the Camino Primitivo, the Camino del Norte, the Camino de Finisterre, the English Road, the French Road, the Portuguese Road, the Silver Way, and the Ría de Arousa Way. It includes detailed maps of each of them and appropriate tourist information (villages, monuments, festivals, etc.). This guide is not for walkers but for drivers—it is sponsored by a petrol company—so, instead of hostels, it lists comfortable hotels and, instead of cheap local food, it recommends the best of Galician restaurants selected with the help of the Galician Academy of Gastronomy. There is also full information on the exhibitions, celebrations, festivals, etc. organized for this special year, most of them in Galicia.

• Guides for rural tourism and small hotels with charm are now coming out annually providing travelers—mostly city dwellers—with all the information they need to get away from it all. One of the first and most complete guides on this subject is the one published by Susaeta and called the **Anuario de Turismo Rural de España y Portugal**. Well organized according to regions and, within these, by areas or districts, it covers over 2,200 hotels, guest houses, or similar that have been selected for their charm, their architecture, and their location. Each one comes with a color photo and a description of services, prices, etc. The latest edition—although labeled 1998—includes 1,290 suggestions for traditional local restaurants. El País-Aguilar has also brought out its **Guía 1999 de alojamiento en Casas Rurales de España** (1999 Guide to Accommodation in Rural Houses in Spain) covering more than 3,000 possibilities although this guide does not offer photos of each house. This publisher has two other guides of interest. **Pequeños Hoteles con encanto 1999,** (Small Hotels With Charm) is the already popular and successful guide offering complete information on about 500 hotels selected by Fernando Gallardo. The format this time is larger with an improved design and layout, and the section on visits to local places of interest has been enlarged. Apart from updating the details on hotels covered in previous editions, this one has added twenty or so new ones. The other guide by this prolific publisher is the **Guía Mondial Assistance de Hoteles y Restaurantes de España** now in its third edition. Arranged in alphabetical order by location, it covers a total of 1,291 towns with 2,205 hotels and 2,630 restaurants (of which 1,342 and 279 respectively are described in a brief text). Essentially the same as previous editions, except for new additions and prices in euros. A guide that has something noticeable to offer in its 21st edition is the veteran **Gourmetour. Guía Gastronómica y turística de España** which now includes a CD-ROM containing the same information as is given on the 1,600 pages of the book. Altogether it contains over 11,533 useful references including comments on 2,138 restaurants and 1,835 hotels. The rest covers *tapas* bars, gastronomy and handicraft shops, museums, monuments, etc. in a total of 737 Spanish towns, grouped by province. The next guide—**Lo mejor de la gastronomía española 1999**—covers restaurants alone. We mentioned it a few years ago and it is now in its sixth edition. It includes only those restaurants ranked at 7 or above, out of 10. Very much on the side of the new cooks—some of them very young—and modern *auteur* cooking, its authoritative compiler, Rafael García Santos, makes personal, lively comments, although he sometimes goes a bit overboard about his favorite dishes or chefs. This guide is absolutely up-to-date on what is going on in the four corners of Spain and more than once has been the first to mention restaurants that subsequently have become the talk of the town.

• Now on to wines. The **Guía de oro de los vinos de España '99** has now come out in its fifth edition. Its author, Andrés Proensa, a journalist who also edits the magazine *Vinos de España*, has tasted over 2,000 wines from all over Spain with the aim of selecting 500 brands from 36 Denominations of Origin and from another dozen wine-producing districts that have not yet been awarded the D.O. Addressing wine lovers and consumers rather than technicians and specialists, this guide originally set out to give an annual selection of the 500 best wines—according to Proensa's criteria—rather than an exhaustive list. In recent years, it had far exceeded this figure but in 1999 it has gone back to its original dimensions and gives just 520 wines. This means standards for inclusion have obviously been pushed up. This guide offers a small mine of information on each of the wineries mentioned. The **Guía de vinos Gourmets** is completely different. Drawn up by a team of writers, the enormous amount of information it gives makes it practically an encyclopedia of Spanish wine. It too includes an updated CD-ROM and, amongst the new features of the latest edition are the name of the enologist in each winery, the number of bottles produced of each wine, etc. Altogether, 2,935 wines are mentioned, with a description and classification for 1,024 of them.
Not a guide but still on the subject of wine is **Spanish Wineries in a Landscape**, a beautifully produced book by the veteran wine writer, José Peñín, who reports fully on some of the most renowned of the Spanish *bodegas*—Alión, La Rioja Alta, Enate, Raimat, Mauro, Lagar de Fornelos. There are 24 of them altogether from different Denominations of Origin including Ribera del Duero, Rías Baixas, Rioja, Somontano, Navarra... And the good photos by Luis de Pazos and Guillermo Navarro show the vineyards, the cellars, and the people behind the wines.

• Now back to gastronomy but without the classifications or stars of guide books. We start with two outstanding books. The first is **El**


Spanish Masterpieces
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TIO PEPE
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JEREZ
JEREZ - XÉRÈS - SHERRY
FINO MUY SEC
FINO
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Brandy de Jerez
Producto de
ESPAÑA
Jerez - Xérès - Sherry
GONZALEZ BYASS
SHERRY & BRANDY

mercado en el plato. Martín Berasategui was named in 1998 by the International Academy of Gastronomy "Chef with the Greatest Future in the World". His team comprises David de Jorge, Andoni Luis Adúriz, and Bixente Arrieta, all tireless workers, and each of them in charge of a restaurant in the Basque Country. This book fulfills a need they had during their training. They wanted a highly practical book that would omit obsolete textbook concepts and techniques and that would teach them how to choose really excellent raw materials. So, based on the two essential pillars of gastronomy—raw materials and technique—the authors explain how they create their recipes, how they choose their products (fish, meat, vegetables, cheese, etc.) in the market and at what times of the year, how they combine textures, what techniques they use and when, which new technology and materials they consider interesting, etc. And they show all the products they habitually use and how they are incorporated into recipes. The book is illustrated with photos of some of their creations and the products of the Basque pantry, the local markets, and landscapes. Ferrán Adrià, another of the great names of Spanish cuisine, says in the prologue, "a book like this was necessary so that cooks could at last offer their know-how to others." He considers it will soon be an essential tool in all schools of gastronomy. As will the amazing book by his brother, Albert Adrià—**Los postres de El Bulli**. We have spoken on more than one occasion of the phenomenon of El Bulli, the restaurant that Ferrán Adrià has raised to stardom, in which the cooking is revolutionary from start to finish—even the kitchen is remarkable. The book written by Albert is the culmination of twelve years as restaurant pastry-cook, a field which, alongside his brother, he has revolutionized and marked by the perfectionism that characterizes the two of them. For a start, he does not consider himself the "restaurant pastry-cook" but the "dessert chef," implying a greater symbiosis and collaboration in everything going on in the restaurant. Thus "savory" food is treated as a sweet and viceversa so, for example, they offer sorbet of eggplant in syrup with yogurt and balsamic caramel and eggplant soup with eggplant ravioli flavored with balsamic caramel.

Fruits, nuts, spices, fresh herbs, liqueurs, natural essences, distilled water, and chocolate are some of the products he uses which, with the application of his various techniques, give rise to desserts in the form of creams, mousses, caramels, and croccanti, gelatins, ices, etc.—a total of twelve different categories. In each of them he explains his combinations, techniques, and several recipes, always with very good photographs by Francesc Guillamet that capture the final result and appearance. This large-format book that was awarded the prize for "Best Book on Desserts" in the International Fair of Cooking Books held a few months ago in Périgueux, France, is undoubtedly a must.

• Along more traditional lines we have a number of new books. **Cocina gallega** belongs to a new collection on regional cooking by Editorial Everest which is always active on the gastronomic scene. This is a selection by Javier Ozores of the usual Galician recipes together with some very old recipes that are not so well known. The book opens with a well-documented, clear presentation of Galician gastronomy—its products, traditions, festivals, etc. Altogether about 30 recipes, each with its history, explanation, and very good photos by Iñaki Preysler.

Rodrigo Mestre is a classic food writer and restaurateur with experience in all the mass media. He has been working on several of the guides to Spanish products that are being published by Plaza y Janés (cheeses, wines, cold cuts). Perhaps the most interesting is **La Guía de las tapas de España** because it comments on the most typical products offered in the form of tapas and provides recipes. A small but thorough guide that should be well received by those who want to try making the tapas themselves.

The gastronomy of the southeastern province of Murcia is not very well known, even in Spain. **Murcia. El libro de la gastronomía**, would fill that gap. Undoubtedly of Arabic origin, it is perhaps the most Mediterranean of the Spanish cuisines. The plentiful availability of vegetables and fruits, the best salt fish, excellent fresh fish, good *charcuterie* products, paprika, cheese, etc. make the local dishes very authentic and characteristic. The text by Paco Nadal contains recipes (although we missed a list of contents) but it is more a stroll through the history of Murcian gastronomy, with a glance at its products and the reason for its cooking styles. And the stroll couldn't be better illustrated. The excellent photos of the products, dishes, and locations of Murcia taken by Carlos Moisés and José Hernández Pina testify to their inside knowledge of the area, as does their work which appears in other publications on similar subjects.

Finally, still on gastronomy, there is a new title in the collection **Guía de productos de la tierra**—which we covered in our last issue. This one is on Galicia.

• It is not just chance that has taken the Spanish word *fiesta* outside Spain and into other languages to designate one of the happiest of human manifestations—that of celebration, enjoyment, fun. That's the meaning of fiesta and fiestas exist throughout the length and breadth of Spain, where each town has its own particular style of celebration. María Ángeles Sánchez has spent almost 30 years traveling round Spain recording this cultural legacy on paper and with her camera. In 1982 she published her *Guía de fiestas populares de España*. She has now brought out **Fiestas populares. España día a día**, a compilation of over 3,200 fiestas held in over 1,600 towns and villages. Arranged according to the festive calendar which ties in with the seasons, the selection reveals extraordinary people, age-old customs, wonderful costumes, and magical images that carry readers to another realm. Written with both devotion and insight, this is practically the bible of Spanish fiestas because not only is it a thorough compendium—in itself a hard enough task—but it describes the nature and the origins of the different fiestas. As the author of the prologue states, this makes the book a work of genuine cultural and anthropological value.

• The River Duero is a historical river whose banks are home to some of the most characteristic landscapes and towns of Spain. For a long time it was also the frontier between the Arab and Christian worlds. Today the Duero is much visited for its famous *bodegas* (Ribera del Duero, Toro, Rueda...) but this is not the route taken by Robert White for his **A River in Spain**. He chose its historical and architectural legacy and devotes the first part of the book to helping travelers understand the region's changing fortunes. The second part goes from east to west—from the source to the frontier with Portugal—introducing us to the towns and villages along the way and describing the most interesting monuments. The itinerary (for drivers) comes with maps and photos, and the well-documented text helps readers to appreciate one of the most classical regions of Spain.

• El camino de Santiago a pie • Ultreia • Guía Mondial Assistance de hoteles y restaurantes de España, 1999 • Guía de Pequeños Hoteles con Encanto. España 1999 • Guía Mitsubishi Motors de alojamientos en Casas Rurales de España, 1999 • La flecha amarilla, el camino hacia Santiago El País-Aguilar; Torrelaguna, 60; 28043 Madrid; Tel: (34) 917 449 060 Fax: (34) 917 449 093; http://www.elpais-aguilar.es **• Los caminos de Santiago. Guía Repsol Galicia,** Repsol Comercial de Productos Petrolíferos, S.A.; Paseo de la Castellana, 278; 28046 Madrid; Tel: (34) 913 488 000; Fax: (34) 913 489 494 **• Anuario de turismo rural de España y Portugal, 1998**, Susaeta Ediciones, S.A.; Campezo, s/n; 28022 Madrid; Tel: (34) 913 009 100; Fax: (34) 913 009 110; **• Gourmetour, guía gastronómica y turística de España 1999** and **Guía de vinos Gourmets 1999**, Club de Gourmet, S.A.; Claudio Coello, 52-1º; 28001 Madrid; Tel: (34) 915 770 418; Fax: (34) 914 311 359; http://www.gourmets.net **• Lo mejor de la gastronomía española 1999**, Ediciones Destino; Enric Granados, 84; 08008 Barcelona; Tel: (34) 932 922 304; Fax: (34) 932 922 305 **• A River in Spain. Discovering the Duero Valley in Old Castile**, I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.; Victoria House, Bloomsbury Square, London WC1B 4DZ; Tel: (171) 831 9060; Fax: (171) 831 9061; 175 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10010 **• Fiestas populares, España día a día**, Maeva Edidiones; Benito Castro, 6; 28028 Madrid; Tel: (34) 913 559 569; Fax: (34) 917 261 437 **• La guía de oro de los vinos de España'99**, N&A—Naturaleza y Ambiente, S.L., Islas Marquesas, 28B; 28035 Madrid; Tel: (34) 913 163 600; Fax: (34) 913 860 265 **• Spanish Wineries in a Landscape**, Pi & Erre Ediciones; Pilar Andrade, 11 chalet 8; 28023 El Plantío (Madrid); Tel: (34) 913 077 890; Fax: (34) 913 076 701 **• Los postres de El Bulli**, Ediciones Península, S.A.; Peu de la Creu, 4; 08001 Barcelona; Tel: (34) 934 437 100; Fax: (34) 934 437 130; **• El mercado en el plato**, Lur Argitaletxea, S.A.; Sabino Arana, 47; 48013 Bilbao; Tel: (34) 944 418 809; Fax: (34) 944 276 349 **• Cocina Gallega**, Editorial Everest, S.A.; Ctra. León-La Coruña, km. 5, Apdo. 339; Tel: (34) 902 101 520; Fax: (34) 987 844 202 **• Guía de las tapas de España** and **Guía de los quesos de España**, Plaza & Jané Editores, S.A.; Travesera de Gracia, 47-49; 08021 Barcelona; Tel: (34) 933 660 300; Fax: (34) 932 002 219 **• Guía de productos de la Tierra. Galicia**, Editorial Edaf, S.A.; Jorge Juan, 30; 28001 Madrid; Tel: (34) 914 358 260; Fax: (34) 914 315 281; **• Murcia. El libro de la gastronomía**, Darana and Caja Murcia; Manga del Fraile, 14; 30152 Aljucer (Murcia); Tel./fax: (34) 968 340 541**

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Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum:

A Titan has Landed

ERIKA BARAHONA/FMGB

Text: Sonia Ortega
Translation: Hawys Pritchard

You are cordially invited to join us (from your armchair) on an art and food trip, taking in some of the best museums in Spain—mainly museums of contemporary art—which stand out not only for their content but also as buildings in themselves. Some are understated, others spectacular, but all house examples of the most avant garde art produced in Spain and the rest of the world. And recognizing that man doesn't live by art alone, we shall also be visiting the best places to eat in each town on our itinerary. The *Museo Nacional de Arte Romano* (National Museum of Roman Art) in Mérida, and the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao open the series.

Something has happened to Bilbao. Since October 1997, Bilbao's time frame has acquired pre- and post-Guggenheim as its points of reference. There's a new before and after, as there must have been for the other cities around the world changed forever by the incorporation of a trademark building into their urban landscape. Who today can imagine Paris without the Eiffel Tower, or Sydney without its waterside Opera House?

But the real question is this: can one single building transform a city's image and turn it into a focus of tourist attention almost overnight? If the figures are anything to go by, one is tempted to say yes: the new Guggenheim has generated countless reports in the media worldwide, and has attracted over 1,300,000 visitors in the first year—86 percent declaring their intention to return—of whom 25 percent were foreigners, among them no less a personage than James Bond, whose next film uses the already famous museum as its backdrop.

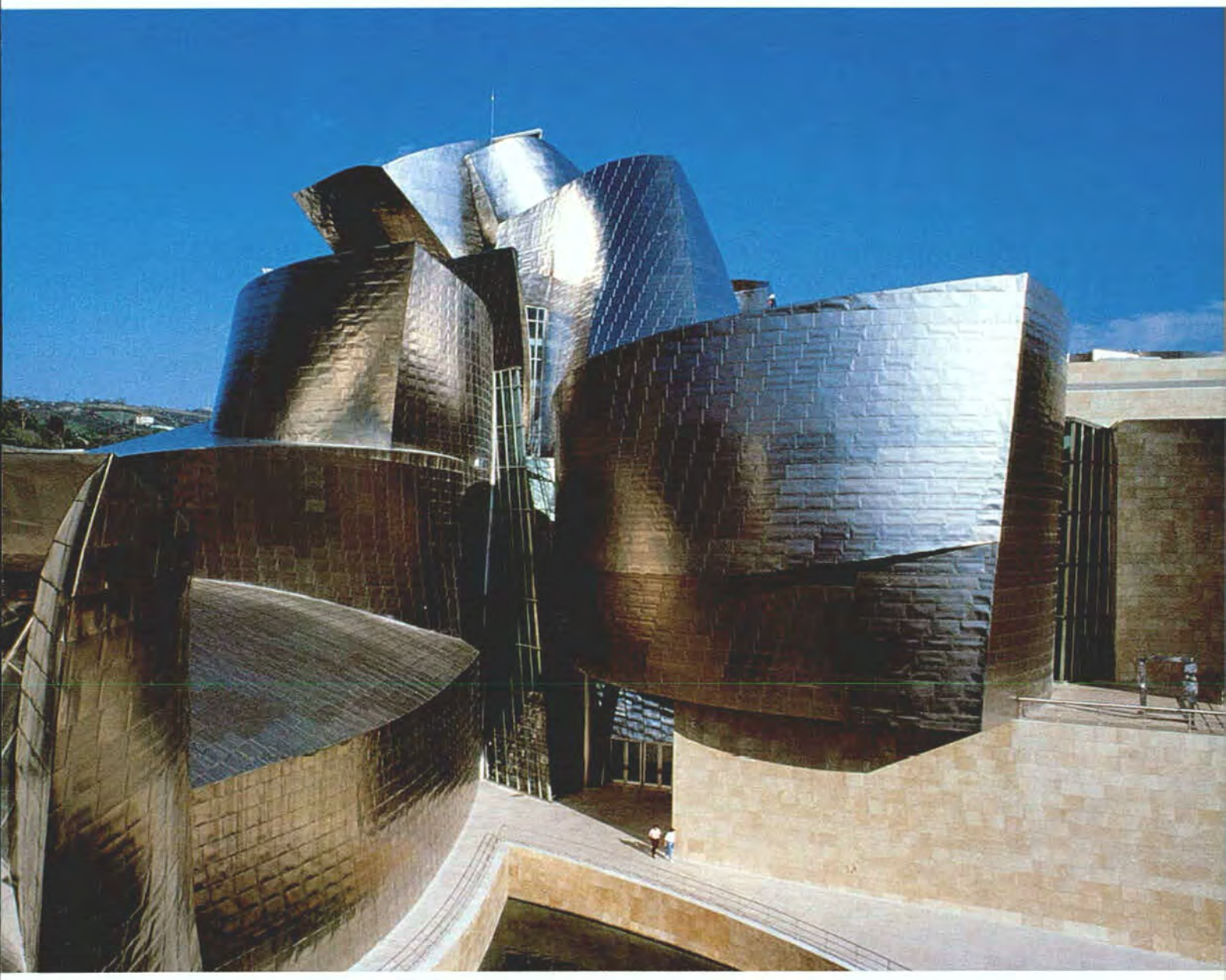
The building of this titanium swirl, vividly reflected in the Nervión Estuary on whose bank it stands, was the spearhead of an ambitious revitalization plan for this area. Economic conditions have propelled Bilbao into opting to obliterate the industrial foundations—blast furnaces, mines, shipyards—on which it prospered from the mid-19th century on, and transforming itself into a city whose economy is service, information, and culture based. With sights set on the future, it is equipping itself with progressive buildings and institutions.

"They asked me to make a building that would have an international impact," explained architect Frank Gehry during an interview. "Bilbao isn't on everybody's travel map, so it had to stand out a lot." There was no question about it: from the moment of conception, this museum was required to be something out of the ordinary, unlike anything else.

Looking at the Guggenheim Museum from the opposite bank of the estuary, it struck me that Gehry must be pleased with his creation: it is unquestionably spectacular, but not overwhelmingly so. A comment by a well-known American architect that I had come across when I was reading up for this visit came to mind: "It challenges the conventions, but isn't dogmatic... It doesn't say 'This is how the world ought to be,' but rather 'Let's try this, let's make a model and see how it turns out.' "My impression was much the same: despite its volume and its weight, the museum building seems somehow provisional, like some marvelous great mockup, that could get taken away. It looks slightly unreal, like a

ERIKA BARAHONA/FMGB

Titanium



glass, stone, and four years' work have transformed Bilbao.

hallucination set against a dying industrial landscape.
But there's nothing unreal about it. It is all very tangible, established, and quantifiable. Titanium, glass, stone, and four years' work have transformed an empty site near the enormous former Euskalduna shipyard—now replaced by a brand new convention and concert hall—into this immense, sculpturesque hull, clad in nearly 25,000 square meters of titanium, a material that enabled Gehry to achieve the artisan effect he wanted in the covering for his metal framework. The interior is every bit as amazing: the central element is a vast atrium, 50 meters high and flooded with light, around which are articulated three floors providing more than 10,000 square meters of gallery space and rooms designed specifically for exhibiting big format contemporary and modern art.
The biggest space is an enormous, boat-shaped gallery, measuring 130 by 30 meters (426 x 98 feet), which is column free and can therefore accommodate installations on a scale impossible in more conventional museums. For example, Robert Rauschenberg's *The 1/4 Mile or 2 Furlong Piece*—a "visual autobiography" of the artist, made up of 190 paintings and sculptures, measuring 330 linear meters—was shown here in an uninterrupted space for the first time. Rauschenberg was the primary occupant of the museum for several months with a retrospective of nearly 400 works; Chinese art enjoyed similar protagonism earlier on. As this demonstrates, Bilbao's Guggenheim is innovative not only in its architecture but also in its exhibitive approach—whereas traditional museums dedicate approximately 80 percent of their space to their permanent collections and the remaining 20 percent to temporary exhibitions—here this ratio might well be reversed. Or not, as the case may be. Conceived as an adaptable space in which to exhibit its permanent collection, the Bilbao museum is, along with New York and Venice, a showcase for the Guggenheim art collection. Composed as this is of nearly 10,000 works of art, it constitutes one of the largest and most important private collections of modern and contemporary art in the world (it is said to include over 150 Kandinskys). At its inauguration, the Bilbao museum was showing only works from the Guggenheim collection, but a few months later it was almost entirely reorganized to make way for the "5000 Years of China" exhibition which brought together traditional and modern Chinese art for the first time and occupied almost the whole museum. Hanging, taking down, rehanging... a job for Titans which seems not to faze anyone working within this sleek titanium shell.

Eating Out in Bilbao: More Than Just Bacalao

It may well be true that pre-Guggenheim Bilbao was somewhat off the standard tourist routes, but for gastronomes it has always been a significant destination, as indeed has the Basque Country as a whole. Such is its wealth of good restaurants that eating out guides to this area veritably bristle with stars, forks, and high scores, making choosing where to eat genuinely difficult. Complicating matters further, there's the decision between modern and traditional to be made. The only answer is to go for both. For modern food at its best, one need go no further than the magnificent Guggenheim building itself: Bilbao's must be the only museum in the world whose restaurant is run by a two Michelin stars winner, in this case Martín Berastegui, who has young Vixente Arrieta as his chef de cuisine. The reasons for this restaurant's success are obvious: a glorious artistic setting, excellent cooking and extremely good value for money. In addition to the main menu (itself a design prize winner), there are also various tasting menus: *Tradición y Naturaleza* (Tradition and Nature), *de Temporada* (Seasonal), and *Producto y Técnica* (Product and Technique). We opted for the latter, tucking into sautéed *cigalas* (Dublin Bay prawns) on a bed of creamy *bacalao* and potato ravioli, followed by a rich risotto with baby squid and dressed with virgin olive oil and Idiazábal (the great Basque cheese made from *latxa* sheep's milk)—this is one of the restaurant's most popular dishes. The oven-baked *rape* (monkfish) that came next was enhanced in both flavor and texture by a delicious accompaniment of stewed octopus and mushroom topped by a thin, crisp slice of cured *ibérico* ham. A splendid pasta parcel of goose resting on potato puree and drizzled with a port wine sauce was fit in before dessert. This was a light chocolate *savarin* with orange ice cream and citrus juice. The food was perfectly executed and the service excellent. One thing I have always noticed about service in the Basque Country is the way it cleverly combines impeccable professionalism with familiarity of approach, always to pleasing effect. Could the fact that waitresses outnumber waiters there have something to do with it? Just a suggestion...
People go to Guría—our chosen restaurant for traditional cuisine—for the bacalao. The very fact that there is a popular song whose words go "*Que viva Vizcaya, que viva Bilbao, que viva Vizcaya y su buen bacalao*" (Long live Vizcaya, long live Bilbao, long live Vizcaya and its fine bacalao!) conveys something of the status of bacalao in these parts. It's more than just a fish—it's a religion in Bilbao, with Guría as one of its temples. Guría is a serious but welcoming restaurant, which also has a less formal bistro attached. Jenaro Pildaín serves the best of traditional Basque cuisine, dishes such as: *porrusalda* (potato and leek soup with a touch of bacalao), *chipirones en su tinta* (baby squid in ink), *merluza* (hake) fried or in *salsa verde* (green sauce), *alubias* (beans) from Guernica... and, of course, bacalao. The best approach is to order an assortment, so that one can sample several house specialties at once: this could include, for example bacalao *al pil pil* (pieces of cod in the magically light sauce created when olive oil and the fish juices emulsify together), bacalao *a la vizcaína* (cod in a sauce made of onion and *choricero* peppers—the rehydrated dried red peppers that give color and flavor to many Basque dishes), and *Club Ranero* (a pil pil served with an accompanying *fritada* of green peppers, zucchini, onion, and vizcaína sauce). There are doubtless many other places in Bilbao where the bacalao is just as good, but Guría has become an institution, a "must," that everyone has to visit at least once in their lifetime. Rather like the Guggenheim really.

Sonia Ortega *is a journalist and has been coordinator of* Spain Gourmetour *since its first issue.*

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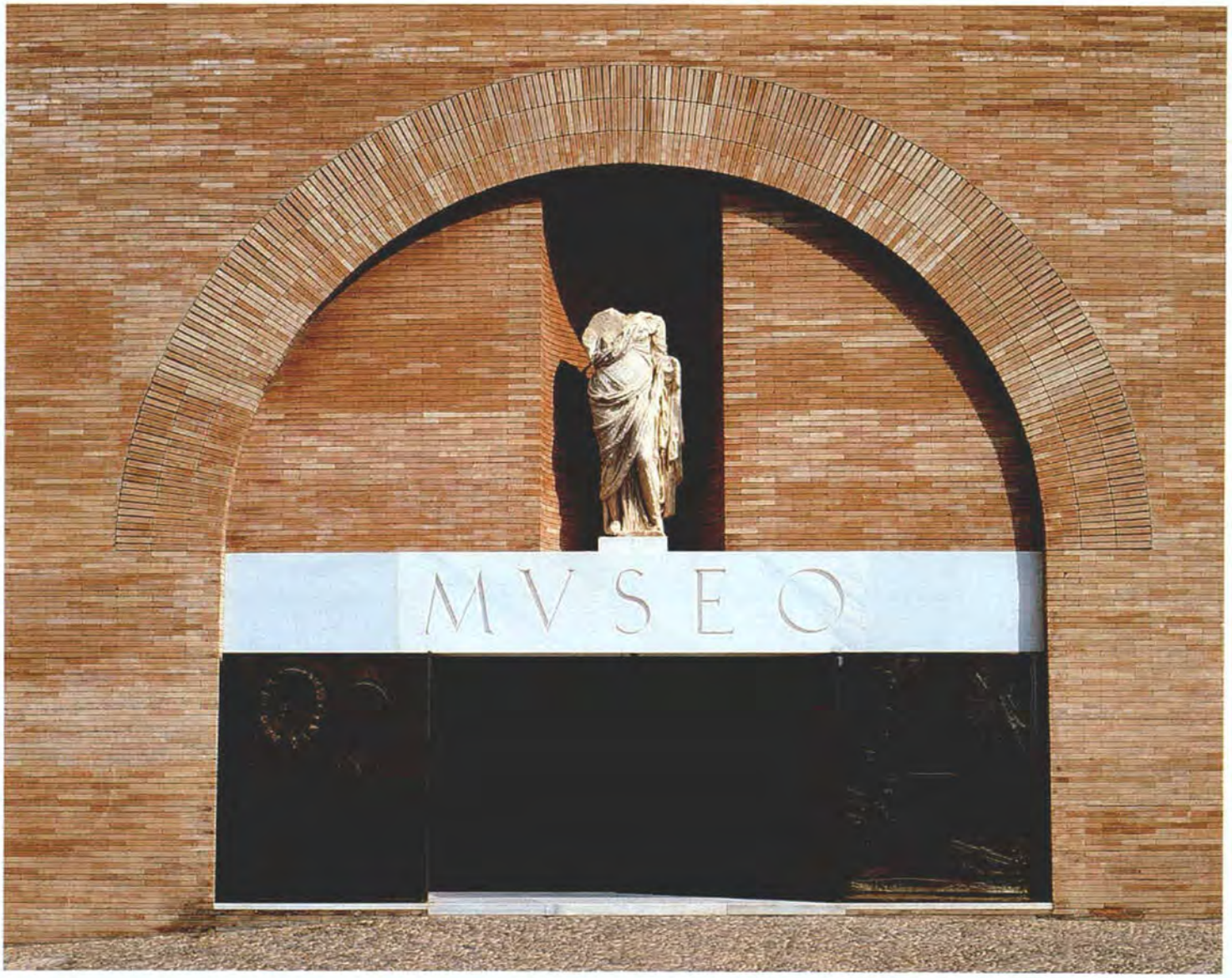

MVSEO

Life in a Roman Province

The National Museum of Roman Art in Mérida

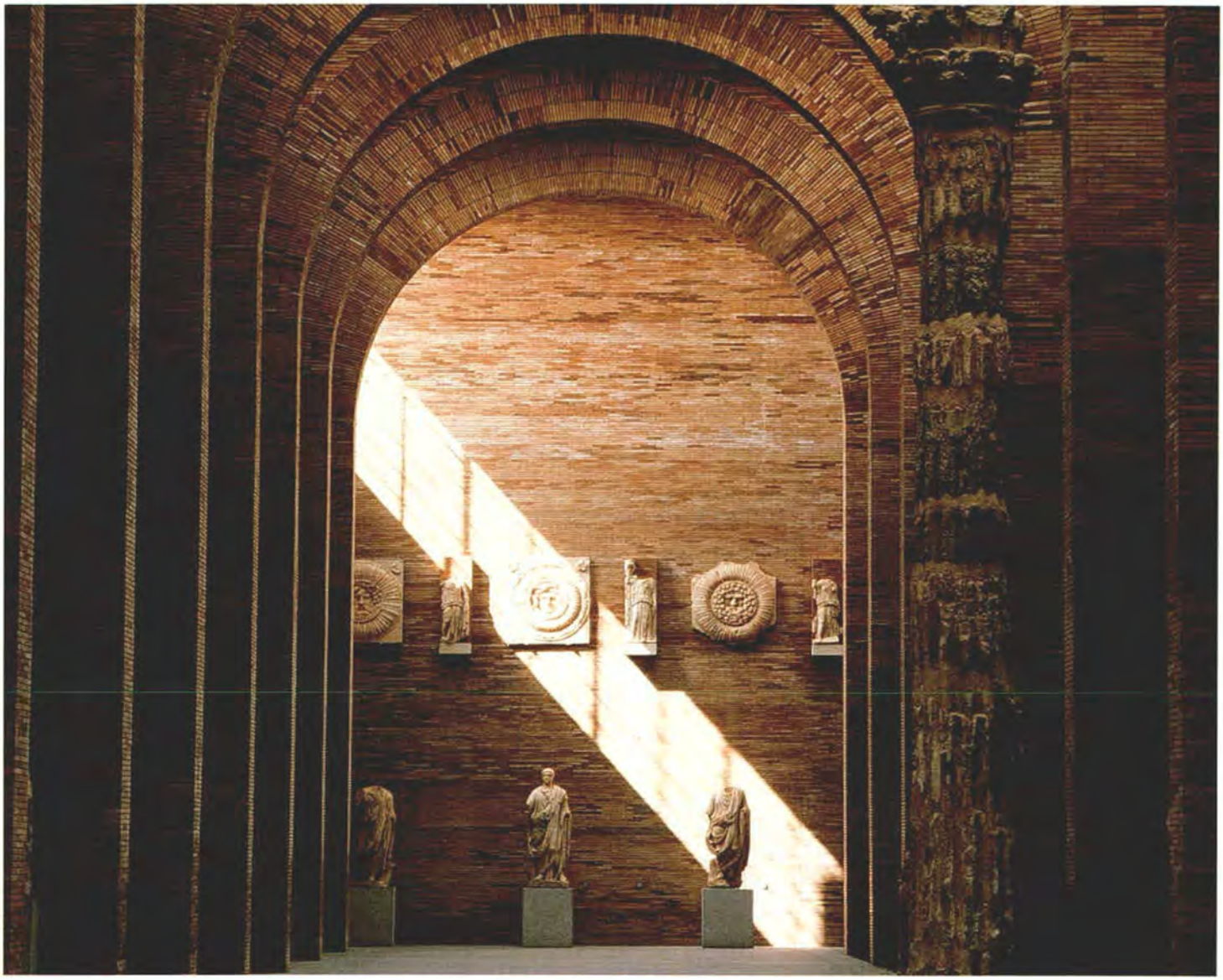
A visit to the National Museum of Roman Art in Mérida is like a trip back in time to ancient Rome. A three and a half hours' drive along a modern highway running southwest from Madrid brings us to Mérida, present-day capital of the autonomous region of Extremadura or, to *Colonia Augusta Emerita*, as it was known 2024 years ago when the city was founded on the right bank of the river Anas (later to be renamed Guadiana by the Arabs). The capital of the Roman province of Lusitania owes its existence, along with its name, to the Emperor Augustus, whose legions had brought Hispania completely under the sway of Rome. It was intended as a settlement for the veterans *(emeritas)* who had fought in Cantabria, far to the north, cementing the peninsular *pax augusta*.

Text: Bettina Krücken Photos: Lluis Casals/El País

During its 4th century heyday, Augusta Emerita ranked ninth-largest among the cities of the Roman empire. Its citizens had no cause to envy Rome for anything they might have enjoyed in the way of contemporary luxuries or comforts. The generously planned area of the city included an amphitheater where gladiatorial combats were staged. There was also a theater for dramatic performances, and a *circus* that packed in spectators for the thrilling chariot races of the *quadrigae*. Thanks to a pair of aqueducts and a network of underground conduits, drinking water was brought into the city and sewage flushed out. Religious and public life took place on two principal venues, the provincial forum and the city forum, each with its own temples and administrative buildings.

Archeological digs have been carried out systematically in Mérida from the 15th century onwards, but until fairly recently, the thousands of objects recovered had been stored, rather provisionally, in different museums or churches. In 1979, Navarre-born architect Rafael Moneo Vallés, winner of the 1996 Pritzker prize and distin-

guished professor for architecture at Harvard, was commissioned to design a new museum opposite the ruins of the theater and amphitheater. Construction got underway in 1981 and was completed by 1985; the building was opened to the public that following year. Three considerations were foremost in the conception of the structure. First of all, preservation *in situ* of the arqueological remains on the museum site; then the establishment of continuity and communication between the museum and the ruins of the theaters standing opposite. Finally, the consider-



ations of essential functionality: Moneo himself has described his creation as an "archive museum." The museum's primary objective, as a national museum, is to serve as the appropriate setting for the contents found exclusively in Mérida, that is, for the most artistically and culturally significant Roman site that has ever been found in Spain and Portugal. Thanks to the great quantity of artifacts unearthed, there is no better place for becoming acquainted with the everyday realities of Roman society and the Romanization of its far-flung empire.

The National Museum of Roman Art in Mérida

Moneo's building is a two-part structure, linked by a walkway suspended over a section of the original Roman causeway. The building facing east, towards the ruins of the theater, houses the workshops where tasks of conservation and restoration are carried out, a library, lecture halls and conference rooms, administrative offices, and the main entrance at the building's southern flank.

Rather than seeking vainly to compete with the magnificent ruins, the museum's yellowish exterior brickwork strikes a note of unassuming simplicity, as well as constituting a reference to the enduring solidity of Roman construction. The southern façade of the building which contains the main exhibition halls is offset at a slant from the actual walls; its buttresses, like a giant's legs, towering like an immense bulwark against time. To this façade Moneo has transposed the brilliant impression of the aqueduct *Los Milagros*, the remains of which can be found on Mérida's northwestern outskirts, by evoking its buttresses that support until today the three-tiered arches. Although when seen from the outside, the visitor may at first get an impression of fortress-like impregnability, as he passes into the interior he finds himself within the spacious, luminous nave of a Roman basilica supported by nine enormous semicircular arches. Their dimensions correspond to those of the Arch of Trajan, which still lords over modern-day Mérida, providing some idea of the monumental scale on which things were done in this provincial capital. Niches formed by these arches contain some of the larger pieces of sculpture recovered from either of the forums, the theater of Agrippa or from the homes (*villae*) of well-to-do citizens. The rough texture of the bricks —manufactured, incidentally, to Moneo's specifications —make for an interesting contrast with the elegant smoothness of the carved marble and busts of gods, emperors, and warriors.

Perpendicular to the main nave, columns supporting the arches extend as parallel walls that serve as the "archive" for the smaller pieces on display over three separate stories. These floor levels serve as a bridge between the parallel walls and are "perforated" at intervals. In such a manner, a vertical space has been created between the various levels, allowing visitors to get unhindered views of the large mosaics displayed on the walls, which are perfectly set off by the natural light from the skylight.

The museum's curator, José María Álvarez Martínez, sums up the advantages of Moneo's virtuosity. The architect has allowed visitors the possibility of viewing the large-scale pieces from different angles, the brilliant way that natural light is channeled to virtually every corner of the museum, and the flexibility by which the different spatial units can be adapted to house special exhibitions, such as the one on "Spain's Roman Legacy" from February to April this year, marking the 1900th anniversary of Trajan's ascension to the throne. The museum's "krypta" consists of semicircular arches echoing the above-ground structure and is connected with the ruins of the amphitheater by a tunnel. Since the building stands on a slight slope, three of its sides are provided with windows in the form of a semicircular arch, each outfitted with fine mesh screens to diffuse Mérida's brilliant sunlight before it falls on the antique treasures inside: the ruins of a quarter on the outskirts of Mérida, a necropolis and remains of the underground conduit San Lazaro. Spain's National Museum of Roman Art is rooted, in the most literal sense of the word, in the remains of Colonia Emerita Augusta.

Ad cenam!

Sad to report that possibilities for fine dining in Mérida are somewhat Spartan and not nearly as opulent as they surely must have been in Roman times. One exception to the rule is the Parador de Turismo, located right in the center of town. Here is where Extremaduran cooking—with names so peculiar that many Spaniards from outside the area have no idea of what they are being offered on the menu— is elevated to a fine art. *Sopa de birondango con huevo* (a soup made up of bits of tomato, potato, and egg), *Zorongollo extremeño con comino* (strips of marinated fried peppers in a tomato, garlic, and cumin sauce) and the not-to-be-missed *Tarta Fina de Técula Mécula*, made from ground almonds, egg yolks, sugar, and butter. Apart from game, meat, and fish specialties, the Extremadura region is the source of some of the most prized culinary highlights of the Spanish kitchen. Here is the home of melt-in-your-mouth *Ibérico* ham with the Dehesa de Extremadura denomination of origin, smoked *pimentón* (paprika), the exquisite ewe's-milk cheese La Serena or Torta del Casar, as well as Ibores cheese made from goat's milk and dusted in paprika, delicious black cherries from the Jerte valley, as well as brandies and liqueurs distilled from cherry and other fruits.

It may be no more than coincidence, but the best restaurant in Extremadura also has a Roman name: Atrio (atrium) in Cáceres, just an hour's drive to the north of Mérida. The restaurant is located in the modern part of Cáceres, in a kind of inner courtyard decorated in warm and elegant shades of green and red. Chef-owner Toño Pérez delights his guests with a seven-course menu of winter delicacies ranging from a light cream of mushrooms garnished with sautéed sweetbreads from Merino sheep, a warm marinade with Iberian pork loin and vegetables, duck's liver with a fine herbs salad in a grape juice dressing, grilled monkfish with mushrooms, roast saddle of venison with a grape and dried-fruit sauce. We come at last to the cheese board and a coffee-based crème with liquefied farmer's cheese. Every superb possibility Extremadura has to offer is found on this menu, and the à la carte specialties, given a unique master touch, would not disappoint and might astound even the most opulent and gastronomically sophisticated Roman. Not least worthy of mention is the restaurant's fabulous wine list, highlighting over 700 wines from around the world and of course, from Spain, to be found in the restaurant's cellars. Here is a Chateau d'Yquem from 1891, in perfect condition and expertly recorked in 1997 for a mere 12,960 U.S. dollars (72,900 FF), the most expensive item on any wine list at a Spanish establishment. Or else a 1924 Vega Sicilia. What better finale could be imagined to our excursion in homage to the Taste for Art.

Opto te bene ce!

Bettina Krücken *has been editorial coordinator of* Spain Gourmetour *since 1994.*

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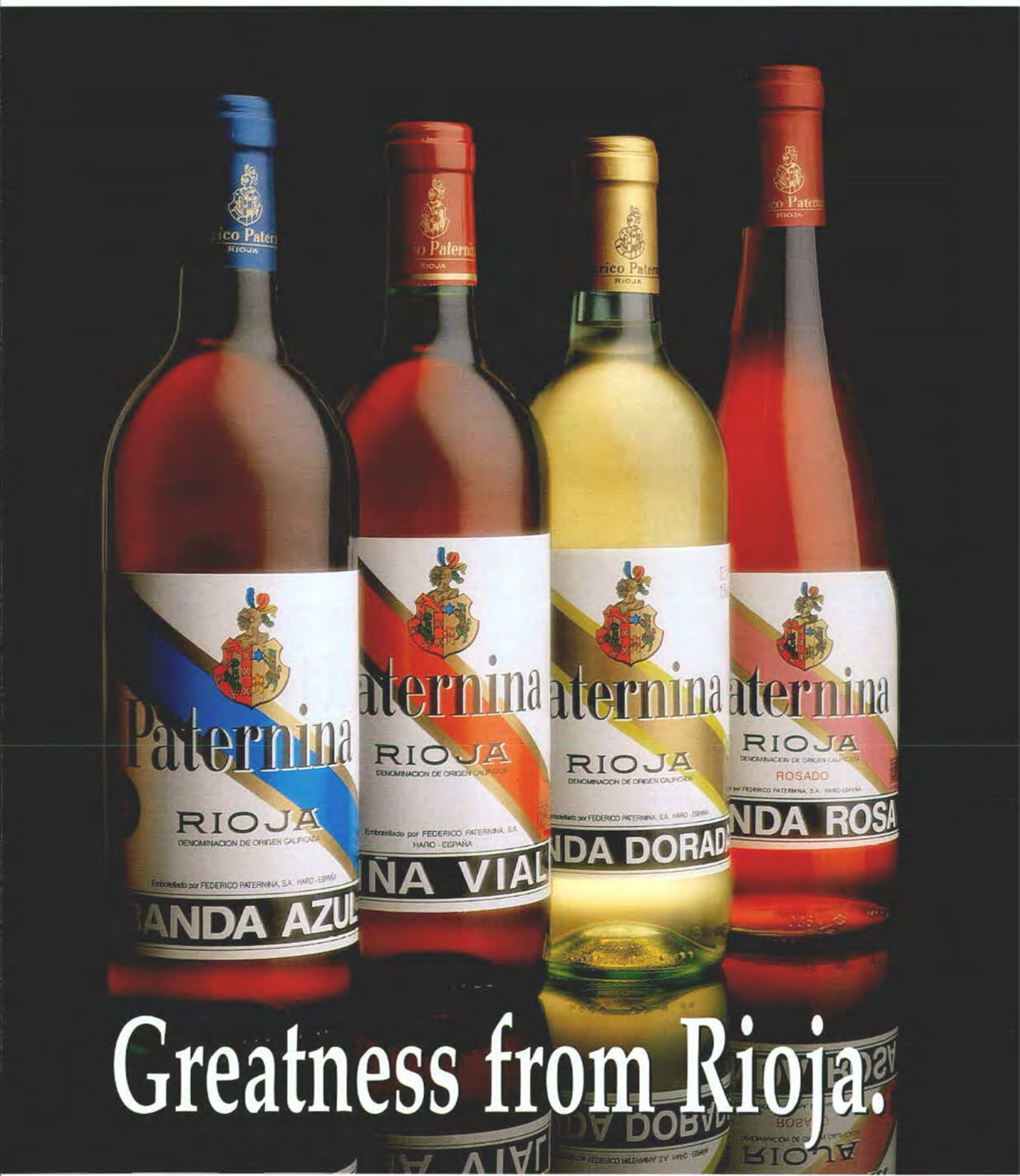

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not just a

Text: Julia López de Sagredo
Translation: Jenny McDonald

C.R.D.E. ESPÁRRAGO DE HUÉTOR TÁJAR/ICEX

asparagus, green

Ignored for centuries by most European consumers, green asparagus is now taking its place alongside the white variety and being appreciated in its own right.

The asparagus traditionally consumed in Spain, and especially in Andalusia, was the wild green variety which is characteristic of the Mediterranean region. The Spaniards call it "*triguero*" because it used to grow amidst the wheat, or *trigo*. Consumption of asparagus was apparently introduced into the Iberian Peninsula by the Arabs although it was already eaten to some extent under the Roman Empire. But cultivation of green asparagus only began in the early twentieth century in the Genil Valley in the province of Granada using seeds from the wild varieties. This is considered the only European variety of green asparagus because in the rest of Europe cultivation and research has focused on white asparagus, essentially the Holland White, which was obtained in Holland in the seventeenth century, and its progeny. In the United States—especially in California—work began at the start of the twentieth century on green hybrids obtained from European genotypes of white asparagus, not from the wild green.

The native varieties were the only ones grown in Spain until the 1980s when commercial interest in green asparagus started to develop. But foreign markets were demanding bigger sizes than the Spanish varieties could grow so American green hybrids were introduced which were also more productive and easier to pick. The overall growing area spread but the number of hectares devoted to the native asparagus dropped sharply. The hybrids adapted perfectly to the growing conditions, with the UC-157 being the most successful. Although this variety still predominates, the Grande and Atlas hybrids are now strong competitors being slightly more productive, earlier, larger, and more uniform.

MIGUEL PÉREZ/ICEX

versus white

Climatic Limitations

The areas of production and the producers of green asparagus are generally different to those of white asparagus. The latter requires little more than light soil, whereas green asparagus is especially demanding regarding climate and this factor limits its growing possibilities. The ideal is the continental Mediterranean climate with cold winters to hold back growth and, in the spring, cold nights in contrast with mild daytime temperatures to allow for growth during the day only, so that the plants cannot go to seed and the harvesting period is longer. Sharp differences between the daytime and nighttime temperatures during harvesting encourage intense coloring of the spear and purplish tones. Summers should be dry and warm and autumns dry until October when vegetative growth stops, to prevent tips forming in September as this would affect quantity and quality in the next season.

Granada is ideal as a growing area. "The production that started in Seville and Córdoba where the white varieties are grown is now moving to Granada to escape from the April heat which opens up the tips of the spears, putting an end to the harvest and making the crop unprofitable. In Granada harvesting takes place from the end of February until June or even July," explains Luis Marín, the manager of Asociafruit (*Asociación Nacional de Productores-Exportadores de Hortícolas*—the Spanish National Association of Producers and Exporters of Vegetables). Extremadura and some areas of Málaga, Cádiz, Murcia, and Toledo, amongst others, are other suitable growing areas. The forthcoming harvest is expected to be good. But, with the exception of 1997 which reached 17 million kg, the previous three harvests and that of 1998 were all affected by the weather—mainly too much or too little rain, and frost during harvesting. Granada alone produces almost 10 million kg.

STILL LIFE: MENCHU ARTIME PHOTO: A. DE BENITO/ICEX

The green hybrids have adapted perfectly to the growing areas in Spain and the environmental conditions have helped them develop special quality characteristics.

Guaranteed Quality With Good Sales Potential

The main difference in the field between white and green asparagus is that the latter needs light to gain its color whereas the former needs to be kept out of light to keep it white. Therefore green asparagus should not be piled up with soil as white asparagus is. This not only saves on labor but makes harvesting easier as the spears are perfectly visible. They are cut every day during the harvesting period (February/March to June/July) when they reach 27 cms (10 1/2 in). The same day they are sized, sorted, and prepared for the market. All these tasks are carried out by hand as there is no suitable machinery for green asparagus. They are handled while dry but at night are stood in water until they recover their weight. Then they are pre-cooled, loaded into refrigerator trucks, and transported at 2-3°C (35-37°F) to reach their final destinations at the latest the day after cutting. The spears are generally sold in crates of 4 and 12 kg, tied in 500 g bundles, "although there are some markets such as Switzerland which prefer 1 kg bundles, and the English market prefers 250 g," explains José A. Guarnido, the manager of Hortícolas de Huétor-Tájar S.A., the top Spanish exporter of green asparagus which sold almost one million kg in 1998. The most popular sizes are from 16 to 22 mm (.6 to .85 in), al-

STILL LIFE: MENCHU ARTIME PHOTO: A. DE BENITO/ICEX

Green asparagus has a more intense flavor and aroma than white asparagus, is more versatile for cooking, and has a greater nutritional value with fewer calories.

though they also export spears measuring 12 to 16 mm (.4 to .6 in) or over 22 mm (.85 in).

Exports of green asparagus started slowly, with a few cases being sent in the trucks of white asparagus to test acceptance. Today it is normal for a company to send two, three, or even four trucks a week to its customer destinations. Consumption of white asparagus is stable but green asparagus still has tremendous potential for growth. The current limits are set by production. The poor harvests of the last few years have kept exports low although, in the best harvest of 1997, five million kg were sold outside Spain.

"Green and white asparagus have different markets," says José Blasco, president of the asparagus sector of Asociafruit and an exporter. "Germany and France are the top two customers for white asparagus followed by Switzerland, Italy, and Belgium. For green asparagus, France is the leader, followed by Italy, then Germany which is a growth market, and England."

Eighty-five percent of all the Spanish asparagus—both green and white—sold to foreign markets is sold by the members of Asociafruit, an association of the most important exporters in the 11 sectors it represents. According to José Álvarez Calderón, the national coordinator for exports of green asparagus for Soivre (the body which carries

The green-to-purple asparagus of the D.E. Huétor Tájar is the only European selection of green asparagus and is the closest to the wild *triguero* variety in genotype.

out control, inspection, and standardization for exports), "the advantage of Asociafruit from the point of view of quality control is that the partners are both producers and exporters so that if the market makes any sort of requirement, this is rapidly reflected in production. Any problem arising is immediately corrected at the source." The asparagus sector has signed an agreement with the Soivre laboratories for regular analyses in the field and in the stores. If the quality level falls short of market requirements and the standards set by the association, the export operation is called off.

"There are very few sectors in Europe with such a high level of voluntary self control," states José Álvarez Calderón.

The main distribution channels are the large retail outlets in all the markets. The prices have been kept very stable and are never higher than those for white asparagus.

Delicious, Healthy, and Versatile

Neither green nor white asparagus can be said to be superior to the other. Their organoleptic characteristics and culinary uses are different, but green asparagus does have greater nutritional value. The white surpasses the green only in total sugar content, so has more calories. Both types of asparagus have a high content of the anti-oxidizing vitamins A and C and of group B vitamins including folic acid. The high levels of potassium and calcium phosphate make asparagus particularly good for bone structure. The anthocyans, which are responsible for the purplish coloring of green asparagus, protect the cardiovascular system. They increase in quantity as the colors become more intense, as does rutin which is known to provide protection against radiation and to assist in blood clotting. It is also a precursor of B complex vitamins. Saponins are responsible for the diuretic effect of asparagus and have a high fiber content. With respect to organoleptic characteristics, green asparagus has a more intense aroma than the white and its flavor is stronger and slightly sweet. Whereas white asparagus always needs to be peeled before cooking, the green does not. It has a fleshy texture and is firmer than the white after peeling.

Each type of asparagus has a different culinary use. The advantage of green asparagus is that it can be grilled rather than boiled, keeping in the flavor and aroma as well as conserving the vitamins and minerals, and this makes it more versatile. In general, asparagus can be eaten either hot or cold—with meat or fish, or in salads. It goes well with other vegetables or can be served alone or as the main ingredient of more sophisticated dishes.

NUTRITIONAL CONTENT OF ASPARAGUS IN 100 G

	White asparagus	Green asparagus
Moisture	93-94%	92-93%
Proteins	1.9%	2.8%
Total sugars	0.4%	0.3%
Lipids	Traces	Traces
Calories	25 Cal	22 Cal
Fiber	0.9%	0.9%
Phosphorus	60 mg	75 mg
Calcium	26 mg	40 mg
Magnesium	16 mg	21 mg
Sodium	4 mg	3 mg
Potassium	360 mg	370 mg
Copper	0.02 mg	2.5 mg
Iron	0.03-0.2 mg	1.2-1.9 mg
Manganese	0.01 mg	0.3-0.5 mg
Zinc	0.04 mg	0.7 mg
Nickel	0.06 mg	0.08 mg
Chrome	0.007 mg	0.007 mg
Vitamin A	50 U.I.	980 U.I.
Vitamin B1	0.11 mg	0.23 mg
Vitamin B2	0.08 mg	0.15 mg
Vitamin B3	1.1 mg	2.2 mg
VITAMIN C	28 mg	48 mg

Source: Data taken from several sources.

Julia López de Sagredo *is an agronomist. She worked in the Spanish commercial office in Dusseldorf, Germany, for seven years dealing with the promotion of Spanish processed agricultural food products. She now lives in Málaga and, amongst other activities, writes on agricultural products and foreign trade.*

See Main Exporters on page 126.

guillén

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D.E. Espárrago de Huétor Tájar (Granada)

In 1996 the D.E. (*Denominación Específica*, see Glossary, on page 134) was granted for the green-to-purple asparagus grown in Huétor Tájar. Because of its morphological and organoleptic characteristics and the fact that it is tetraploid unlike the other cultivated varieties, it is considered the direct successor to the *triguero* asparagus that used to grow wild in the Genil Valley to the northwest of the province of Granada, the current growing area for the D.E. Two of the eight cooperatives in this area grow the asparagus with the D.E. as well as hybrid varieties—Centrosur S.C.A. (CESURCA) and Vegas Bajas del Genil S.C.A. representing 236 growers. This is the location of the most important producers of hybrid green asparagus which, because of the ideal environmental conditions, acquires special quality characteristics. Of the 2,000 ha (4,942 acres), 220 ha (543 acres) are given over to the green-to-purple asparagus, with the rest growing the hybrid. The 1998 harvest amounted to 6,260,000 kg, of which 15 percent was the native variety. CESURCA also packs the D.E. asparagus. The quality characteristics of this asparagus are due as much to the geographical environment as to the variety itself. It is strongly colored, ranging from purple to bronze and bright green. The tip and bracts are always purple. The shape is cylindrical, there being no conical spears as with the hybrids. The tip stands out from the stem, being larger and having a pointed or acuminate shape. The scales are more pronounced than in the hybrids and have a small spur at the bottom. No spears exceed 14 mm (7/12 in) in diameter and the normal size is 6-10 mm (0.23-0.39 in). This asparagus is fleshy and has a firm, flexible texture—it can be bent through 180° without breaking whereas the green hybrids and white varieties break after 90°.

It has an unusual flavor, similar to that of the wild species—intense and slightly bitter, with a strong aroma. The fertile soils of the Genil valley and their high magnesium and calcium content, as well as the marked variation in daytime and nighttime temperatures during the harvest period, promote intense purple coloring, firm consistency, and tenderness. "The main problem for this asparagus," complains Juan Antonio Espejo Calvo, the secretary general of the D.E. and a researcher, "is that the 1992 quality standard which is still in force for cultivated asparagus only distinguishes between two groups—white and green. According to the standard, the green and purple asparagus would be of inferior quality because of its small size. A new line of triguero asparagus needs to be differentiated and defined, and the name and characteristics need to be laid down officially." The costs of production are higher than for the hybrids because, being more primitive and hardier varieties, although the plants have a longer life, they take up to five years to reach full production, their yields are smaller and harvesting is more difficult and costly. But their hardiness makes them fairly resistant to pests and disease and the Regulating Council is therefore advocating integral cultivation systems with minimum use of plant health products.

The Huétor Tájar asparagus is of special interest from the dietary and health points of view because of its high rutin and anthocyan content and because it generally has a higher concentration of nutrients in that the spears are more slender and have a lower percentage of water. Gastronomically, it is ideal for grilling, and the smaller spears are excellent for egg dishes, mousses, soups, canapés, sauces, etc.

GREEN ASPARAGUS EXPORTS (in Kg)
1998 Campaign (February-June)

Belgium	43,031
France	1,357,971
Germany	835,138
Italy	339,900
Netherlands	20,536
Switzerland	151,889
United Kingdom	648,052
Others	158,416
Total	**3,554,933**

Source: ASOCIAFRUIT (Spanish National Association of Producers and Exporters of Vegetables)

GREEN ASPARAGUS EXPORTS EVOLUTION (in Kg)

1992	3,042,705
1993	3,639,644
1994	3,554,978
1995	2,427,408
1996	1,899,882
1997	3,019,823
1998	3,544,933

Source: ASOCIAFRUIT (Spanish National Association of Producers and Exporters of Vegetables)


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RECIPES WITH GREEN ASPARAGUS

Wines recommended by María Jesús Gil de Antuñano

To see just how versatile a food product is, there's nothing more convincing than the recipes of a few outstanding chefs, as we saw in our recent article on *piquillo* peppers. On that occasion we circled the globe with recipes from Australia, the U.S., and Europe. This time we shall go round Spain together with some of the most renowned Spanish chefs and each of them will offer us their special creations. Traditional cuisine also offers many suggestions for green asparagus—with eggs, in stews, in soup or, to follow the Mediterranean tradition, simply char-grilled.

Asparagus with fried egg and Iberian ham gelée

Manuel de la Osa gave us some good recipes to go with an article on garlic in 1996. At that time, his restaurant Las Rejas was busy making a name for itself, in spite of its location in a no-man's land in La Mancha, off the tourist and gastronomy routes. In just three years, his quality is now unanimously recognized. Here is a very different recipe. It could be considered a sophisticated version of the traditional dish of scrambled eggs with green asparagus.

SERVES 4:
200 g of green asparagus
200 ml of chicken stock
300 ml of Iberian ham stock
4 very fresh eggs
50 ml cream
Oil and a little salt
2 sheets of gelatin

Cook the asparagus in the chicken stock without the tips which should be sautéed and set aside. Make a very thin soup with the asparagus and stock and then add the cream. Dissolve the gelatin in the Iberian ham stock.
Fry the eggs in plenty of oil to make them bubbly and voluminous. Place each one in the bottom of a wineglass and sprinkle with salt. Pour over the asparagus cream-soup, then the Iberian ham gelatin. Decorate with the asparagus tips.
Recommended wine: A young, dry, white D.O. Rueda made from 85% Verdejo grapes and 15% Sauvignon Blanc. This wine is clean, fine and penetrating on the nose. Its smoky, toasted, milky, and grassy notes will contrast well with the combined flavors of this dish, the mild asparagus cream, the fried egg and the aroma of the Iberian ham gelée.

Thin cream of green asparagus with lobster

This recipe comes from Zuberoa in Oyarzún in the Basque Country, about a dozen kilometers from San Sebastián. There the Arbelaitz brothers, in their beautiful old family home, take the best of the local produce and combine it with Basque tradition to create exciting new dishes.

SERVES 4:
4 lobsters
1 onion
2 tomatoes
500 g green asparagus
1/2 l stock
50 g butter
Salt
Sugar
Cornstarch

Cook the lobsters in boiling salted water for 6 minutes. Peel the tomatoes and onion. Place the lobster with the tomato and onion in a bowl and crush together. Season with salt.
Cook the asparagus in the stock with sugar and salt. Reserve a few tips for decoration. Blend the rest then thicken with butter and a little cornstarch. Strain then leave to cool. Serve in bowls with the lobster cream in the bottom topped with the cream of green asparagus. Decorate with the tips.
Recommended wine: A dry, white wine from the D.O. Rías Baixas, 100% Albariño from the Salnés Valley. I have chosen a fairly intense wine with tropical fruit aromas to stand up to the flavor of the asparagus, and its hints of green apple would be a good match for the lobster. It is important to choose a young wine and to serve it at a cooler temperature than the cream of asparagus.

Salad of Aranjuez strawberries and asparagus

Aranjuez, just 50 km (30 miles) from Madrid, is home to a magnificent royal palace, the summer home of the Spanish royal family for many centuries. It is also the garden of Madrid. Its two-star products—asparagus (both white and green) and strawberries—are here honored in this colorful salad by Salvador Gallego whose village restaurant, El Cenador de Salvador, is one of the best on the Madrid scene.

SERVES 6:
4 green asparagus spears per person
3 red tomatoes, cut in half and hollowed out
1 kg strawberries, peeled and cut in quarters
1 l water
Orange rind
Lemon rind
Bay leaf
5 peppercorns
2 cloves
1 sprig of parsley
3 tbsp virgin olive oil
4 tbsp sugar
Chicory leaves cut into 5 cm pieces
Crystallized orange

VINAIGRETTE:

Strawberry peelings crushed and strained
4 tbsp raspberry vinegar
2 tbsp sugar
6 tbsp virgin olive oil

Cook the asparagus until *al dente* and drain. Cut off the tips and set aside. Fillet the rest as finely as possible and cut to lengths of 5 or 6 cm (2 or 2.4 inches).
After hollowing out the tomatoes, marinate them for a while in the water with the orange rind, lemon rind, peppercorns, cloves, parsley, bay leaf, sugar, and oil. Drain, dry, and fill with the strawberry pieces. Chill in the refrigerator for a few minutes. Make the vinaigrette by mixing all the ingredients and strain. Arrange a bed of sliced asparagus in a crown shape, place the filled tomato in the center and pour over the vinaigrette. Decorate with the asparagus tips, two pieces of endive, and a little crystallized orange in julienne strips.
Recommended wine: Manzanilla, D.O. Jerez, made from 100% Palomino grapes. Neither asparagus nor vinegar, which are the predominant flavors in this salad, are good partners for wine. A manzanilla is one of the few possible choices. Its saline and nutty flavors would make a pleasant contrast.

Green asparagus with scrambled eggs

The next recipe comes from the Ruta del Veleta restaurant just outside Granada. Here special emphasis is placed on local ingredients, obviously including the Specific Denomination Huétor Tájar asparagus which is used in both traditional Andalusian recipes and other more creative styles.

Char-grilled asparagus

SERVES 6:
400 g asparagus from Huétor Tájar
Salt
Pepper
Virgin olive oil

Reject the hardest part of the asparagus. Grill, then serve on a dish drizzled with virgin olive oil and sprinkled with a little sea salt.
Recommended wine: A rosé, 100% Garnacha, demi-sec wine from the Contraviesa-Alpujarra wine-growing district. The hint of sweetness in this wine will prevent the usual clash between asparagus and wine. It is difficult to find these wines outside their growing area so an alternative might be a D.O. Madrid rosé made from 70% Tinto Fino and 30% Malvar. This is a fresh-flavored wine with aromas of crystallized fruits.

Bream with wild asparagus and shrimp

Santi Santamaría has converted his Racó de Can Fabes (three stars in the Michelin Guide, see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 41) in Sant Celoni, 50 km from Barcelona, into a culinary port-of-call for visitors to the capital of Catalonia. It has become practically a place of pilgrimage.

SERVES 4:
1 bream weighing 1.2 kg
4 bundles of wild asparagus
12 shrimps weighing 50 g each

SAUCE:
Fresh, aromatic vegetables (celery, parsley, onion...)
Olive oil
White wine
Sweet curry powder
Table salt
Gray sea salt

To make the sauce, first sauté the vegetables in olive oil, then deglaze with white wine. Place the vegetables in water, bring to the boil and cook for 25 minutes.Lleave to soak for 30 minutes. Flavor with the sweet curry powder, reduce and bind with the olive oil. Check for seasoning.
Scale and fillet the bream. Cut into 150 g pieces.
Remove the heads from the shrimps, peel the tails, and place on brochettes.
Scale and fillet the bream. Cut into 150 g pieces. Brush with olive oil and season with salt. Cook over a chrome griddle or in a non-stick pan with the skin side down, turning just before serving. When the bream is half cooked, grill the shrimps.
Sauté the asparagus in olive oil at the last minute. Dish all the ingredients and pour over the sauce. Sprinkle the bream with a pinch of gray sea salt.

Recommended wine: Oloroso D.O. Jerez made from 90% Palomino, 10% Pedro Ximénez. A powerful wine on the nose with aromas of dried figs, its very marked flavors allow it to stand up to the curry which is the trickiest ingredient in this recipe, even more so than the grilled wild asparagus which, when cooked in other ways, tends to be slightly bitter. The bream, shrimps, and vegetables would be easy to accompany with any dry white wine or with a fino or a manzanilla.

Salad of liver with green asparagus

Koldo Royo is a Basque chef based in Palma de Mallorca in the Balearic Islands. His restaurant has become the best representative of high-level Spanish cuisine on the island. His creations combine Mediterranean flavors with Basque inspiration.

SERVES 4:
600 g veal liver
1 large onion
16 green asparagus spears
2 tomatoes peeled and diced
10 ml olive oil
Sherry vinegar
Salt
Pepper
Pine nuts
Walnuts
Chervil
Miniature watercress

Remove the hard part of the asparagus and cut the rest into two or three pieces. Cook in salted water and leave to cool.
Heat the oil in the frying-pan. Sauté the walnuts, pine nuts, and tomatoes. When turning color, add the chervil and vinegar.
Lightly fry the onion cut in julienne strips with a little oil and salt.
Cut the liver into pieces, season with salt and pepper, and brown all over in a little oil.
Dish with the green asparagus on one side and on the other a little pile of onion with the liver pieces on top. Top with the vinaigrette. Decorate with the miniature watercress.
Recommended wine: A white *crianza*, D.O. Alicante, made of Chardonnay grapes. The varietal aromas are brought out during fermentation by the smoky, milky, and nutty aromas of the oak. This rich blend of aromas pairs well with the combination of tomatoes and nuts in the vinaigrette used in this very original recipe and at the same time can stand up to the strong personality of the liver. The flavor of the asparagus does not stand out in this salad so is not a problem when choosing the wine.

Restaurants

Las Rejas
Avda. de Brasil, s/n
16660 LAS PEDROÑERAS (Cuenca)
Tel: (34) 967 161 089

Zuberoa Jatetxea
Iturriotz Auzoa, 8
20301 OYARZUN
(Guipúzcoa)
Tel: (34) 943 491 228

El Cenador de Salvador
Av. España, 30
28411 MORALZARZAL (Madrid)
Tel: (34) 918 577 722

Ruta del Veleta
Ctra. Sierra Nevada, 136
Km. 5,400
18190 CENES DE LA VEGA (Granada)
Tel: (34) 958 486 134

Racó de Can Fabes
Sant Joan, 6
08470 SANT CELONI (Barcelona)
Tel: (34) 938 672 851

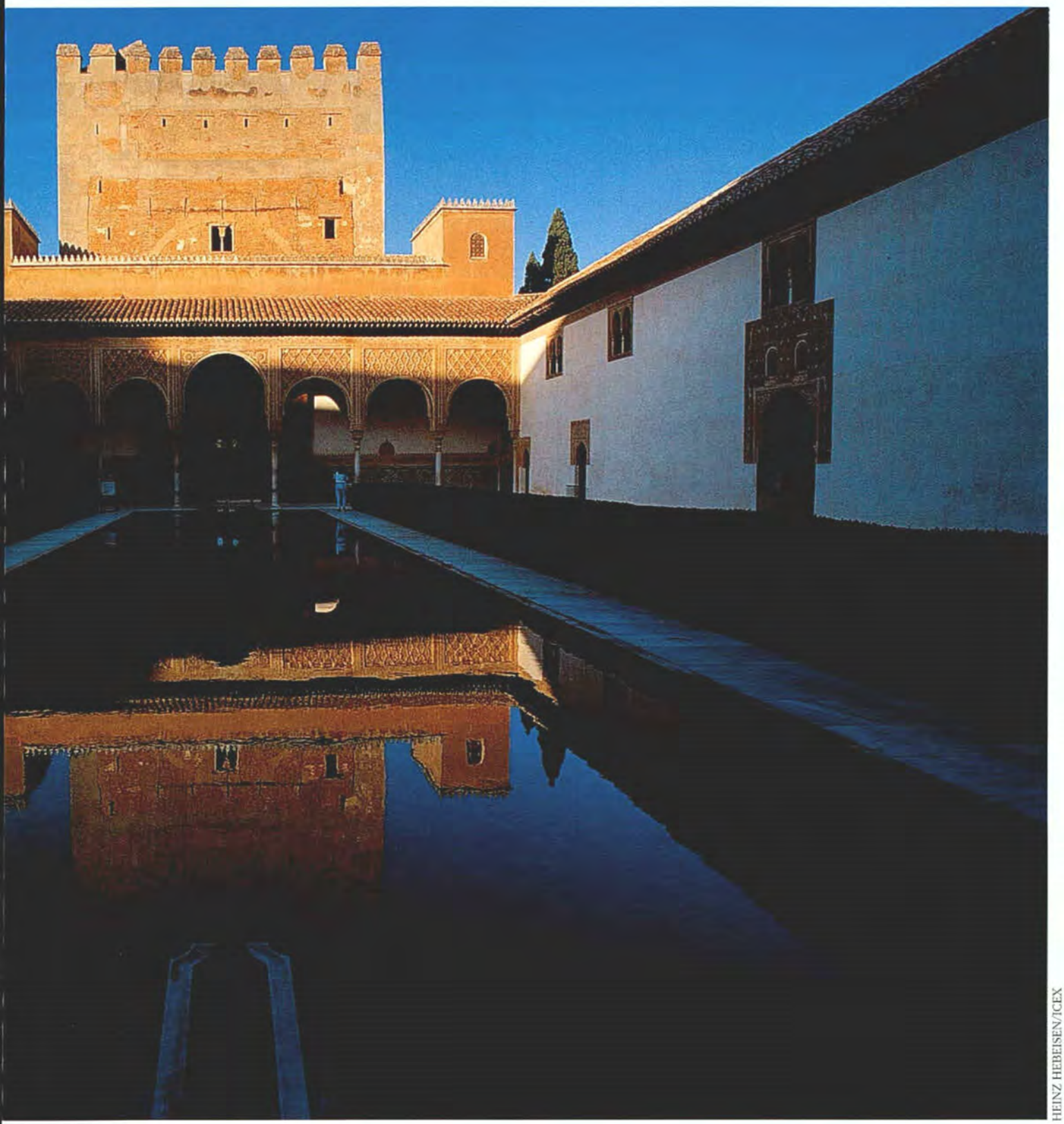
Koldo Royo
Pº Maritimo, 3
PALMA DE MALLORCA
(Baleares)
Tel: (34) 971 732 435

SPAIN'S SHARE OF THE WORLD'S HERITAGE

Text: Jesús Torbado

Translation: Hawys Pritchard

IN THE COURSE OF JUST FOURTEEN YEARS, UNESCO HAS SELECTED OVER A HUNDRED OF SPAIN'S BUILDINGS, TOWNS, AND LANDSCAPES FOR INCLUSION IN ITS WORLD HERITAGE LIST WHERE, COLLECTIVELY, THEY CONSTITUTE TWENTY-NINE ENTRIES. THE SCOPE REPRESENTED BY THESE ENTRIES IS VAST: THEY RANGE FROM STONE AGE PAINTINGS DATING BACK FIFTEEN THOUSAND YEARS, RIGHT UP TO THE FANTASIES-MADE-FACT OF AN ARCHITECT OF OUR OWN CENTURY. THEY SYMBOLIZE A COUNTRY ON WHICH MANY CULTURES AND DIFFERENT RELIGIONS HAVE LEFT THEIR MARK, AND ULTIMATELY, PERHAPS, THE UNIVERSALITY OF ART AND LIFE.

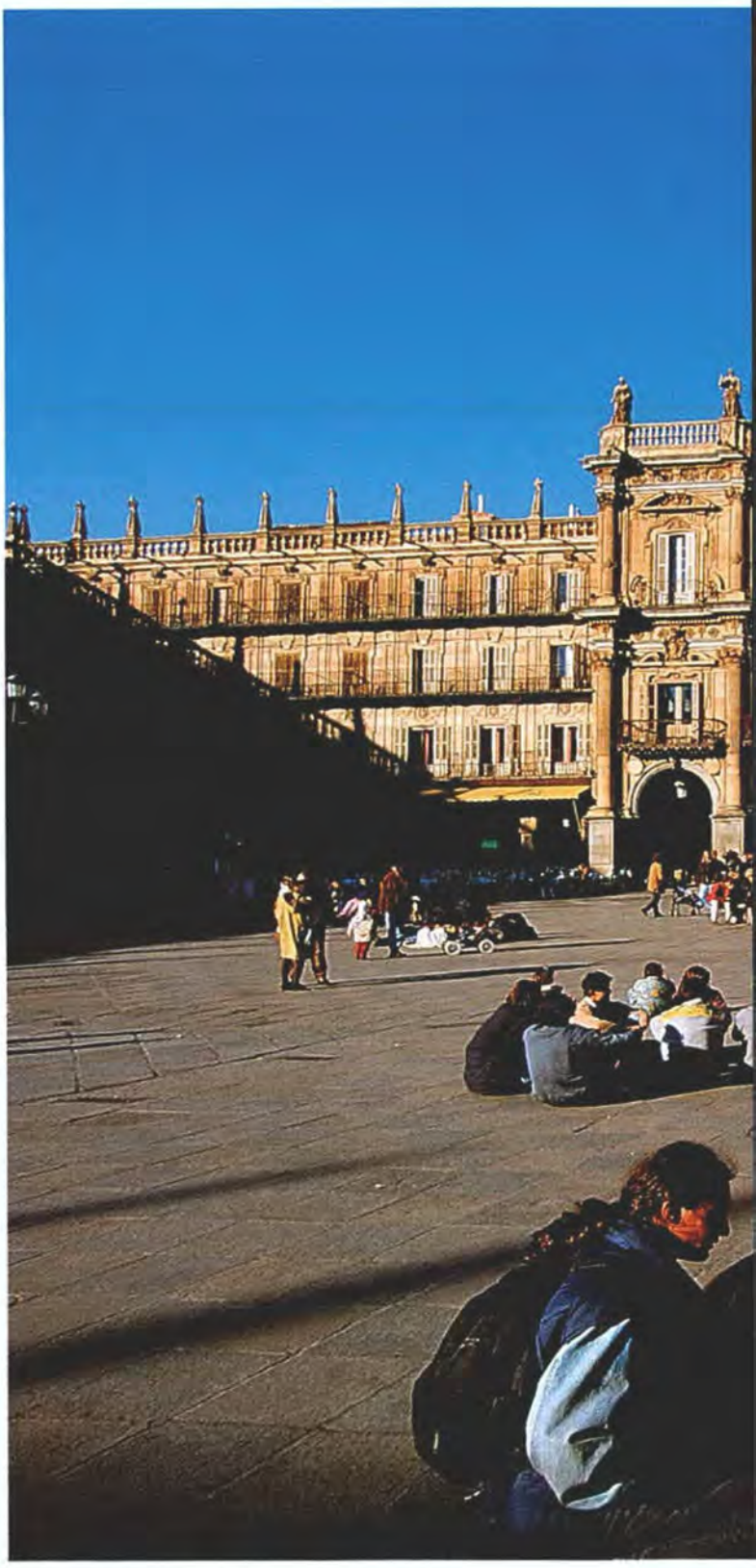


HEINZ HEBEISEN/ICEX

Every December, thousands of Spaniards are to be found on tenterhooks, tensely waiting to hear whether Unesco's World Heritage Committee has approved their minutely detailed proposals on behalf of candidates for the World Heritage List. National and local authorities, art, history, and nature lovers, and just people for whom fine historic buildings are their native environment, wait impatiently to learn which parts of the globe have received the accolade that year of being declared jewels in the crown of mankind, symbols of which we can all feel proud.

So far, a total of 582 sites in 114 countries have been officially recognized as of worldwide importance, and numerically, alongside France, Spain heads the list with a total of 29. And this is despite being a late joiner, for Spain subscribed to the convention only in 1984, twelve years after its approval at Unesco's General Conference on 16 November, 1972.

The present director general has declared that "because of its history and geographical situation, Spain has been a cradle of diverse cultures and civilizations; they have left their traces everywhere (...) The work carried out by Spain's architects, town planners, archaeologists, naturalists, historians, and patrons therefore deserves praise. It must also be recognized that the large number of cultural and natural possessions registered is consequent upon the civic and cultural activity and enthusiasm of its citizens." The director general's point here is an acknowledgment of the interest that the World Heritage List has engendered in Spain and of the fact that it was the first country to propose as a candidate not a specific site but an entire route of singular historical, artistic, and spiritual significance—the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela, known as the *Camino de Santiago*. This proposal was accepted in 1993, thereby paving the way for a wider interpretation of the concept of world heritage on the part of Unesco. Meanwhile, the numerous detailed applications received from Spain at Un-

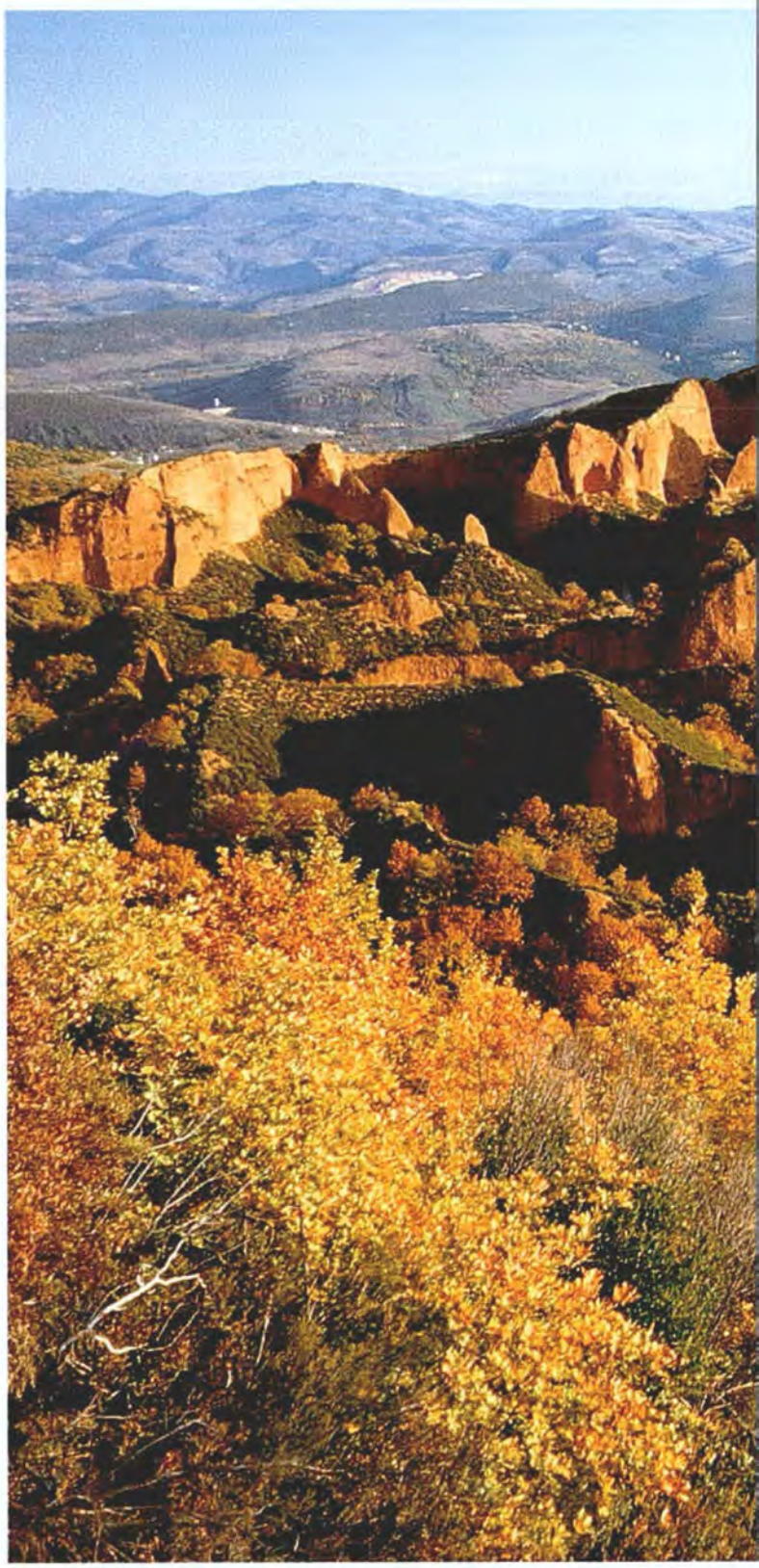


TO DATE, A TOTAL OF 582 SITES IN 114 COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED AS OF WORLDWIDE VALUE. NUMERICALLY, SPAIN, ALONGSIDE FRANCE, LEADS THE LIST WITH A TOTAL OF 29.

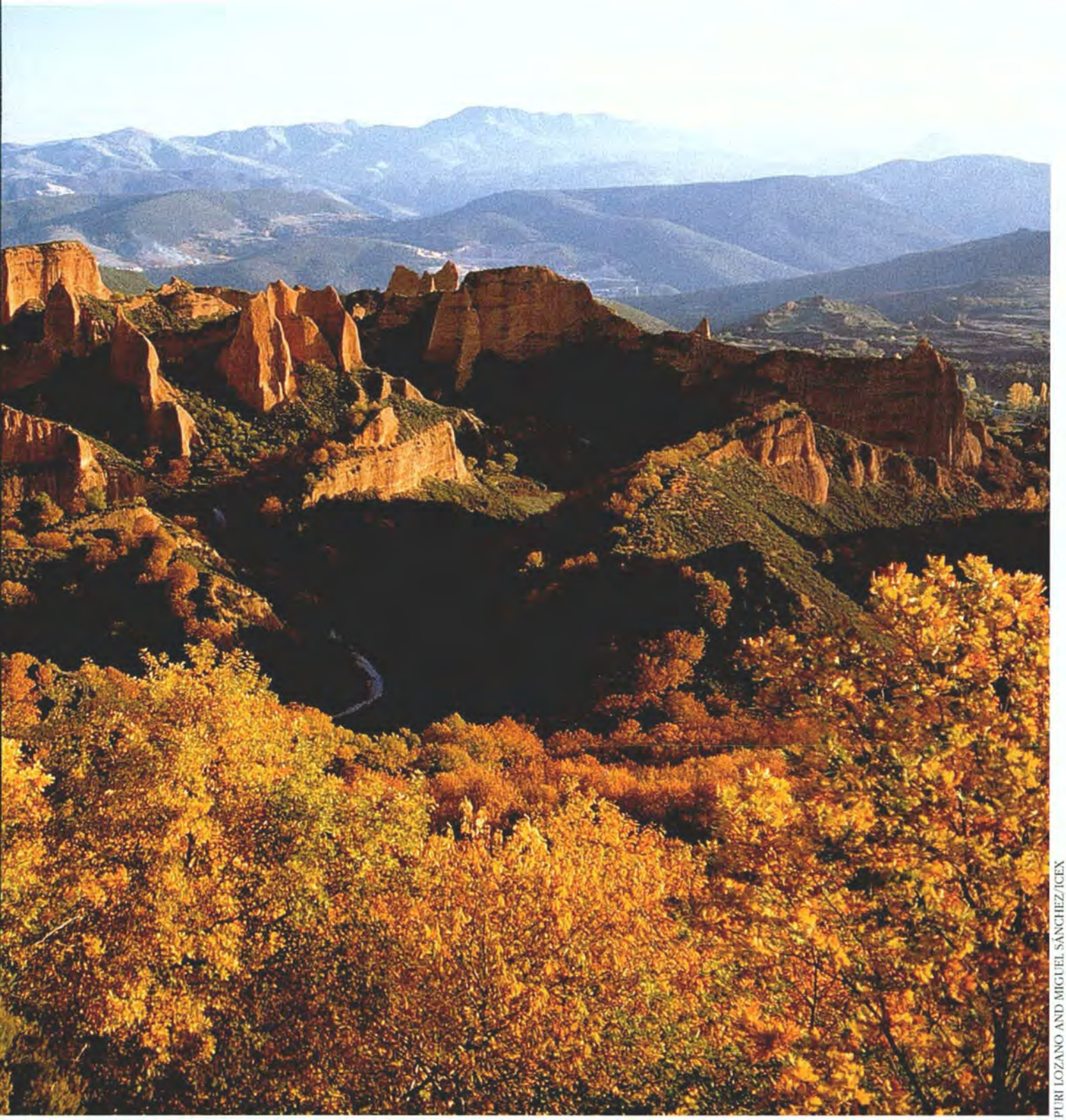
HEINZ HEBEISEN/ICEX

esco's offices each year on behalf of very diverse candidates attest both to the nation's concern to conserve its treasures and what a wealth of them it possesses. And they are by no means the products of one historical period or one mode of cultural expression; they span no less than fifteen thousand years of man's presence on this planet and represent very diverse civilizations. Spain's heritage extends from elements dating from the Stone Age, in the form of cave paintings found in Altamira (near Santander, in northern Spain) and in other caves and sheltered enclaves along the stretch of east coast known as Levante, right up to the architectural fantasies created by Catalan architect Antonio Gaudí at the turn of this century. Ranging in its components from the crowd-pulling to the modest—from the monumentally splendid Escorial to a remote little Romanesque church in the mountains of Palencia, for example—this heritage represents a huge resource of beauty, effort, skill, and talent. But of course the pages of Spain's long history are populated by many more treasures than the twenty-nine officially recognized as being of international worth. There are thousands of others which will probably never appear on the Heritage List, many already publicly acclaimed, many still virtually private, and many as worthy of inclusion as the listed ones, for the Iberian Peninsula, like the Italian, is one of the greatest repositories of artistic riches in the world. Furthermore, the natural beauty and diversity of Spain's landscapes often work in synergy with these, with the result that some areas of the country's 500,000 square kilometers (193,050 square miles)—still a very small, albeit impressive proportion—have also qualified for inclusion in the World Heritage List, Unesco being faced with the difficult task of singling out specific areas from so much that is outstanding.

It is important to realize that World Heritage designation, with all that this implies in terms of conservation and,



SPAIN WAS THE FIRST COUNTRY TO PROPOSE NOT A SPECIFIC SITE BUT AN ENTIRE HISTORICAL, ARCHITECTURAL, AND SPIRITUAL ITINERARY IN THE FORM OF THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO PILGRIMAGE ROUTE.



PURI LOZANO AND MIGUEL SANCHEZ/ICEX

FOR MANY CENTURIES, THE OLD QUARTERS OF CITIES SUCH AS SALAMANCA, SEGOVIA, TOLEDO, AND CUENCA HAVE BEEN CONCENTRATIONS OF ART AND CULTURE.

of course, honor, implies no exclusion—many other monuments of equal merit could also qualify. In Spain, for example, both Burgos and León cathedrals are comparably fine examples of the Gothic, but only the former enjoys World Heritage status. Unesco chooses from what is proposed, not from what exists.

That the sites awarded designation merit their status is, however, beyond question. In some cases, the term "site" covers several different buildings—examples of Asturias' pre-Romanesque *ramirense* architecture (which takes its name from the 9th-century reign of King Ramiro I during which much of it was built) are a case in point, not to mention the overall architectural content of the Camino de Santiago—and itemized in this way, the number of places officially granted heritage status tops the hundred mark. They present the world with a sort of *crème de la crème* of Spain's geography and culture, providing a source of enormous pleasure to true explorers of other cultures.

MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE TOWNS

Twelve towns appear on the Heritage List, though none of them in its entirety—towns are, after all, constantly evolving. The listed features are the "old towns" or historic quarters of Salamanca, Alcalá de Henares, Santiago de Compostela, Cáceres, Ávila (including churches built outside its famous walls), Toledo, Segovia, El Albaycín (one of the three historical towns encompassed by present-day Granada), Cuenca, Córdoba's Jewish quarter, some parts of Oviedo, and Mérida's Roman archaeological area.

Obviously, the scope is wide, taking in almost the entire history and geography of Spain: from 25 B.C., the year when Mérida was founded as a retirement place for veterans of the Roman legions, through the Renaissance as grandly expressed in Salamanca and Cáceres between the 15th and 17th centuries, and including much more modern buildings in Cuenca and El Albaycín, though these are almost without exception based on ancient, even prehistoric, predecessors. These towns sum up not only the architectural achievements of 20 centuries but also the way of life of the people of Spain—pagans, Christians, Arabs, and Jews—throughout that long period. Mérida, in Extremadura, has gradually recovered its amphitheater, temples, arches, aqueducts, and villas: indeed, its granite-built theater, dating from the 1st century, is used for staging performances every summer. Once the capital of the province of Lusitania, founded by Augustus and point of departure of another of Spain's famous routes, the Silver Route, or *Vía de Plata* (up to ten important routes originated there), Mérida was, in its prime, the ninth most important city in the Roman Empire—we are told by the 4th-century poet Ausonius that it was superior to Athens. It grew into a walled city extending over 80 hectares (200 acres) and equipped with sophisticated urbanistic facilities such as a sewage system and paved roads. There are so many buried remains beneath Mérida that building there today is a very difficult business. Its marvelous museum (see article on page 18) displays just some of the sculptures, mosaics, and other artifacts found during excavations.

Salamanca, Alcalá, Segovia, Ávila, Toledo, and Cáceres all share certain features in common. Their origins are unclear, though almost certainly pre-Roman, and they began to grow in importance during the Middle Ages, in pace with the recovery by Christian forces of territories captured by the Arabs since their invasion of the Peninsula in 711. Each of these towns, in its own particular way, represents something of the essence of traditional Castile. Cáceres, which today falls within Extremadura, was the birthplace of many of the conquistadors who colonized the Americas. These towns were focuses of art and culture, home to famous personages, and kings and noblemen endowed them richly with churches, convents, city walls, imposing plazas, and mansions.

Salamanca's seven hundred year old university is one of the most ancient and respected in Europe, and it enjoys privileges on a par with Oxford, Bologna, and Paris. At its apogee in the mid-16th century, it had 60 lecture halls in use, and among its students, or at least habitués of the city, were Cervantes, Hernán Cortés, Christopher Columbus, and dozens of artists, philosophers, and theologians. Not surprisingly, this Heritage Site embraces more than twenty splendid buildings as well as part of the town itself: the university, two linked cathedrals (the "old one"—*la Vieja*—consecrated in 1160, and the Gothic "new one"—*la Nueva*—built 1513-1560), several golden-toned stone-built convents and monasteries, churches, mansions, and an exceptionally fine Plaza Mayor, considered to be one of the most beautiful in Europe.

Alcalá de Henares, just outside Madrid, shares certain characteristics with Salamanca. It is also the home of an ancient university, dating back five centuries in this case, and its important buildings, still in use, share World Heritage status with the historic town center which contains many churches, mansions, convents, and monasteries, all dating from the 15th-17th centuries, and with the Archbishop's Palace which stands within a walled precinct. Originally founded by Trajan as the town of *Complutum* in the 1st century A.D., Alcalá was the birthplace of Cervantes, author of *Don Quixote*, and its superb scholastic buildings date from 1499, date of the founding of the university by the great Cardinal Cisneros, famous for printing the Complutensian Polyglot Bible.

Both the walled town of Ávila, and Segovia, whose proud royal palace, the alcazar, stands out like a ship's prow, lie on the northern slopes of the great mountain chain north of Madrid which divides the Peninsula in two. Turned into fortress towns in the Middle Ages, both in subsequent centuries acquired a wealth of imposing stone buildings of a readily recognizable character. Their narrow streets lead between these monumental buildings, often standing just a few

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THESE SITES PRESENT THE WORLD WITH A SORT OF *CRÈME DE LA CRÈME* OF SPAIN'S GEOGRAPHY AND CULTURE, PROVIDING A SOURCE OF ENORMOUS PLEASURE TO TRUE EXPLORERS OF OTHER CULTURES.

paces apart, providing a concise case study of the evolution of architecture from the Romanesque to the late Baroque.

At 1,126 meters (3,700 feet), Ávila is the highest regional capital in Europe, but its trademark features are its 2.5 km (1.6 miles) of city walls, nine centuries old and still perfectly preserved. Segovia's claim to fame is its Roman aqueduct, the finest example in existence and still intact after two thousand years. With its double-tiered arches, it stands almost 30 meters (100 feet) high, stretching over 700 meters (2,300 feet) and spanning the town center, an enduring tribute to Roman engineering. But even without this astonishing feature, the town could still claim its place among the finest in Europe.

Cáceres is a less ancient town, and is characterized by the singular harmony of its architecture. This extensive enclave of splendid turreted mansions and sturdy churches came into being as a result of settlement by Christian knights after 1229, when they recaptured the town from the Arab invaders. There are still traces of the Muslim occupiers within its town walls—these include an Arab water cistern hewn out of solid rock—but most of its treasures date from its period of greatest prosperity, up to around 1600. Although Cáceres is a lively town today, a certain atmosphere of the restraint, solidity, severity, and beauty of that period still emanates from its history-steeped buildings.

CULTURAL INPUT

Toledo and Granada's El Albaycín exemplify the remarkable way in which Spain's Christians, Jews, and Muslims coexisted for centuries. El Albaycín is a hillside covered with little houses and gardens, evocative above all of the Arab presence. It looks directly across at the Alhambra Palace, tantamount to a view of paradise. Two thousand years of history have left an amazing number of monuments in the city which Spaniards know as "la imperial Toledo," built on a granite promontory over the River Tagus. Narrow winding streets charged with atmosphere and legend lead among synagogues, mosques, and two imposing Christian buildings, symbols of power both religious—the astonishing cathedral—and civil—the alcazar, or royal palace. Strength, wisdom, and solidity, impervious to the passage of time, characterize this city famous as a place of peaceful coexistence, learning, and art (El Greco lived here). Toledo is prototypical of Spain's great medieval cities.

Cuenca's special feature is its dramatic location, perched over two gorges, through which the rivers Júcar and Huécar run. According to legend, this town was founded on the same day as Rome, and its urbanistic layout, again liberally endowed with important buildings, is mysterious, abstract, strangely romantic and, in a word, unique. Córdoba is represented on the Heritage List by its *Judería*, or Jewish quarter, adjacent to the great mosque; this tiny area, full of picturesque features and flower-crammed courtyards, seems to sum up thirty centuries of human life and energy. Victor Hugo had this quarter of Córdoba in mind when he called it "the city of old houses," and it dates from the period when, in Muslim hands, this was the largest and most splendid city in Europe.

Parts of historic Oviedo were added to the Heritage List in 1998. Six beautiful local churches had already been granted World Heritage status ten years earlier. They are examples of the pre-Romanesque ramirense style dating from the 9th century, a period when Asturias was a tiny Christian enclave (Oviedo was its capital) while much of the rest of Spain was Muslim-occupied. The 1998 additions are the Foncalada fountain, operated by a fascinating hydraulic system, the cathedral's *Cámara Santa*, and the church of San Julián, all further examples of this completely unique style of local architecture and as such complementary to the earlier listing.

Santiago de Compostela is the goal of a long pilgrimage route, more than 800 km (500 miles) of which lie within Spain, and whose entire length is redolent of religious fervor, legend, and art history. While its great Romanesque cathedral is the most obvious candidate for heritage status, this entire city is a marvelous expression of beauty and harmony, founded in the Middle Ages to the greater glory of the apostle St. James. Under the typically Celtic rainy skies of Galicia, convents and monasteries, mansions, university buildings, and hospitals cluster around Santiago's cathedral, whose famous Romanesque Pórtico de la Gloria, which incorporates some 200 still eloquent figures, just within the West Front, is one of the most important works of sculpture surviving from the 12th century. Dozens of buildings, landscapes, and legends are allied to this great cathedral, lining the long medieval pilgrimage route whose Spanish stretch led from the Pyrenees almost to the shores of the Atlantic. The millions of pilgrims who have made their way on foot to Galicia's capital, through Aragon, Navarre, and Castile, have experienced the wealth of their artistic treasures along the way.

The true Camino de Santiago, the old "French Route" through Spanish territory (the stretches of the pilgrimage route within France were also granted heritage status in 1998), was an important artery along which the sap and lifeblood of medieval Europe flowed, and its contribution to the emergence of the Spanish nation was a vital one. How apt that this should now become part of the world's heritage: nearly a thousand kilometers of art, legend, prayer, adventure, and dogged endurance, along which stand buildings which range from the imposing to the modest, some in towns and villages, others standing alone in the landscape. Not to mention the dust, sun, mountains, rain, and rocks with which pilgrims contended—and still contend—along the road itself... Perhaps no other heritage listing, however impressive, sums up so thoroughly the past and present of the Spanish people.

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SPAIN'S HERITAGE SITES SYNTHESIZE ERAS, SENTIMENTS, BELIEFS, AND PEOPLES. THEY SUM UP CULTURES AND THEIR INTERPRETATIONS OF ART AND LIFE.

Heritage List are, unquestionably, its prehistoric paintings. Of the five areas of Spanish landscape chosen by Unesco for their outstanding qualities, two qualified by virtue because of the impression made on that landscape by the hand of man, a sort of "added value" contributed by man to nature.

The most significant of these is perhaps the cave at Altamira, in Cantabria, northern Spain. This would be a cave like many others had not certain anonymous representatives of *homo sapiens*, relatives of Cro-Magnon Man, painted figures on its walls some ten to fifteen thousand years ago, turning it into what has been dubbed the "Sistine Chapel of prehistoric art." The figures are of sixteen lifelike bison, two wild boar running at full speed, several horses, a sweet-faced hind... a whole catalogue of enchanted and enchanting animal life, described by French historian Nodier as "the masterpiece of all time." The same eternal epithet could be applied to the paintings and engravings of Levante—the cave art of the Mediterranean basin—added to the Heritage List last year. The area in which they occur actually extends from Lérida to Almería, namely almost the whole length of the east coast, penetrating inland as far as Albacete and Teruel. Figures were painted or carved on rock during the Paleolithic and Mesolithic periods, from four to eight hundred years B.C., in more that 800 caves or sheltered sites. According to Unesco, they are one of the scarce artistic/documentary testimonies of the socioeconomic conditions of prehistoric Europe.

The other listed natural landscape on which man's intervention could be said to have wrought a decisive change is Las Médulas, in León, where, using waterpower to move tons of earth, the Romans extracted more gold from these now spectral mountains than Spain did from the Americas. Pliny the Elder, who was governor and administrator of these mines, calculated that seven thousand kilos of gold a year were sent to Italy from these mines for more than two hundred years. This was the site of one of the first gold rushes, and the toil of thousands of slaves has left its enduring mark. These imposing remains combine the natural charm of centuries-old chestnut woodlands with the warren of galleries and yellow rubble left after Rome had exhausted the wealth of this lovely area of El Bierzo, in western Spain.

The other three areas of Spain's landscape designated World Heritage Sites are areas of natural beauty: the national parks of Doñana, in Huelva province, Andalusia, and Garajonay, on the Canary Island of La Gomera, and the Spanish section of Monte Perdido, a national park in the Pyrenees, shared with France. Doñana, once a royal hunting estate, is on the Atlantic coast, and provides the main winter shelter for migrating birds in Europe. It incorporates various very diverse ecosystems—marshlands, quicksand, dunes, and the like—and extends over more than a thousand square kilometers (386 square miles), providing the habitat for very varied wildlife. This territory was trodden by Punic invaders five centuries before the birth of Christ. Garajonay Park, on the Canary Island of La Gomera, is unique and strange: its damp island environment has permitted the survival of the world's best example of laurisilva woodland, a botanical relic of the Tertiary Age.

The number of single buildings to have been granted World Heritage status over these fourteen years is even greater. They are: Cordoba's mosque-cathedral; Granada's Alhambra and Generalife (the former summer palace of the sultans and its gardens); Segovia's aqueduct; three impressive buildings in Seville—the Reales Alcázares (the royal palace, built in the Mudéjar style), the cathedral, and the Archivo de Indias (the archive founded in the late 18th century for documents relating to the discovery and colonization of the Americas); the monasteries of El Escorial, Guadalupe, and Poblet; the Mudéjar towers and buildings of Teruel; the old Silk Exchange building in Valencia; Burgos cathedral; the two monasteries in San Millán (the Monasterio de Suso and the Monasterio de Yuso, meaning the "upper" and "lower" monasteries) in La Rioja; in Barcelona, the 15th-century Hospital de San Pablo, the Palacio de la Música (a *modernista* building, designed at the turn of this century by Catalan architect Domènech i Montaner), and three masterpieces by his contemporary Antonio Gaudí: the Güell Palace and Park and the Milá house, also known as La Pedrera.

Each of these deserves a detailed description, each representing as it does a particular moment of the past, a landmark in the history of art, a particularly vivid expression of culture. Created by Spaniards of different religions, to express the power of kings, of the church, of individual genius, they are the products of periods often centuries apart, and range in character from the urban to the rustic. More than twenty centuries separate the dizzying stone arcades of Segovia's aqueduct from Gaudí's Barcelonan fantasies; the modest rusticity of the medieval Monasterio de Suso, built before the year 1000, and among whose manuscripts the first known example of written Castilian was found, could hardly be more different from El Escorial, memorial to and mausoleum of Philip II, one of the most powerful kings in history. In this sense, Spain's Heritage Sites synthesize eras, sentiments, beliefs, and peoples. They sum up cultures and their interpretations of art and life. They are a sort of "official" reflection of us that presents an image to the outside world, but we see our own reflection, too.

Jesús Torbado *is a novelist and travel writer. Author of some thirty books, he has won the Planeta, Alfaguara, and Ateneo de Sevilla prizes for fiction. His latest works include* El peregrino, La ballena, Los Topos *and* El imperial de arena. *Several of his travel books are about Spain, including* Pueblos de España *and* Patrimonio de la Humanidad.

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UNESCO'S CHOICE OF SPAIN'S HERITAGE

1. **Burgos Cathedral.** A Gothic building, begun in 1221, prototypical of this style in Spain and full of works of art from many periods (1984).

2. Granada's **Alhambra Palace**-cum-fortress, including the gardens and buildings of the **Generalife** and the hillside *barrio* of **El Albaycín** (1984-1994). These are among the finest examples of Muslim architecture anywhere in the world (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 9).

3. **Córdoba's Mosque,** *La Mezquita*, later converted into a Christian cathedral, and the **old Jewish Quarter known as *La Judería*** (1984-1994). The earliest parts of the mosque date from 786 (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 18).

4. **El Escorial Monastery.** Built by Philip II in 1563-1584, this is a royal pantheon and a vast repository of works of art (1984). (See *Spain Gourmetour* No. 31.)

5. **Güell Park, Güell Palace** and **Casa Milá.** These are the three most outstanding works of architect Antonio Gaudí (1852-1926). Seventeen of his buildings are categorized as national monuments in Spain (1984). (See *Spain Gourmetour* No. 25.)

6. **Altamira Cave,** Cantabria, often described as "the Sistine Chapel of prehistoric art" (1985).

7. **Segovia's Old Town** and **Roman aqueduct.** The designation includes the elegant Gothic cathedral and several other historic buildings (1985). (See *Spain Gourmetour* No. 8.)

8. **Santiago de Compostela's Old Town**, with its Romanesque cathedral and a pilgrims' hospital, now a parador (1985). (See *Spain Gourmetour* No. 17.)

9. **Ávila's Old Town**, and some churches outside its famous, perfectly preserved, town walls (1985).

10. **Pre-Romanesque *ramirense* churches** in the former kingdom of Asturias. Half a dozen of the many built from the 9th century were selected (1985-1998). (See *Spain Gourmetour* No. 34.) In 1998 the **medieval quarter of Oviedo** and a church were added, rounding out the selection made in 1985.

11. **Teruel's Mudéjar architecture,** especially the towers. They were built in the 14th century by Muslim craftsmen who stayed on after the Christian reconquest of the territory (1986).

12. **Cáceres' historic center,** with mansions and churches built by Christian knights, particularly in the 15th and 16th centuries (1986). (See *Spain Gourmetour* No. 19.)

13. **Historic city of Toledo.** Former capital city for the Visigoths, the Arabs, and later the Christians (1986). (See *Spain Gourmetour* No. 15.)

14. **Garajonay National Park** on the Canary Island of la Gomera. Natural heritage from the Tertiary Period (1986). (See *Spain Gourmetour* No. 25.)

15. **Seville's Cathedral, Reales Alcázares** and **Archive of the Indies,** the three finest buildings in this beautiful Andalusian city (1987). (See *Spain Gourmetour* No. 13.)

16. **Salamanca's Old Town.** Very extensive, with many fine religious and civic buildings dating from the height of its ancient university's fame (1988).

17. **Cistercian monastery of Poblet,** in Catalonia. Pantheon of the royal family of Aragon (1991).

18. **Mérida's archaeological relics,** including the many Roman remains in this former capital of Lusitania (1993).

19. **Hieronymite monastery of Guadalupe**, in Extremadura. Palace, church, and fortress closely linked with the colonization of the Americas (1993). (See *Spain Gourmetour* No. 10.)

20. **Camino de Santiago,** the long medieval pilgrimage route (though prehistoric in origin) which stretches right across the north of the Peninsula (1993). (See *Spain Gourmetour* Nos. 17 and 30.)

21. **Doñana Park,** in western Andalusia. The biggest and most important European refuge for migratory birds (1994).

22. **Historic town of Cuenca,** with remains of town walls and its amazing *casas colgadas*—houses suspended over two river gorges (1994). (See *Spain Gourmetour* No. 27.)

23. **Valencia's Silk Exchange,** an imposing Gothic-Baroque building dating from 1483, meeting place of sailors and traders (1996).

24. **Las Médulas.** An area of natural beauty in the mountains of León, with mine-workings dating from the period of Roman occupation (1997).

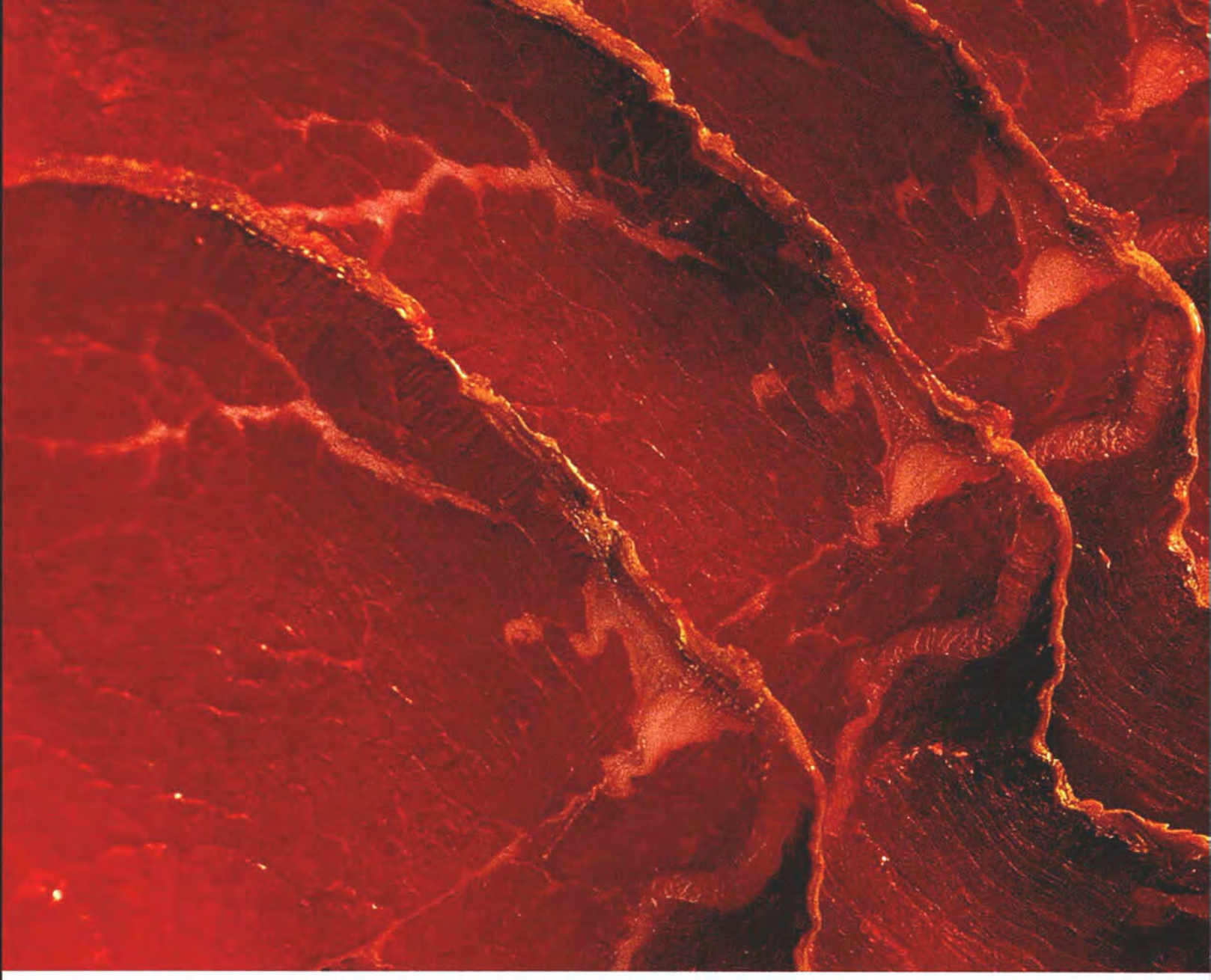
25. Catalonia's *modernista* **Palacio de la Música,** built in 1905-1908, and the 15th-century **Hospital de Sant Pau** (1997).

26. **The two San Millán monasteries, Yuso and Suso, in La Rioja.** Very different one from the other, they are described as "the cradle of the Castilian language" (1997). (See *Spain Gourmetour* No. 20.)

27. **Monte Perdido, the National Park in the Pyrenees**, shared with France (1998). (See *Spain Gourmetour* No, 46.)

28. **The historic quarter of Alcalá de Henares,** just outside Madrid, including university buildings dating from the 15th and 16th centuries (1998).

29. **The cave art of the Mediterranean basin.** Paintings and engravings in the caves of Levante (1998).

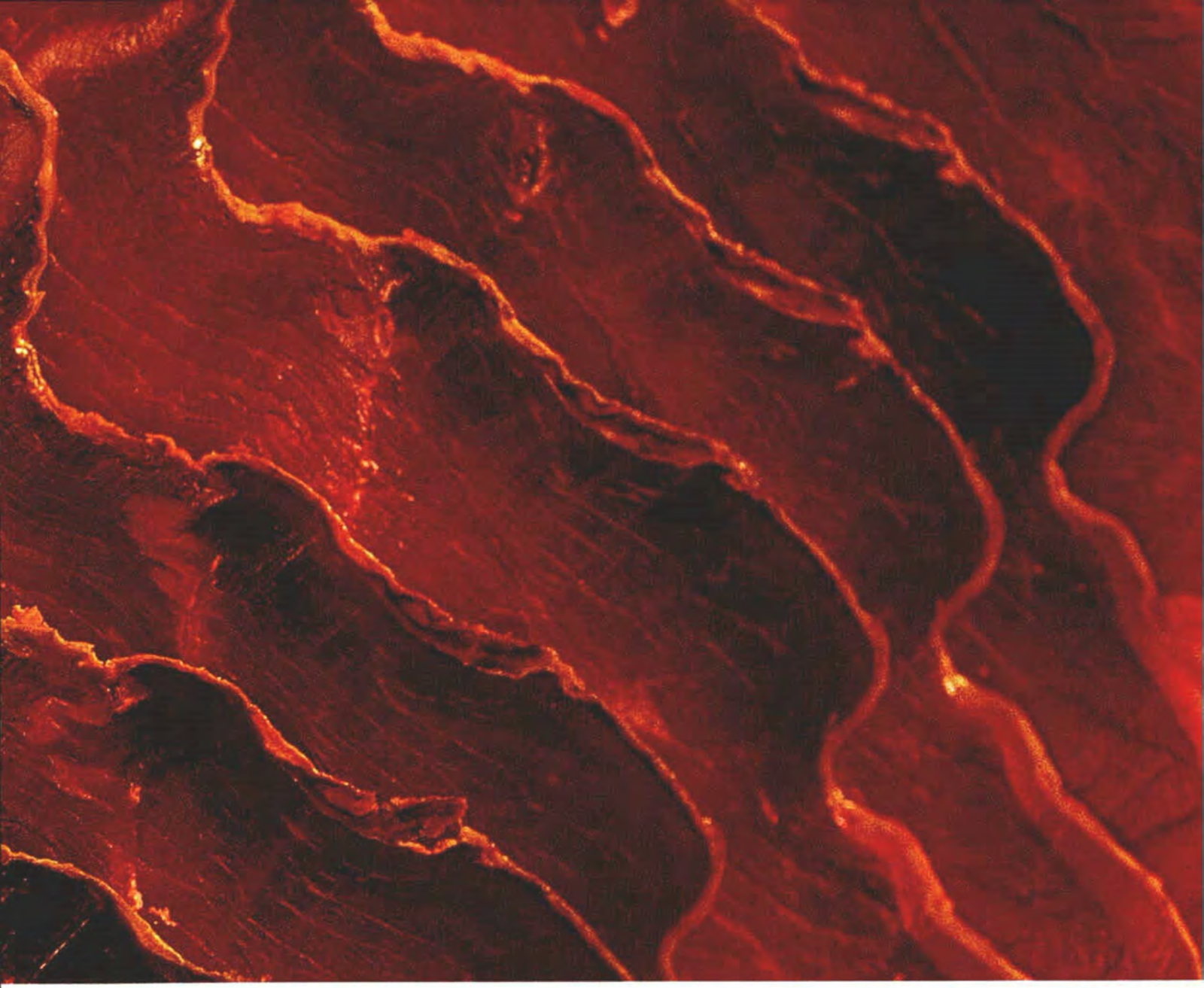


THE COMEBACK OF LEONESE CURED BEEF

Rediscovering Cecina. *Cecina*, or smoked cured beef, has been a specialty of León province for centuries.

"Food fit for warriors with little time for anything but fighting," was how

Text: Vicky Hayward



Cecina has evolved from frugal food to gourmet delicacy.

writer and anthropologist Julio Caro Baroja (1914-95) described it. Certainly old-fashioned cecina could give well-built teeth hours of exercise. But in the last ten years cecina has acquired a new finesse.

Photos: Fernando Briones/ICEX

The key point of smoking cecina is using the right raw materials: the logs must be holm oak or oak to give the right woody aroma and flavor.

"It has changed as a product," explains Santiago Blanco Álvarez, a specialist producer from Astorga. "People used to think of it like a chewy piece of wood, but now it is more like ham. It should almost dissolve in your mouth." He is right. The tenderness of the musky flavored, ruby red meat can bear comparison with Iberian ham. The change came about in the hands of a new generation of curers who stayed true to local curing traditions—dry-salting, oak-smoking, and natural air-drying—but applied them only to the best quality beef. As a result, cecina is now fit for the most hardened gourmets.

"You can find me here with my boots on by 7 a.m. every day," explains Santiago Blanco, gesturing around the echoing warehouse where he makes cecina just outside Astorga. "We are not a factory, you know. We cure cecina and hams. There's a big difference: stoking the fire, opening and closing the windows, keeping an eye on the meat all the time."

Feliciano, Santiago's father, began to make small quantities of *tocino* (fatback) and cecina in small premises in the center of Astorga fifty years ago. By the time Santiago took over the business in the early 1980s the years of plenty had arrived. He began to smoke hams as well, expanded into purpose-built premises in the town's industrial estate, and in 1994 joined the new regional denomination, Cecina de León, which groups curers from around the province. Today Santiago employs half a dozen helpers and cures 90,000 kilos of fresh beef a year.

But he cannot keep up with the growing demand for his

Cecina is made from cuts of mature beef, its flesh naturally interlarded and covered with fat, which keeps the cecina tender as it cures.

EXPORTS ARE STILL SMALL BUT RISING RAPIDLY AS CECINA BECOMES KNOWN ABROAD.

cecina. Most is sold well in advance of leaving the warehouse, and some is ordered before it is made. He is clear about the reasons. As he puts it, "If a product is good it is easy to sell."

Survival Food

Cecina's turnaround from frugal food to gourmet delicacy has happened in the last ten years, but it dates back much further than that. Cecina's name comes directly from *siccina*, the Latin for dried meat, and the combined salting and smoking used by Leonese curers is almost identical to the method Cato the Elder suggested for curing ham in *De Re Rustica* two thousand years ago.

Once cecina was widely eaten right across northern Spain. Further south meat and game could simply be sun-dried into *tasajo*, jerked meat, but in the damp Atlantic climate of the north smoking was necessary to ensure the meat was properly dried and would keep well for at least a year. There the meat from animals which had reached the end of their working or productive lives—mule, sheep, horse, goat, and oxen—as well as game like wild boar or venison was preserved by combined salting and smoking (see box *Other Types of Cecina*).

As agricultural historian Eloy Terrón has pointed out in his book *España, encrucijada de culturas alimentarias*, 1992 *(Spain, Crossroad of Food Cultures)*, there was good reason to take care over the matter. Most of the medieval population ate no meat other than cecina and tasajo, and then often only as a lump dissolved in a pot of slow-cooked beans. Even when dietary levels began to rise after the 18th century

dried meats remained a staple for fishermen, shepherds, harvesters, and muleteers, who spent months of each year away from fresh food supplies. Recent laboratory analysis has explained why cecina was so highly valued as survival food. It might have been as chewy as cardboard but it contains over 75 percent protein, less than ten percent fat—much of it monosaturated—and all eight essential amino acids.

Gastronomic Specialty

It was geography that allowed cecina to acquire its gastronomic qualities in León, Castile's northwestern province. The continental climate—long icy winters, hot summers, and the dry inland air—gave perfect curing conditions for beef from native cattle, and from the 18th century onwards cecina begins to appear as a valuable asset in local wills, inventories, consumption surveys, bylaws, descriptions of weddings and other feasts. Especially famed for the quality of their homemade cecina, the *maragatos* of the Astorgan countryside began to trade it on their mule journeys around Spain along with salt, garlic, and *pimentón*.

While cecina-making died out in most places after the arrival of refrigeration, it survived in León as a family skill. The chosen animal, bought over a handshake in the marketplace, was home fattened on rye flour and beet cuttings then slaughtered on a cold autumn day, traditionally with the moon on the wane. The hindquarters would then be salted, dunked in a vinegar *adobo* flavored with pimentón, garlic, and oregano, and smoked. "It follows the weather," explained Inocencio Ares in his book *Gastronomía popular del país de los maragatos, 1994 (Popular Food from the Maragatos Region)*. "With a lot of damp you need heat and just a little smoke... when the January and February frosts press in, you need more smoke than heat." The first cecina would be cut in the late spring, but the fattest cuts would last until well into the autumn and winter.

Today's industry grew out of that family craft base as small companies were set up and handed down from father to son. Now craft and industrial production exist side by side. While some two dozen denomination producers make only a tenth of León's estimated output of a million kilos of cecina a year—much of the rest is still made at home—their output has doubled in the last five years to a total of some 17,000 whole joints of cecina every year. Significantly, too, it is these professionalized curers like Santiago Blanco who have taken the final step in transforming cecina from frugal rural food to subtly flavored delicacy.

The Raw Materials

The key to the change, say the producers themselves, has been a new emphasis on the right raw materials. "More than anything, cecina's quality today reflects the type of beef from which it is made," explains Francisco Vega Alonso of Cecinas Pablo, another Astorgan producer. Today the work animals are long gone. Now, cecina is made from cuts of mature beef, its flesh naturally interlarded and covered with fat, which keeps the cecina tender as it cures. To earn denomination labeling, meat must be categorized as Extra (1A)—Spain's top quality—and bought by producers as whole hind-quarters for butchering into four different cuts, each with a minimum weight to ensure the meat comes from mature animals. "It does make a difference buying whole legs," comments Vega Alonso. "Or you cannot control the final butchering and check the proportion of fat in each cut." Locally known as *bolas*, the massive hindquarters make an impressive sight strung up on butcher's hooks in the curing rooms. Each has a slightly different shape and distribution of creamy yellow fat. Today producers buy from right across northern Spain in order to find the right kind of meat, ideally from herds of native breeds such as Rubia Gallega, Asturiana de los Valles and Morena del Noroeste, or Pyrenean Retinta and Pirenaica (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 41). The ideal animal is four or five years old, its fat evenly marbled through the flesh to give the creamy yellow flecks and veining that make cecina succulent.

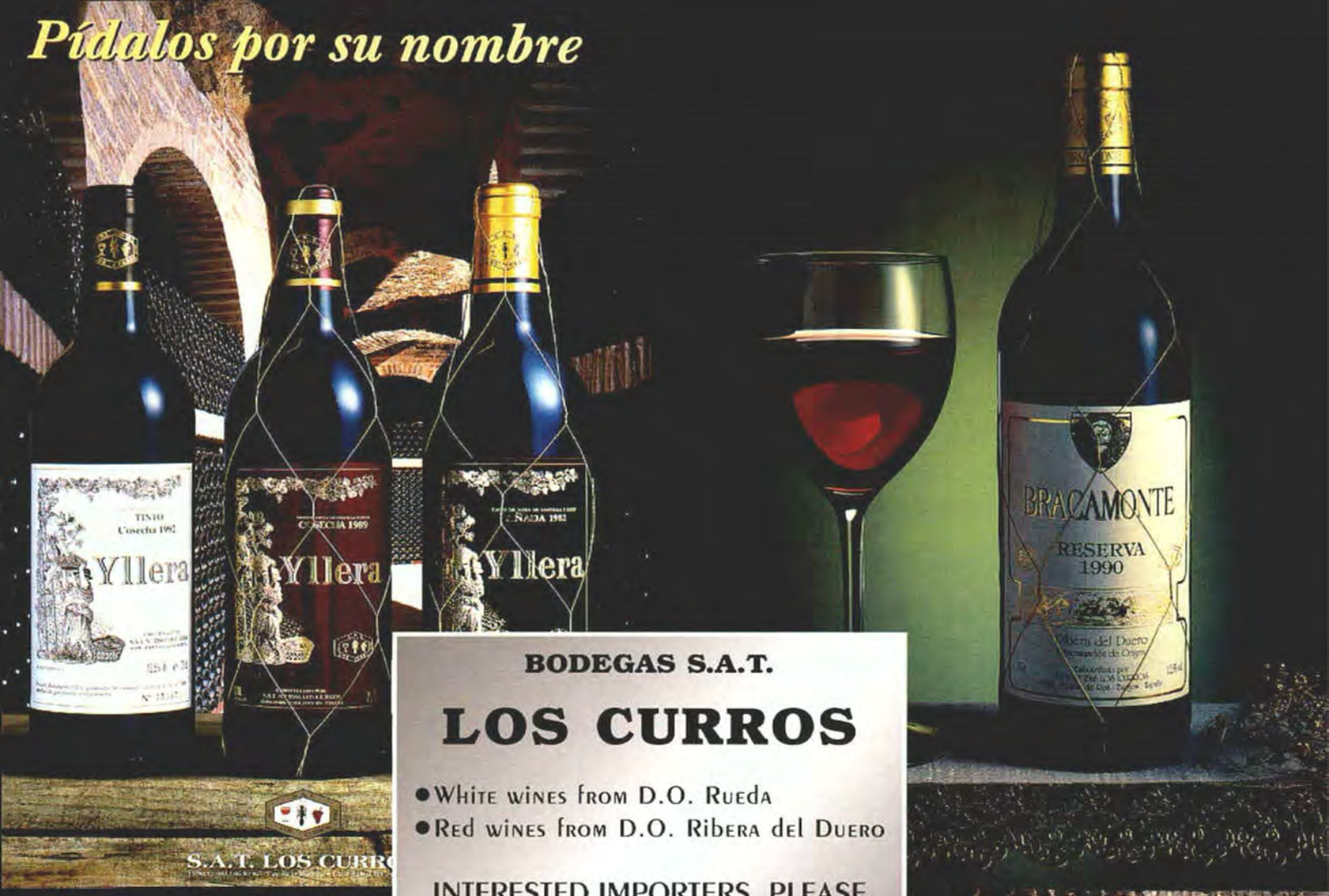
Butchering by hand divides each hindquarter into four cuts: the *tapa* (topside or round), *contra* (silverside or brisket), *babilla* (thick flank or top rump), and triangular *cadera* (rump). Trimmed, boned and tagged with an identifying numbered seal, as well as a loop of string to hang from, the jointed pieces are then sent down to the chilly salt room where curing begins.

Salting and Smoking

In outline the curing process sounds straightforward: the meat is salted, rested for one to three months, smoked, and finally air or wind dried. But each stage has its subtleties. Salting itself is done dry: coarse Mediterranean salt is generously shoveled under and over layers of beef joints. Nothing is visible in the finished *montaña* (mountain), as it is called, except the top layer of beef hams humped like rocks under snow and the stripy strings of the lower layers sticking out at the side. The important point, as Cato said, is that the pieces do not touch and that each one is left for the appropriate length of time. After three to six days, depending on the weight of each joint, the meat is dug out from the salt mountain, handwashed in lukewarm water and dripdried for a day. In a few larger producers, salting is now done by weight in separate bins, and machinewashed afterwards.

Although direct salting is over, it effectively continues for the next thirty to sixty days while the beef is hung in very humid (82 percent) but chilly (5-6°C/41-43°F) hanging-rooms so the salt penetrates right through the beef's fibrous muscle. During this resting, or *asentamiento*, the meat begins to develop patches of velvety blue and gray mold covering and a rich leathery aroma. Then comes the smoking,

Pídalos por su nombre



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which the producers play in one of two ways. Some place an open brazier under racks of cecina hanging in the smokeroom; the flow of smoke is then controlled by opening and closing the door over the next few weeks to let the beef breathe. Others pipe the smoke from a chimney into the sealed smoke room, to give a very controlled light flow of smoke for a fixed span of fourteen to fifteen days.
In either case all the producers return to the key point of using the right raw materials—the logs must be holm oak or oak to give the right woody aroma and flavor.

Curing: Time and Patience

Finally comes the air drying, still done the time-honored way by many Astorgan producers. The temperature and dryness of the *secaderos*, large rooms left open to winds blowing south off the Sierra de Teleno, are controlled by the simple "opening and closing of windows," as the curing process was once locally known. It plays off the seasons' natural temperature curves; curing starts during the cold months, with the meat's fats filtering through the flesh as the weather becomes warmer.
Other producers, especially in areas away from the dry *meseta* climate, fall back on controlled cooling systems to allow infallible year-round production. At Pajariel, a major producer in the misty valley of Ponferrada, both temperature and humidity are computer controlled and can be adjusted from a control desk at the flick of a switch. This accurate, if less natural, approach may soon appear at other cecina makers.
In the end, though, curing is essentially a question of time and patience. Nearly all producers go well over the five month minimum laid down by the denomination to allow the beef to reach its full potential. Cecinas Pablo generally cure for six months, Pajariel for eight to ten, and Santiago Blanco stretches the cure to fourteen or eighteen months.
Of course every producer makes a slightly different cecina, and there are many different qualities. In some cases the semi-cured pieces are smeared with lard or a mix of olive oil, lard, and vinegar, just as the already mentioned Cato recommended, to keep out pests. Pajariel smokes and cures theirs in nets to give a smoothed-off shape. But all share the same leathery hide-like appearance, musky flavor, and woody aroma as they are sliced. Inside, the meat is shiny and crimson with creamy yellow flecks and streaks of fat veining it. This is the cecina that, from the first time it hits your tongue, sets your taste buds alive.

The Final Product

"I have served cecina from Tokyo to Paris," says Astorga born chef Carlos Domínguez Cindón, who has been instrumental in the rediscovery of cecina. "People notice the deep intensity of flavor straight away."
As Cindón says, cecina is easy to identify. Deeper in flavor than *bresaola, bünduerfleisch*, or *viande des Grison*, it has a finer and smoother texture than Jewish *pickelfleisch* or salt corned beef. In León, people can also identify the cut, knowing each for its slightly different texture. As with smoked salmon or *jamón ibérico*, it is usually eaten locally simply sliced, with perhaps a dribble of olive oil over the top. Good unfussy accompaniments are, as in the *maragatería*, toasted rye bread, a local sheep's cheese, and an equally punchy Ribera del Duero red wine or Asturian cider.
But cecina is also a wonderful ingredient to play with in the kitchen. Carlos Cindón, for example, serves contra in an inspired native version of *carpaccio*, keeps the dryer tapa for dishes when presentation is a priority, uses the cadera in lightly cooked dishes, slices the babilla raw and simmers hard off-cuts in stocks or purees them for mousses.
Outside Spain, it is hard to track down cecina either sold by the cut or freshly sliced off the joint simply because it is still not very well known abroad. This year a tenth of denomination cecina will be exported, with the French and Italians buying top-quality whole cecinas for restaurants or delicatessens, and the British and Scandinavians preferring the cheaper, more convenient vacuum-packed large chunks or ready sliced version. American buyers are keen to import, but awaiting an approved slaughterhouse used by cecina producers.
Do not despair if you can only find the prepacked sliced cecina. It may not reach quite the same quality as the authentic whole cecina, but it can come close if properly kept.
"Keep it wrapped in a damp cloth in a cool dry place away from draughts," advised Cindón, "And try to avoid chilling it in the fridge as that produces moisture inside the meat. If you have bought it in a chunk, slice just enough before you are going to eat it so it does not dry out."
But of course it won't necessarily be around long enough to begin to dry out. As the producers know, the real problem is keeping up with demand.

Vicky Hayward *is a writer, journalist, and book editor whose articles about culture, the arts, travel, social issues, and food are published internationally. She lives in Madrid.*

See Recipes on page 116 and Main Exporters on page 126.

OTHER TYPES OF CECINA

Although the habit of curing a wide range of meat and game has died out, some cecinas have survived as local specialties.

Cecina de Villarramiel: cured horse and mule meat (50,000 kg a year) is a specialty of this Palencian town, in Castile. Cured by *muleros*, the meat, taken from elderly horses (12 to 14 years), is pickled and cured for 8 months. Granted local denomination status in 1994, it is compact, crimson black in color, smooth textured, and sweet flavored. Also made in Teruel, Aragon.

Cecina de Castrón: cured billy goat is made on a craft basis in the Leonese mountains, where it is known as "*Dios nos libre.*" The ribs and hindquarters are used, and the cecina is then cooked in chunks in *cocido montañés.*

Cecina de Cabra: kid is cured to give cecina with a milder flavor, but its short keeping time means that it is mainly made for home consumption in León.

Cecina de Venado: among the cecinas made from game—it is also made from wild boar—venison, a dark red meat with a very rich flavor, has been successful in mountainous northern regions such as Asturias.

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OLIVE OIL FROM

SPAIN

PINK PARADE

Glistening glasses of pink wine frequently adorn Spain's dining tables, where the light dances through the various shades of the rose spectrum. It is a splendid aperitif, an ideal lunchtime wine, summer and winter, and matches a wide variety of dishes, at anytime of the day. Rosados, as they are called in Spain, are the most misunderstood wines of all.

TEXT: JEREMY WATSON

PHOTO: ÁNGEL BECERRIL

ROSADOS ARE A SPLENDID APERITIF, AN IDEAL LUNCHTIME WINE, SUMMER AND WINTER, AND MATCH A WIDE VARIETY OF DISHES, AT ANYTIME OF DAY.

Despite a long tradition of producing and drinking them, even Spaniards do not know them as well as they might. Here, as in most countries, they are considered a compromise—neither red nor white—and the drinking of them is thought fashionable only on a warm summer's day.

Few people know how pink wines are really made, or relate them to the wine drinking occasion. Think of them as very light red wines to be drunk chilled, often an alternative to cheaper white wines, and many more opportunities to enjoy them become apparent. Watch your party sparkle as the guests mill around with the colorful pink wine shimmering in their glasses.

It will surprise many to learn that the Spanish drink three times more red wine than white, and that they drink almost as much *rosado* as they do white wine. Despite the warm climate image, due to the high average altitude, the country experiences low temperatures across a wide area both in winter and summer. The coastal regions are more temperate, of course, especially the Mediterranean, but it is only in the very height of summer that it becomes too warm for red wines in the evenings.

What we know as rosado today, was more likely to have been called *clarete*—very light red wine—until the early 1980s, since when, under the laws of the European Union, the name has been reserved for pink wines made from red and white grapes, while rosados are only made from red grapes. As a result, rosado wines have assumed a much higher profile than before. Claretes evolved from the desire to make lighter red wines to contrast with those around 15 percent alcohol or more, that were traditional in Spain. However, rosados have become a separate category, which combines the original purpose, and the more modern, leisure driven needs of today's wine drinkers.

Pink wines are more expensive to make because the process requires only the best juice of the grapes. As a pointer, one kilo of grapes makes about seventy centiliters of red or white wine, but far less rosado. As we know, the flesh of red grapes is white and it is the black skins that give the wines their color, but the maceration time—the time the juice remains in contact with the skins—is the key. For rosados maceration time can be as little as a three or four hours, or as many as forty eight, depending on the intensity of the black skins, the mix of the grapes, and the required grade of color for the wine.

Tête de Cuvée

It is made from the first and free run juice of the grapes, known as *mosto de yema*, which is bled off as the grapes press themselves under their own weight. This is the cream, and what remains is poorer quality suitable only for sale as second class red wine. The problem for the producers is that rosado wines, no matter how good, will never achieve the price levels that are attained by reds, yet the demand exists, and is big enough for producers to take it seriously.

Rosados should be drunk young, the younger the better, but it takes anything up to four months to bring the new wine to the market. So, it is vital that the previous vintage remains in top condition for as long as possible, ideally not less than two years. Oxidization, or the prevention of it, is the secret. The best rosados will be ruined if the production processes do not include maximum controls to eliminate this problem. There have been examples of award winning wines in March being undrinkable by August when demand is at its height. We have all experienced those browning, flabby, even beery pink wines that should never reach the glass, and everybody in the sales and distribution chain has a responsibility in making sure they do not. First, producers must bring the grapes to the *bodegas* speedily, in cool conditions, preferably early morning, and with skins intact. The reception, movement, and rest of the production process should ensure as little contact with the air as possible, because the retention of fruit and freshness is paramount. Temperature controlled fermentation, which is almost universal now, allows the process to occur at lower temperatures, thus more slowly, and avoiding the high levels of heat, which dried out the wines during the free and tumultuous ways of the past. This should happen no longer, the freshness of the fruit is retained with crisp, clean aromas and flavors, which, while not the beginning and the end of the process, has meant a transformation to winemaking, and not only for rosados.

Wine will oxidize in the bottle more rapidly than if stored in much larger volumes. The bottle is good for reds, but not for young whites and pinks. So, the best producers keep the finished pink wines in large, cool vats in sealed conditions, often under an inert gas blanket, to prevent air reaching the wine. They bottle on a regular (probably monthly) basis throughout the year, so that eighteen months after its vintage, the wine can be almost as fresh as the day it was born.

Insist on Young and Fresh

And this is where the rest of the chain comes in. The distributors, retailers, bar and restaurant owners must ensure that they rotate the wines rapidly. When it comes to rosados, older is not better, quite the opposite! Many is the battle I have fought with them on this matter, and, if in doubt, the best advice is to go for a well-known brand of the most recent vintage. Above all the wine must be young, richly pink or very light red, with a brilliance and clarity that is the hallmark of any well-made wine, in good condition.

Rosado wines are made all over Spain, but in some regions more than others. A few are particularly well known for them, and Navarre, which built its early reputation on these wines, most of all. There the wines are made chiefly from the Garnacha grape variety, which is predominant in the zone, and well known as the Grenache from which rosés are produced in the south of France. Forty percent of the production in Navarre is pink wines, though there is a trend towards reds as bodegas try to avoid being too dependant on a one dimensional product. Over the past twenty years they have focused more on single-variety reds and

PINK WINE WILL OXIDIZE IN THE BOTTLE MORE RAPIDLY THAN IF STORED IN MUCH LARGER VOLUMES. THE BOTTLE IS GOOD FOR REDS, BUT NOT FOR YOUNG WHITES AND PINKS.

whites, and the technology in developing these wines has helped them produce better rosados at the same time.
Companies particularly noted for rosados include Vinícola Navarra, at Las Campanas with a Castillo de Javier, Julián Chivite at Cintruenigo with Gran Feudo (Spain's top rosado on more than one occasion), and Ochoa at Olite whose Lágrima Rosado is made from Garnacha and Cabernet Sauvignon. All regularly win top awards.
Levante, not least Utiel-Requena, inland from the city of Valencia, also has a reputation for producing large quantities of good pink wines, thanks mainly to the Bobal and Monastrell (Mourvèdre) grape varieties. The wines have not received the recognition they deserve in their own region, let alone Spain, because in the bars of Valencia you will mainly find pink wines from the ubiquitous Rioja region, and beer drinkers. One senses the producers are discouraged by the fact, because quality, recently, has been less exciting, notable exceptions being Gandía's Hoya de Cadenas and Cavas Murviedro's Las Lomas. However, Spanish consumers are becoming more aware of the other wines of their country, including those in their own provinces, and as the worldwide demand for Rioja grows and its availability is more difficult, so they will turn to their regional wines more and more.
Rioja produces some excellent rosados, but, as the prices of the grapes increase, it is difficult to think that the producers will want to go on making them, or, if they do, that their customers will want to pay such a premium for them. Indeed, Rioja bodegas are reporting a decline in sales of rosados and one suspects that most, if not all of them must be exercising their minds as to what to do. It would not be surprising to see rosados of top brands being produced in other denominations in the future. Yvonne Candina at Herencia Remondo is not so sure, "It is hard to know what will happen, and our 1998 is still very competitive, but if we were speaking of young white wine, I would agree. Our wine is one hundred percent Garnacha from our own vineyards in the Rioja Baja, and, following eight hours maceration on the skins, the wine has good color and texture."

New Wave Wines

The most exciting developments, lately, have been in Catalonia, in the northeast. It has become the place to seek out new rosado wines. Apart from a gloriously rich wine like that of Scala Dei in Priorato, made from old Garnacha grapes, or the consistently good

THERE IS A NEW AND MOST INTERESTING GENERATION OF CATALAN ROSADOS BEING PRODUCED FROM TWO IMPORTED VARIETALS—PINOT NOIR AND MERLOT.

De Casta of Torres, made from Cariñena and Garnacha, there is a new generation of rosados being produced from two imported varietals—Pinot Noir and Merlot. In Penedés, Chandon with the brand Eclipse, Gramona, Paratò and Sumarroca are all producing much acclaimed rosado wines from the Pinot Noir. Again, in Penedés, Alsina y Sarda, Gran Caus, Lavernoya, and Rimarts, together with Roura, in Alella, are being equally successful with Merlot. Roura's, in particular, really does have the characteristics of a very light red wine.

Catalonia is a large market, having a population of nearly seven million people plus a large share of the annual 45 million foreign visitors to Spain. The Balearic Islands just 94 miles away, and very dependant on Catalonia for much of its supplies, has over six million foreign visitors annually, and is, per capita, the country's most wealthy indigenous population. The combined numbers mean a huge demand for all wines, not least rosados, and the winemakers in both regions have more reasons than most to explore the potential of pink wines.

The Catalan province of Barcelona, is also the main area of production for *cava*—the traditional method sparkling wine—and pink cava is a great party wine. Sometimes thought frivolous, and what is wrong with that?, it is colorful to serve, easy to drink and is the type of wine that is overlooked too often. The pink cavas achieving highest marks include Castel de Vilarnau, Codorníu, Ferret, Marqués de Monistrol, and Castillo de Perelada. All are produced from different blends of the indigenous grapes Monastrell, Garnacha, Tempranillo, Cariñena, and the white Parellada.

The Tempranillo grape variety reveals a lovely strawberry aroma and flavor, which is often more apparent in the pinks than the reds, and not only in Rioja. It comes through strongly in that of Bodegas Ribas of Binissalem in Mallorca, where it is blended with the local variety Manto Negro, and in Castile-León, it is predominant. The winemakers of Ribera del Duero have the same problem with prices as Rioja, on an even greater scale, and, with their very limited production, they do not want to use good juice on the less profitable rosados. But there are some good wines from elsewhere in the region like Cigales D.O. (Frutos Villar's Viña Calderona) and Medina del Campo (Javier Sanz's Orden Tercera), while, in Benavente, Otero with Valleoscuro, and Peñascal, at Tudela de Duero, near Valladolid, both produce delightful rosados. In Salamanca province, the Cooperative of San Esteban's Triñuelo, made from a red grape called Rufete, which is used in port, is also thought of highly.

The bonus and direct result of the authorities insisting on the correct production method, is that there are now many quality rosado wines available. With the law has come new technology and winemaking skills leading to the production of rosados like Corcova of J.A. Megía e Hijos in Valdepeñas and Tomillar from the largest cooperative in Spain, Virgen de las Viñas in La Mancha. Together with the new generation of fruity, crisp, and fresh red wines, this last region should become a more important source of rosados in the future.

A number of bodegas are producing rosados with the Cabernet Sauvignon variety, and with some success. Viñedos y Crianzas de Alto Aragón have won a lot of acclaim for their Enate brand, as have Príncipe de Viana in Navarre and Puig y Roca with Augustus and Covides with Duc de Foix, both in Penedés. The Cabernet Sauvignon takes on distinctly different, and very attractive characteristics in Spain. For many it is best used for blending with Tempranillo, which is undoubtedly true, but the examples of pure Cabernet Sauvignon reds and rosados show just what a great and adaptable variety it is.

Great Food Wine

There are specific occasions when a rosado wine is the right wine to choose with your meal, and rice dishes, like a *paella de la huerta* or *arroz a banda* from Levante, are amongst the first and most obvious. Perhaps it is why so much pink wine is produced in the region, but, the food and wine matching does not stop there. Rosados, often more than white wines, are ideal with a whole assortment of fish, especially the meatier types, either grilled or when in stews. I remember the pleasant surprise of Anton Mosiman, one of Britain's premier chefs, proposing a Navarra rosado with a lightly grilled halibut on a bed of winter vegetables for a banquet in London—it was an enormous success.

The same argument applies to the cooking of other cultures. Recently I found that a soft and light Godello white could not cope with some delicate Thai starters, whereas a rosado would have been ideal. Many pasta dishes would welcome a rosado as accompaniment, while the spicy flavors in white meats often used in Latin American kitchens, combine delightfully with a dry, fresh, and crisp pink wine.

We all accept that rosado wines are predominantly seasonal, but not entirely, by any means. Why not drink it with the turkey on Christmas day, and the several days afterwards, for that matter? And I mean in northern climes, not the Southern Hemisphere! Many people choose a cold white wine for the occasion, and an indifferent one at that, because price is an important factor, when, for the same price, they could buy a young, fresh rosado with its colorful, aromatic, and spicy characteristics.

Vegetarians should rally round, rosado wines are perfect for you. They are suited to an abundance of the dishes you prefer, where reds are overpowering, and whites innocuous. With the growing number of people giving up meats, here is a classical opportunity for the trade, shops, and restaurants, to show customers that they are thinking about vegetarians and their needs. Most menus list vegetarian dishes, so let's have the wines to complement them. This is another good reason for drinkers to bury their prejudices and make rosado wines a regular option.

Jeremy Watson *was director of* Wines from Spain *in London for thirteen years until he came to live in Spain and work as a consultant and writer on Spanish wines.*

See Main Exporters on page 127.

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SPAIN HAS A WIDE REPERTOIRE OF DESSERTS AND CONFECTIONERY WHOSE ORIGINS CAN BE TRACED BACK TO THE ROMANS, VISIGOTHS, ARABS, AND JEWS. ITS CONVENTS HAVE PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN ENSURING THE SURVIVAL OF MUCH OF THIS: WITHIN THEIR SEQUESTERED ROUTINE OF PRAYER AND WORK, MANY HAVE CONTINUED MAKING TRADITIONAL SWEETS, THEIR REPERTOIRE TENDING MORE TOWARDS CANDIES AND FRITTERS RATHER THAN DESSERTS OR PUDDINGS AS SUCH.

Sweet Suite

TEXT: MARIA JESUS GIL DE ANTUÑANO
TRANSLATION: HAWYS PRITCHARD
STILL LIFE: MENCHU ARTIME
PHOTOS: A. DE BENITO/ICEX

The Discalced Carmelite nuns of Ecija (Seville) make and sell jams whose labels quote Saint Teresa of Ávila's dictum that "the Lord walks among the pots and pans," a belief confirmed by the large number of convents whose devotional activities combine prayer with sweetening life for the rest of us out in the everyday world, through the medium of *gloria bendita*, as convent-made sweets are generically known in Spanish.

MOORISH OR ROMAN?

There is no doubt that the origin of these sweets dates back to the 800-year long Arab occupation of the Iberian Peninsula which left such an enduring imprint on so many aspects of its life, and which is still discernible in modern-day Spain. The Arab, or Moorish, influence, is obvious in confectionery, especially in Andalusia and Levante: the names—*alfajor, alajú, almojábanas*—and the ingredients—almonds, sugar, honey, orange flower water—are obvious clues in themselves. Despite this, in his book *El sabor de España* (The Taste of Spain) (1992), Spanish food writer Xavier Domingo protests that to adopt this view is "to forget (or to be unaware of) the Roman and subsequent Visigothic foodways which the Arabs who invaded Spain (and had no cuisine of their own) (sic!) encountered there, and then adopted as their own." Domingo goes on to maintain that "a not unimportant part of North African cuisine is probably derived from that of conquered Spain rather than the other way round. For example, versions of *alcuzcuz* (couscous) and *pastela* (a recipe still made and eaten in Murcia to this day) were eaten in Roman Iberia, their recipes also occurring in the cuisine of Augustan Rome." As is to explain away the evidence of Arab influence, he declares: "Arab cooks certainly modified and even enriched the confectionery and cuisine that they found *in situ* , but they did not introduce it from where it did not exist, nor did they invent it."

DISH OF THE DAY

The Spanish custom of making particular sweets and desserts to mark specific saints' days is another aspect of the religious connection. This custom almost certainly derives from the period of Roman occupation: sweets were placed in the temples of Ancient Rome as sacrificial offerings to the gods at specific times of the year. Like many

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AS A GENERAL RULE, DESSERTS MADE FROM MILK, CREAM, AND BUTTER ARE MORE TYPICAL OF THE NORTH OF MAINLAND SPAIN WHILE IN THE CEREAL-GROWING AREAS, WE FIND DESSERTS BASED ON FLOUR, EGGS, OLIVE OIL, AND DRIED FRUIT AND NUTS, ESPECIALLY ALMONDS.

others, this custom was subsequently "Christianized," hence the many sweets associated with the church calendar. Historically, the staple sweetening agent was honey, the uses of sugar (known to the Romans as *sacarum*) being primarily medicinal.
Today, dessert recipe books are still in demand, and no meal is considered complete without a suitable sweet course. Nowadays, the move is towards less calorific desserts, often lighter-weight versions of long-term favorites—some very long term indeed. The recipes for many appear in *Los Quatro libros del Arte de Confitería* (The Four Books of the Art of Confectionery) written by Miguel de Baeza, a confectioner from Toledo, and published in Alcalá de Henares in 1592, and in an 18th-century treatise on the art of dessert making entitled *El Arte de Repostería en que se contiene todo género de hacer Dulces secos y en líquido, Vizcochos, Zurrones, Natas; Bebidas heladas de todos géneros, Rosolís, Mistelas y otras* (The Art of Dessert Making, in Which are Contained All Ways of Making Sweets, Both Dry and Liquid, Sponges, Nougats, Creams; Iced Drinks of All Sorts, Rosolís, Mistelas and Others) in which the author, Juan de la Mata, curiously includes eggplants, capsicums, cucumbers, and olives. *El Arte de Cocina, Pastelería, Vizcochería y Conservería* (The Art of Cooking, Pastry Making, Cake Making, and Preserving), written in 1611 by Francisco Martínez Montiño, contains a recipe for *huevos mexidos*—eggs beaten up with sugar and water—which is surely the origin of today's *tocino de cielo, huevo hilado,* and *yemas* (see below).

THE MILKY WAY

Spain's repertoire of sweets and desserts can be divided up into "workshop-produced" sweets, namely the less perishable ones made in pastry shops and convents, and "kitchen-produced" ones, generally made in the home or restaurant kitchen and intended for same-day eating. The one great exception to this is tocino de cielo, the rich, dense egg-yolk sweet that is made across the board.
Similarly, one can divide them according to ingredients. As a general rule, desserts and sweets made with milk, cream, and butter are, traditionally, typical of northern Spain, on whose pastureland cattle thrive, while in the cereal-growing areas one finds flour, eggs, oil, dried fruit, and nuts, especially almonds, as the basic ingredients. Interestingly, the use of almonds in cooking—clearly an Arab legacy—extends as far as Galicia, which was never occupied by the Moors. Indeed, one of Galicia's classic desserts is a ground almond tart—the *tarta de almendra* made in Allariz and the *almendrados* made in Mondoñedo are good examples of this phenomenon. *Filloas,* eaten especially at carnival time, are another Galician classic. These wafer thin pancakes (Galicia's answer to France's crêpes) are made with a light milk, egg, and flour batter, a couple of spoonfuls of which are dropped onto a hot frying pan greased by rubbing it with a piece of pork fat on the end of a fork. Asturias has its own version, known as *fiyuelos* or *frixuelos.*
Arroz con leche (rice pudding) is made all over Spain, but especially in the north, and Asturias claims its own version as the best of the lot. Other Asturian specialties include (walnut-filled turnovers) and *carbayones* (little almond-filled cakes). Cantabria produces wonderful milk and butter, and can claim as its own the only sponge cake in Spain made with butter rather than olive oil: this local specialty, known as *sobaos pasiegos,* is made into portion-sized squares of rich yellow sponge cake baked in paper cases twisted at the corners. Another local delicacy is *quesada pasiega,* a cheese cake which is eaten warm, while other classics here are arroz con leche, *natillas* (meringue-topped egg custard) *leche frita* (literally "fried milk," but see page 71), and *jarrepas* (a thick "soup" made with pork crackling, apples, milk, flour, lemon, cinnamon, and sugar).
The Basque Country's famous desserts are *intxaursalsa* (a sweet Christmastime soup made with walnuts poached in milk and sugar); *mamia* (a junket of sheep's milk set with calves' rennet and often sweetened with honey); fruit *compotas* which combine fresh and dried fruits; *crema frita,* natillas, and arroz con leche in various forms. These days, the standard of dessert cookery in the Basque Country, both "workshop" and home or restaurant kitchen type, is on a par with the overall cuisine of this very gastronomically aware region, and every town, even every village, has its own specialties.

YEMAS

Eggs loom large in a high proportion of Spanish sweets, re-

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THE ORIGIN OF MANY SWEETS DATE BACK TO THE MUSLIM OCCUPATION OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA WHICH LASTED EIGHT CENTURIES AND LEFT AN INDELIBLE IMPRINT ON MANY ASPECTS OF LIFE, AND WHICH IS STILL DISCERNIBLE IN MODERN-DAY SPAIN.

gardless of region. A yema is a yolk, and the word has also come to mean a candied egg yolk. Yemas de Santa Teresa, an Ávila specialty, are perhaps the most famous example of this sort of sweet, though challenged hotly by the Yemas de San Leandro made since time immemorial by the Augustinian nuns of Seville, and consisting of threads of yolk (huevo hilado) encrusted in sugar. Huevo hilado is made by pouring thin streams of beaten egg yolk through a funnel with five tiny outlets, into a syrup heated to soft-ball stage. Andalusian sweets are the most varied in Spain: clearly of Arab and "folk" origins, the best are found nowadays in the convent workshops. Tocino (or tocinillo) de cielo is said to have been invented as a way of using up the many yolks left over after using egg white to clarify sherry wines. Both yemas and tocinillo de cielo are undeniably an Andalusian specialty, though one should not underestimate the delicious yemas made in Almazán (Soria) or the tocinillo made in Grado (Asturias). In Salamanca and Extremadura, one finds traditional "popular" (in the sense of "ordinary people's") sweets, cakes, and pastries, sometimes fried, sometimes baked, and generally sweetened with honey: these include *perrunillas* (sponge cakes), *bollos de chicharrones* (buns containing pork crackling), *pasteles de patata* (potato cakes), flat rice and sugar cakes and—in Salamanca—a cake known as bollo Maimón which serves as the centerpiece for a dance at wedding celebrations.

SWEETEST OF THE SUITE

The people of the Levante stretch of the east coast, especially in Valencia and Alicante, seem to have a particularly sweet tooth, as revealed by their taste in both wine and desserts. In his guide to good eating in Spain, *Guía del buen comer español* (1929), Dionisio Pérez declares: "And there is a repertoire of sweets in which Valencia competes with Seville and rivals Toledo in its Arab heritage": almendrados (almond cakes), *arnadís* (cakes made with sweet potato or pumpkin flesh), *arropes* (wine-must jellies), *bocaditos*, *bollos* (buns), *buñuelos* (fritters), *cocas* (sweet "pizzas"), *monas* (ring cakes), *empiñonados* (pine nut cookies), *sequillos*, sweet soups, yemas and *turrones* (see *Spain Gourmetour* Nos. 34, 24, 11) prove his point, these last, of which Alicante is a traditional fount, being the pick of the lot.

The Balearic Islands have a range of sweets as varied as the islands themselves. *Ensaimadas*, Majorca's snail-shaped rolls made with pork lard, flour, eggs, sugar, and water, are famous throughout Spain, and other specialties include coca, buñuelos, *crespells* (biscuits), jam-filled *rubiols*, and sponge cakes. Catalan writer Josep Plá (1897-1981) claims a long history for Catalonia's regional sweets: "The feudal system, in its seigniorial, episcopal, ecclesiastical, and monastic aspect, cultivated not only cuisine but also confectionery and pastry." That, then, is where to look for the origins of *neulas de Navidad*, *carquinyols* (little pine nut or ground almond cakes), *panellets* (marzipan candies), and *cremas* (custards).

Writing in the 18th century, Portuguese traveler Pinheiro da Veiga expressed amazement at the existence of "two hundred and five shops selling sweet things in the north of the Plain of Castile." Their wares would have included the famous yemas of Ávila, Almazán, and Arcos de Jalón, chocolate from Astorga (where it was an important contributor to the local economy), pine-nut coated empiñonados from Aranda de Duero, *almendras garrapiñadas* (candied almonds) from Briviesca, butter from Soria, and a vast range of rich ring cakes and biscuits, such as *nicanores* (very light puff pastry) from Boñar.

FRITTERS

The sweets and desserts of Castile-La Mancha are vernacular and very simple. Flour, olive oil, and pork lard predominate as the basic ingredients, with the Arab influence discernible in, for example, Toledo's local marzipan sweets. Fritters typical of this are: ring shaped *rosquillas*, *pestiños* (fried pastry twists), buñuelos (little doughnuts) and, especially, *flores manchegas* ("La Mancha flowers"), these last made by dipping a flower-shaped perforated metal mold into a batter of egg, flour, and milk and then into hot oil: the batter comes away from the mold as it fries. *Mantecados* (cup cakes), flat *tortas de Alcázar*, *melindres* (frosted biscuit rings), arroz con leche with honey, and sweet soups are among its other specialties.

Navarre and Aragon offer evidence of the Arab heritage, too. The Navarrese town of Tudela has a long

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cherries per day, selected by hand one by one

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From April to August El Valle del Jerte produces up to one million kilogrammes per day. This valley, with such special microclimatic conditions, makes the slopes of the mountains an ideal place for cultivating hight-quality cherries. Picking and classifying cherries is done by hand using traditional artisan methods. From the century 14th the cherries from the valley, for its magnificent appearance and intense flavor, are know as the Queen of cherries, specially the "Picota" variety. From 1996 our trademarks are recognized by a name which guarantees its quality origin: "Cereza del Jerte".

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ANDALUSIAN SWEETS ARE THE MOST VARIED IN SPAIN. TOCINILLO DE CIELO IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN INVENTED THERE, AS A WAY OF USING UP THE MANY YOLKS LEFT OVER AFTER USING EGG WHITE TO CLARIFY SHERRY WINES.

sweet-making tradition, and *turrón de alajú*, made with almonds, walnuts, bread crumbs, and honey, is still produced there. *Cuajada* (junket), natillas (meringue-topped custard) and arroz con leche are eaten throughout this area, but its *canutillos* are something of a specialty. These are little pastry horns, made either of puff pastry or of a flour, olive oil, and wine dough, either fried or baked, and filled with confectioner's custard. Aragon is famous for *frutas de Aragón*—glacé fruits dipped in chocolate and wrapped in paper like boiled sweets.

KITCHEN DESSERTS

To round off this survey of Spain's desserts, let's take a closer look at the most characteristic "kitchen-made" ones, which are cooked at home for the family but which visitors to Spain are also sure to find on restaurant menus. The classics are natillas, *flan, crema catalana,* arroz con leche, leche frita, buñuelos, and *torrijas.*

Natillas: This is said to be an originally Jewish dish, suggested by the fact that egg and milk desserts were Jewish favorites. It is essentially a custard, made by heating beaten egg yolks, sugar and milk over a gentle or indirect heat (the mixture must not boil, or it curdles) until it reaches a consistency that coats the back of the spoon. Lemon peel or cinnamon are usually added for flavoring. The egg whites are whipped with sugar until they form stiff peaks and are then spooned onto the cooled custard, sprinkled with sugar, and "flashed" under the grill, or drizzled with liquid caramel.

Flan: This caramel custard is almost certainly a descendant of natillas, given that the basic mixture is identical. The custard is cooked until set in a caramel-lined mold placed in a double boiler.

Crema catalana: Catalonia's version of *crème brûlée* has become known well beyond its area of origin. Legend has it that it was an accidental invention: required to cater for an unexpected visit from the bishop, the nun in charge of the kitchen hastily made some flans for dessert but had to turn them out of their molds too soon, so that they collapsed into a custard with the caramel floating on top. Burning his mouth as he tasted it, the bishop cried out in Catalan "Crema!"—"It's hot!" but ate on regardless as the mixture was so delicious. Ever since, the custard has been sprinkled with sugar and "burned" with a salamander rather than being set in molds.

Arroz con leche: The secret of Spanish rice pudding is to cook it slowly for about three hours, stirring frequently during that time and adding milk as necessary to achieve just the right dense, creamy, yet grainy consistency.

Leche frita: "Fried milk" is actually a custard made to the consistency of a béchamel sauce, which is left to cool and then cut into little squares or rectangles, dipped in flour and egg, and fried in hot oil.

Buñuelos: These fritters are the most traditional and popular of all these desserts. They are made with a flour and water dough similar to a French *pâte à choux.* An especially light version known as buñuelos *de viento*—puffs—is made for the All Saints or Lenten festivals, depending on the region. The secret is simply to fry them in oil that is not too hot so that the spoonfuls of dough drop to the bottom before bobbing to the top again. They have to be turned as they puff up on one side so that they burst open: the split is then cut further with scissors so that the confectioner's custard filling can be inserted.

Torrijas: These are slices of day-old bread moistened in sweetened milk, dipped in egg, and fried, They are then sometimes soaked in syrup or simply sprinkled with sugar. They are eaten in Catalonia on Saint Teresa's Day (15th of October), and in Madrid during Lent and Holy Week.

María José Gil de Antuñano *won the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Foods'* Alimentos de España *prize in 1997 and the* Premio Nacional de Gastronomía *in 1994. She has published several cookery books and currently writes a regular column for* El País Semanal *and* Semana *magazine.*

See page 119 for recipes.

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VINOS DE NAVARRA

JULIAN AÑO 1647 CHIVITE

BODEGAS JULIAN CHIVITE
DE PADRES A HIJOS DESDE 1647

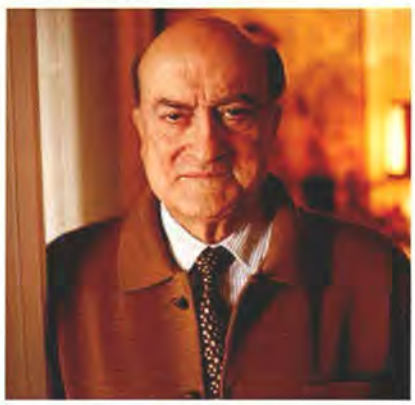
(I)

A Lifetime Devoted to Wine

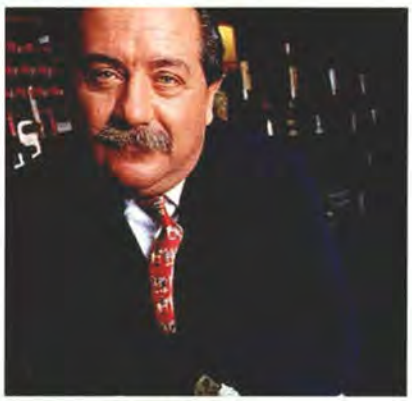
Text: **Víctor Rodríguez** Translation: **Mark Little** Photos: **Pablo Neustadt/ICEX**

With this issue we start a new series featuring interviews with nine personalities of the Spanish wine world, all of them long-standing connoisseurs of Spanish winemaking and enology. For different reasons, they became key figures in the development of this major sector which in the last two decades has taken a gigantic step forward, both in terms of quality and of professionalization. Although they work in different fields—research, teaching, promotion, official bodies—they all have made a crucial contribution to the general improvement of Spanish winemaking which, without them, would not be the same. In this first part of the series, we meet Gabriel Yravedra, the man who brought order to the dispersed, outdated Spanish wine legislation, and continues to be a staunch defender of the Spanish enological heritage on the international scene. Pascual Herrera, from his headquarters at the Viticulture and Enology Station of Castile-León, has made a major contribution to the growth of the wine areas within his region, including Rueda and Ribera del Duero. With Enrique García Maíquez, who handles himself in the laboratory with the same confidence and ease as in his own home, we discover the sherry wines of the 21st century.

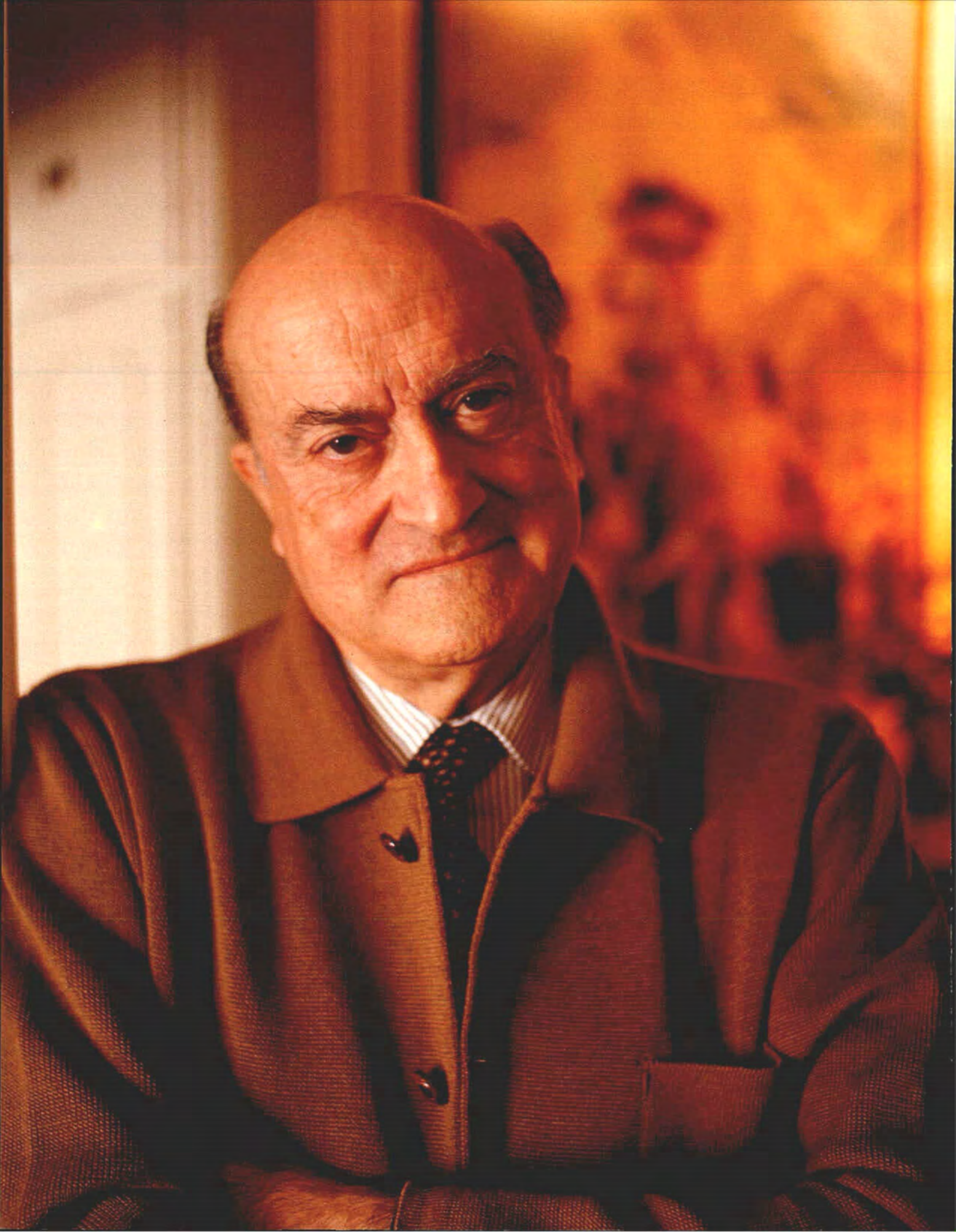
Gabriel Yravedra



Pascual Herrera



Enrique García Maiquez



Gabriel Yravedra: A New Order for Spanish Wine

If you review the recent history of Spanish winemaking you're bound to come across the name Yravedra name in each of the moments and situations when there has been a crucial decision to be made. According to his résumé he holds a doctorate in agronomy, but there is more of the dedicated attorney in the workstyle of this 68-year-old Madrid man who has spent much of his professional life defending Spain's winemaking heritage, both in Spain and abroad. In fact, his father was a lawyer, but early in life Gabriel Yravedra was attracted to the idea of becoming a technician in a subject, winemaking, at a time when Spain was severely lacking in this field.

He currently teaches Economics and Legislation in the Masters Studies on Enology and Viticulture at the Universidad Politécnica in Madrid, a postgraduate course which he himself established some decades ago together with Luis Hidalgo, another veteran of the Spanish wine world, and which has provided training for the modern generation of Spanish enologists. Gabriel Yravedra has bittersweet memories of his earliest beginnings in the field of research, after he'd finished his university studies. "I was very interested in the world of yeasts and microbiology in general, and I tried to learn as much as I could on the subject. However, I did not agree with what you could call the 'party line' in research those days, which was influenced by the prevailing *autarquía*, that spirit of isolationism and supposed self-sufficiency. Back in the late 1950s, the heads of the university were irritated if we drew on foreign research, be it Italian or French. And there was no real contact with the wine business itself. It was all a bit cliquish."

In 1963 he was named secretary of the Comisión del Estatuto de la Viña y del Vino (the body commissioned to draw up the law that regulates the winemaking industry in Spain) and was put in charge of modifying the old Wine Statutes of 1933. In 1970 the Spanish Cortes, the legislature of the Franco period, approved the new text inspired by Yravedra and today, nearly thirty years later, it is still in force. The updating of the old regulations sparked a succession of reforms, as Gabriel Yravedra was determined to give Spain a legal framework more in tune with the times. Thus was born the Instituto Nacional de Denominaciones de Origen (INDO), the National Institute of Denominations of Origin, whose technical services department embarked on the Catastro, or registry of vineyards. "In ten years, between 1972 and 1982, the teams in charge of the registry recorded three million vineyard plots. On the other hand, the statutes enabled a broader legal platform than that provided by the existing *denominación de origen* system, allowing products other than wine to have their own appellations. This gave rise to the denominations of Brandy de Jerez, Turrón de Jijona, and others for cheeses, hams, etc."

Closer to Europe

As regards relations with the rest of the European community, Yravedra has participated in numerous work groups of experts consulting for the European Commission.

"It was there that I started to realize that Spain's winemaking potential was seen as a threat by some our European partners. This applied not only to our wines, but to other agricultural products as well. We faced a decisive battle, which we won in the end with the recognition of the agricultural appellations, in spite of the serious objections raised throughout the negotiations by some northern European countries, which did not wish that milk or ham, for instance, be marketed with such geographical designations. Against this colonial approach, we thought up a way of segmenting the market in order to free ourselves of the dictates of the distribution and marketing channels."

There were inevitable conflicts between Gabriel Yravedra's role as spokesman for Spain's interests in Brussels and his presence in the Office International de la Vigne et du Vin (OIV) of which he was president between 1991 and 1994. Yravedra, awarded with France's Ordre National du Mérite Agricole, has been fearless in bringing up the controversial matter of the chaptalization of wines (the addition of sugar to wine to encourage fermentation, a common practice in France and Germany) in many international discussions, and that has rankled with more than one.

"I believe that in this matter the European Commission has clearly let itself be influenced by Germany and France. For me, the question is obvious: the 400,000 tons of saccharose used for chaptalization in the European Union is the equivalent of the yield from 670,000 hectares (1,655,000 acres) of vineyards in Spain. That translates as 20 million hectoliters of must, only 4 million less than the European wine surplus estimated by the Commission. The problem is that behind the matter of chaptalization there are more thorny questions, such as the existence of a policy which, in many places, has encouraged the maximum productivity in vineyards even though the result is wines of poor quality. Replacing saccharose with rectified grape must concentrate would mean changing the planning of all these hyper-productive vineyards, and on top of that it is impossible to ensure that the growers comply with the laws regarding chaptalization and to detect fraud. So we have a situation which has brought about the capitulation of the Commission in the face of pressure from certain member states."

Gabriel Yravedra has retired recently, but he still is very much involved in the world of wine after four decades of intense activity. Due to his proven experience, he is regularly invited to preside wine tasting committees, to consult for specialized trade fairs, and to participate in work groups, such as the scientific committee of which he is currently a member which consults for the European Commission on the subject of denominations of origin.

"Now that there are some who question, often with weak arguments, the usefulness of the denominations and their regulatory councils, I am among those who defend the validity of this system. The denominations provide a stable framework for a given zone and are a guarantee for present and future investments. A regulatory council must be a body with legal force, independent of the State, although this does not mean to say the State should neglect its duties. In this respect, I support a general law of denominations of origin in which wine, because of its historical significance, should be given special treatment."

Pascual Herrera: Custodian of the Treasures of Castile

Pascual Herrera, an agricultural engineer born in Burguillos (Toledo) in 1945, was in the second graduating class at the Escuela Superior de Viticultura y Enología (Higher School of Viticulture and Enology) at Madrid University.

He started working for the Instituto Nacional de Denominaciones de Origen (INDO) in 1972, joining the technical services team shortly after the new Wine Statutes were approved. He was fully involved in the task of carrying out the registry of vineyards, and spent years "traveling Spain—and running through several car engines in the process—to classify the vineyards and sample the wines." He also took part in setting the boundaries of the sparkling *cava* area, paving the way for the future denomination of origin and, from then on he collaborated closely with the regulatory councils, helping to set up almost all the tasting committees within these institutions.

In 1988 his career took a turn when he agreed to direct the Castile-León Viticulture and Enology Station, which had just been established in the Valladolid town of Rueda, and which includes an interesting experimental winery. These were times when a number of Spanish wine regions were starting to take off, and Herrera was excited by the changes in thinking and attitudes which he detected among many winegrowers and winemakers in areas like Rueda and the Ribera del Duero.

He had no doubts about supporting the vanguard of Castilian vintners who were in favor of making young red wines of quality and even aged reds on the banks of the Duero river. This might seem nothing unusual now, a decade later, but at the time it clashed with the deep-set ways of some producers, who preferred to maintain the existing tradition of unsophisticated wines, mainly the uncomplicated light reds known here as *claretes* (nothing to do with French claret). Even today Pascual Herrera believes that the Ribera del Duero, a denomination of origin of which he was president for a time, is not fully aware of its true winemaking potential. "Ten years ago, the search for quality and the need for quality control were difficult subjects to broach among the producers in the Ribera without hurting some feelings. For me it was an exciting period and, at the same time, a testing one."

At present the station is involved in research into the color of the indigenous tinto fino variety, using data supplied by the station's own experimental vineyard in Las Horras (Burgos province). As Pascual Herrera says, "we know how the phenolic compounds are extracted, but we do not know just how they are synthesized and conserved."

In the case of Rueda, Herrera was convinced that they could successfully make varietal whites with the Verdejo grape, a noble variety "which is a bit short on aromas, but which has great quality." The director of the station is against making up for this lack in aromatic intensity with the use of selected yeasts or by blending the Verdejo with Sauvignon Blanc, the newest variety to be planted in Rueda, and he is willing to prepare a culture of indigenous yeasts for all those vintners who request it.

A Pioneer on Many Fronts

Pascual Herrera has contributed to the establishment of other denominations of origin in the region, such as Toro (Zamora), Bierzo (Castile-León) and Cigales (Valladolid). Aside from these areas, there are other zones which he considers worth encouraging, not so much for their geographic and climatic identity but because each of them harbors an original grape variety, for example the Prieto Picudo grape of Valdevimbre-Los Oteros (Castile-León), a variety which lends itself to the making of rosé wine; the Juan García grape of Los Arribes del Duero (Zamora); the Rufete of the Sierra de Salamanca, or the Garnacha of Cebreros (Ávila). This last is something of an impossible love, as the make-up of this particular Ávila district, devoted to supplying the raw material for ordinary wines and dominated by industrial-style producers, has up to now prevented fulfilling the potential of an area in which various quality factors coincide (poor, sandy soils perfect for growing grapes; climate extremes in winter and summer; and vines of a very old age).

Herrera played a decisive role in the creation of the first young reds from Castile made with the carbonic maceration method, in Bierzo and later in Toro, efforts which have since given labels as prestigious as Prada A Tope or Fariña. He also had a hand in the first Verdejo whites from Rueda fermented in oak casks.

He was ahead of his time in foreseeing a promising future for the historical wine area of Toro, which is now attracting the attention of many prestigious winemakers from Ribera del Duero, Rioja or Priorato and which, Herrera comments, "is more balanced than Ribera del Duero, with sandy soils and fewer damaging frosts." In Toro he is also interested in recovering the legendary white grape, the Malvasía, for the production of whites aged in oak and of sweet wines, as this part of Zamora province has the largest vineyards of Malvasía in Europe. Under his direction studies are being carried out to compare the Toro variety with the island Malvasías of Bañalbufar (Majorca) and Lanzarote (Canary Islands).

"Much remains to be done in this region," he says. "For instance, we have another interesting zone just waiting to be developed, Tierra de Medina (Valladolid). It has a tradition and vocation for making red wines, and is a gravelly land a bit more rugged than Toro in which both the local Tinta grape and Merlot grow very well, giving good fruits which ripen earlier than in the Ribera del Duero."

Enrique García Maiquez: The Power of Research

Enrique García Maiquez, a scientist with a clear humanistic bent, has been director of the technical division at the González Byass winery in Jerez since 1990. He was born in El Puerto de Santa María (Cádiz) in 1943, and was destined to carry out his professional life in an environment with which he was very familiar, the wineries of the sherry region, but his first efforts were in the classroom. After completing a double doctorate in Pharmacy and Biological Sciences, he became a teacher at the University of Seville. García Maiquez was the youngest university professor in Spain. Then one day he was made a tempting offer by the González Byass company, which invited him to join their research team. "The university held my post at my disposal for a year, but once the choice was made, there was no turning back as I made the leap from the classroom to the winery."

From 1969 to 1985 García Maiquez devoted himself to microbiological research projects. For example he isolated many of the yeasts which now are used in the unique organic aging process of the fino sherry of Jerez. "I discovered that there are distinctions between the typical manzanillas of Sanlúcar and the finos of Jerez other than those resulting from their different geographical location, proximity to the sea, relative humidity in the aging cellars, and so forth. I found other internal factors which accounted for the different styles and which have to do with the types of yeasts present in each case and their metabolism. In laboratory tests these curious sherry yeasts, which act within the oak butts creating the so-called *velo*, the floating cap of *flor*, are active even with low levels of alcohol, which leads us to speculate with the future possibility of fino sherries with an alcohol content of 12 percent volume, as opposed to the 15 percent prevailing today."

Thanks to the strict control of the yeasts which intervene in the fermenting and aging of wines, Enrique García Maiquez has been able to shape the quality and character of what is perhaps the most universal brand of sherry, Tío Pepe, a fino which is the result of a marriage of tradition and technology, two concepts which García Maiquez insists are not contradictory.

Research Always Pays

"In Jerez, we have passed from a period in which the norm was 'let someone else do the research' to the present approach, in which all the major firms devote money and time to R&D, a break from the deep-rooted suspicion of anything new or innovative. I believe that all of Jerez has benefitted from the pioneering efforts of González Byass—whose technical department has an annual budget of 100 million pesetas (almost 700,000 US$)—both in basic research and the practical research applied to solving specific problems in the winemaking process (stabilization of wines, control of pests in the vineyards, etc.). We must defend the idea that research always pays. The aim of research is information, and information is power. As Caligula says in Albert Camus' work, power allows you to make possible the impossible."

García Maiquez has never lost the healthy curiosity of the pure scientist, but he is aware that in the world of business one must forsake public recognition of one's achievements. "All goes well if, when setting your objectives, you don't lose sight of what I call the BIL factor: Better quality, Increased productivity, and Lower costs."

He supports any new line of research and has enormous respect for the promotion of wine thanks to recent studies, such as those involving resveratrol, which recommend a reasonable consumption of wine for health reasons. "It gives me great pleasure when the American government recommends that its citizens drink two glasses of wine and take a thirty minute walk each day."

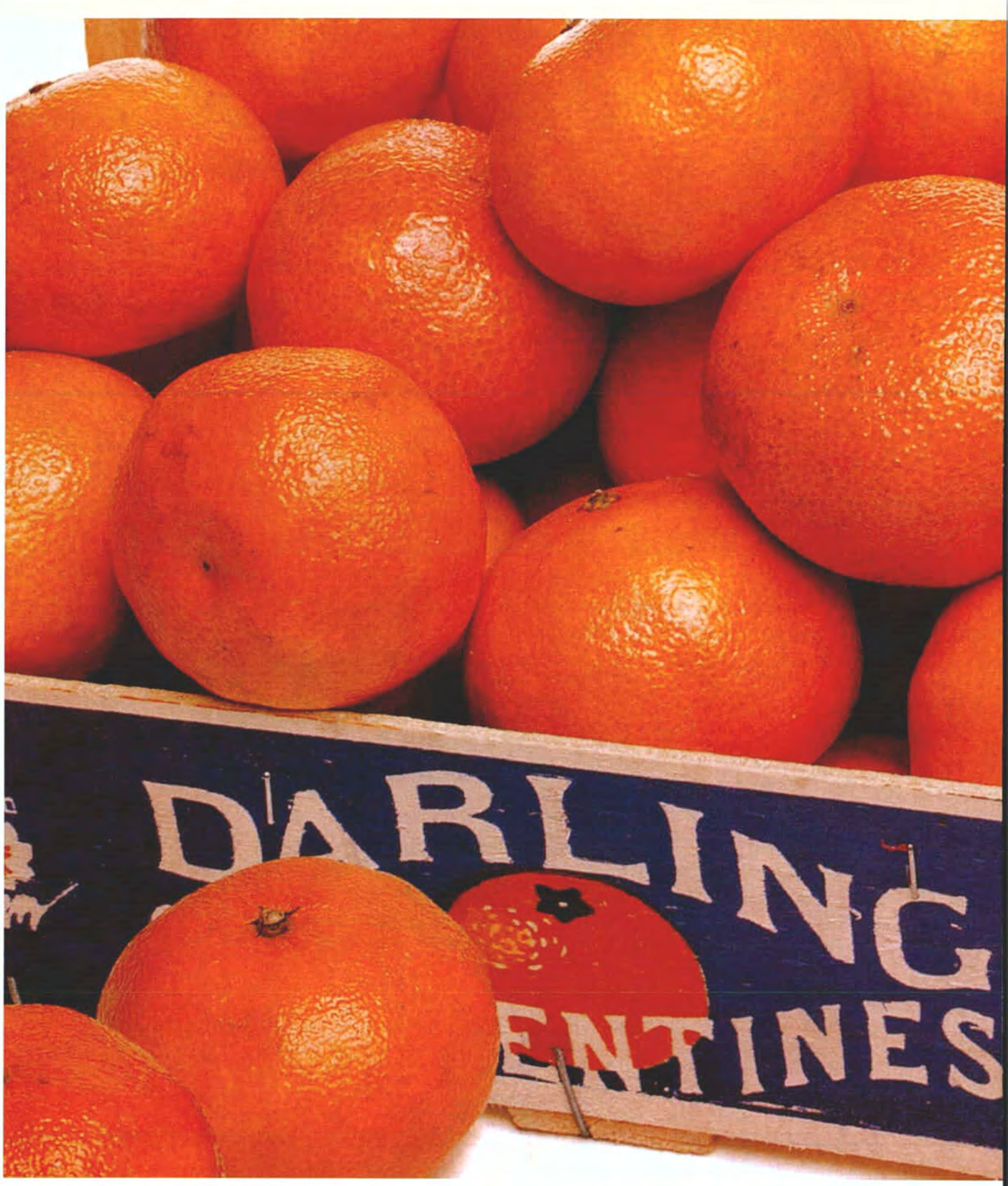
This scientist, an enthusiast of the fine arts, is open to all manner of technological advances involving vineyards and wineries, but he is conservative when it comes to harvesting methods and is opposed to the modern mechanization of the process. He points out that the great wines of the world prohibit harvesting grapes by mechanical means and he hopes never to see those machines let loose in his beloved *albariza* vineyards, the noble lands on which the Palomino grape of Jerez grows.

García Maiquez has centered his latest efforts on improving the shelf life of the bottled wine distributed for sale and preventing the dreaded *remontado*, the progressive oxidation of fino sherries. "The biotechnology applicable to sherry has yet to be discovered—or, perhaps, to be described—both in the fermentation process and in the aging process which takes place beneath the layer of flor yeasts."

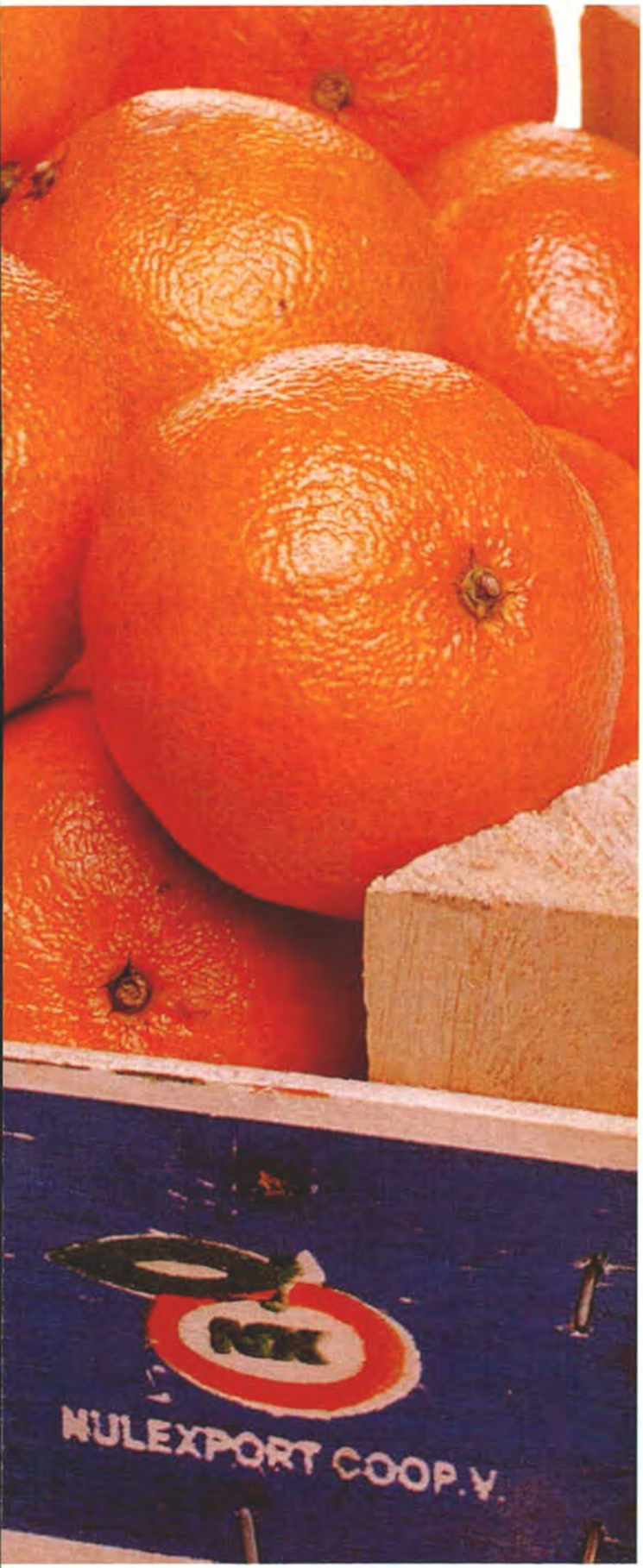
He speaks with cautious optimism of the future of the winemaking sector in Jerez. "I believe that Jerez is about to correct the strategic error it committed in drastically increasing production in the past. In the 1970s Jerez jumped from selling the equivalent in wine of 50,000 butts a year (each holding 500 liters) to 300,000, a clearly exaggerated figure. Today, the figure is around 160,000 butts, an amount much better suited to the region. At the same time, in the 1990s, the vineyard acreage of 18,000 hectares (44,500 acres) has been reduced to 10,500 hectares (26,000 acres) and the number of butts in the area's wineries has gone down from one million to 560,000."

García Maiquez shares with the proprietors of the 200-year-old firm where he works a commitment to safeguard the art of making sherry for the enjoyment of future generations, ensuring the survival of one of the most original wines in the world.

Victor Rodríguez *is a journalist specializing in wine. He has contributed to numerous publications and audiovisual media and is currently editor of the magazine,* Vino y Gastronomía.



NULEXPORT CO-OP



Text: **Iñigo Moré**
Translation: **Mark Little**
Photo: **Michael Kraus/Saveur**

"Oh, My Darling Clementine..."

Spain is the world's largest exporter of clementines, having increased its production threefold in the last ten years. One of the firms responsible for this sudden growth is the Nulexport Cooperative, based in the eastern Spanish province of Castellón. This company combines its specialization in clementines with a dynamic approach and a market vision hard to imagine in an enterprise this size, whose proprietors are the growers themselves.

THE SUCCESS OF THIS COMPANY LIES IN PRODUCING WHAT SELLS, NOT IN TRYING TO SELL WHAT THEY PRODUCE AND THAT MEANT CHANGING CROPS IN THE BEGINNING.

Fifteen years ago, in April 1984, the Nulexport Cooperative was suffering the results of a year which had been discrete, to put it mildly. Too discrete in fact for this small cooperative, established two years previously by 37 fruit farmers without the benefit of capital backing, technology, or marketing experience. They did not even have their own warehouse. That year, their sales had not surpassed 800 tons of fruit, around 35 million pesetas (245,198 US$) worth, which was not even enough to cover costs. The cooperative's president, Vicente Canós, sought the advice of an expert named Juan Arnal, who only confirmed their worst fears.

The conversation went something like this.

"With sales of only 800 tons a year, you'll have to shut down," said Arnal.

"No way," replied Canós.

"In that case," said Arnal, "you should negotiate your entry into another cooperative, under favorable terms."

The president found that unacceptable, too.

"Well, all I can say is that to carry on is madness," said Arnal.

To which the president replied with a job offer.

Fourteen years later, Nulexport's sales had been multiplied by more than a hundred, and billing increased from that modest 35 million to 4,500 million. The number of members of the cooperative has grown to 1,020, and Nulexport is now one of Spain's major exporters of clementines. All thanks to that meeting which Arnal, now managing director, recalls with a certain nostalgia.

"The first thing I told them was that I would not draw a salary," he says, "for the simple reason that they couldn't have afforded to pay me."

Arnal had arrived at Nulexport from a company with sales of 20,000 tons a year, and knew that 800 tons would barely cover running costs, not even his own. "In truth, it was a foolhardy venture," he admits. "With 800 tons you cannot meet the market's demands."

Nevertheless, the cooperative grew step by step, and today farms 1,700 hectares (4,200 acres), with a daily production that matches the annual total of 800 tons for 1984.

"I had a feeling it would work," enthuses Vicente Canós, who today continues as president of the cooperative. "I knew we would forge ahead, but I also realized that we were farmers, nothing more. We hadn't the faintest idea what a superstore was, so we pledged our full support for Arnal and asked him to tell us what to do."

A Switch in Crop

Arnal started by focusing the cooperative on the market's needs. "The aim of any farmer is to sell what he produces; but in order to survive, a company must do the reverse: to produce what sells."

This simple play of words had major implications when applied to fruit farming, for it entails changing crops grown for generations, and uprooting trees.

"When I arrived at Nulexport," recalls Arnal, "I found that the production was principally in satsumas, a tangerine of low quality which was much less in demand than the clementine."

Without hesitating, he told the members that they had to switch, abandoning the old fruit and grafting new varieties onto their trees.

The decision not only brought immediate profits to the cooperative. It was also a strategic choice which sparked its unstoppable growth, placing it in a market where demand was high and where there was hardly any competition in the world, for the clementine, like all agricultural crops of high quality, is very choosy and demanding. It can only be grown in this part of Spain and in certain areas of northern Africa. The clementine requires a very specific climate, with high temperatures in summer and a noticeable difference between daytime and nighttime temperatures during fall and winter, going from a mild 16°C (60.8°F) during the day to near-freezing temperatures at night. This is precisely the microclimate prevailing in the plains of Castellón which lie between the Mediterranean and the mountainous interior. Thus, the clementine is hardly grown at all in California, and other Mediterranean countries such as Italy cannot even satisfy their domestic demand.

Having specialized in clementines, Nulexport found the door open to a global market and renewed opportunities for export.

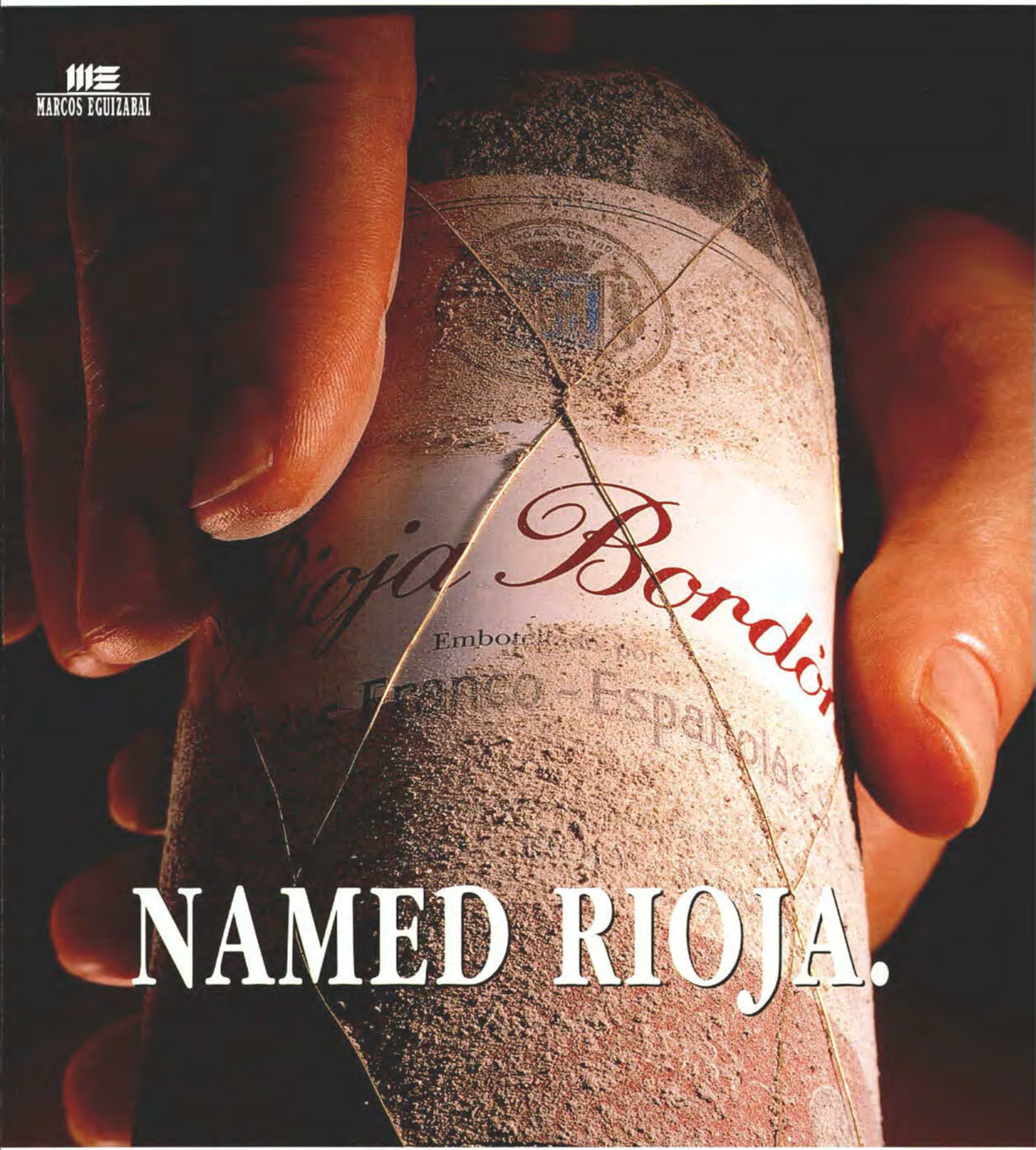
Adapting to the Market

The challenge of the international markets called for major investments, the selection of new varieties and, above all, it forced Nulexport to think global.

"At the beginning of the 1980s the European market for fruit was very different from the Spanish market," recalls Arnal. While in Europe the large superstores were the norm, in Spain the first ones were just being established. This implied important differences. While in a traditional grocery shop there is a shopkeeper who looks after and sells the product, "in modern distribution, nobody can spend time tending to the fruit, which must sell on its own strength," says Arnal. "Therefore, the client demands a product with careful packaging and even prepackaging, a product which is hardy and which has a longer shelf life without losing quality."

The cooperative sought those strains of clementine which best fulfilled the market's demands. As luck would have it, they did not have to look far. In the village of Nules itself, where Nulexport has its headquarters, a strain of clementine called Clemenules had originated spontaneously in the 1950s. It is a subvariety of the clementine which is more resistant and with a longer life. In addition, the Clemenules is bigger and has more juice, plus excellent organoleptic qualities, with a delicate balance of acidity and sweetness. To-

Bodegas Franco-Españolas, S.A.



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THE WORLD OF FRUIT MARKETING HAS BECOME SMALL. IN SOME COUNTRIES, THE FIVE TOP DISTRIBUTORS ACCOUNT FOR MORE THAN 60 PERCENT OF SALES.

day, Clemenules account for nearly 75 percent of Spanish exports of clementines.
However, it is a delicate crop and its cultivation is extremely demanding on the farmer, who must tend to his trees on a daily basis. This limits the size of the groves, which rarely exceed one hectare (2.5 acres) and in fact the growers of Clemenules are more like gardeners than farmers, but these requirements are well-suited to a cooperative setup, where the fact of being an owner of the company motivates the farmer to pay special attention to his craft.

More Investments

At the same time, Arnal decided to purchase modern equipment for sorting and packaging the fruit. He had inherited a passion for technological advances from his family. "My father bought the first machine in this area which worked on a continuous basis, washing the product and enabling the easier sorting of the fruit," he explains.
Investment in equipment has surpassed 1,000 million pesetas (7,005,646 US$) in recent years, and the Nulexport plant is practically as robotized as a state-of-the-art car factory. When the crop arrives, it is automatically fed into a machine which sorts the fruit by size and weight and delivers an immediate report on the total weight and the characteristics of the fruit. "The members of the cooperative call it 'The Truth Machine,'" explains Canós, adding that each member's production is treated by the machine separately. "This way, everyone knows exactly what he has delivered and therefore can make a fair estimate of his income."
Once the fruit is selected, another automatic machine washes and waxes the fruit—"always with natural wax," Canós points out—before delivering it to another robotized device which packages the fruit in small boxes and stacks it on pallets.
"There are only two phases of the process which are not carried out by machine: the removal of damaged fruit, and the laboratory," says Canós. The cooperative's lab team analyzes the clementines to gauge their quality. "The fruit is opened to determine whether it has the correct juice content, and to analyze its taste and texture." Depending on this analysis, the fruit will be further sorted by different grades and destined for different markets.

NULEXPORT
Sales per Campaign in Millions of Pesetas

80/81	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99
35	3,271	3,793	4,466	4,138	4,500

Source: Nulexport. * Forecast.

The Demands of Distribution

Once Arnal had come up with a clementine which met the requirements for major distribution, he started a continuing search for market outlets. There has been a steady growth in sales, reaching the 4,500 million pesetas (31,525,409 US$) forecast for 1998. The secret was to sort production according to each market—distributing it under different labels depending on that market and the grade of the fruit—and to join forces with other producers. According to Arnal, the world of fruit marketing has become a small one indeed. In countries like Germany and France, he says, "70 percent of fruit is marketed by the five major distribution chains. Every day there are fewer dealers, but every day they sell more volume." In his opinion, this has the advantage that "one has to deal with a handful of potential buyers" but, on the down side, "they are powerful, and very demanding." As an example, he says, "the British chain, Tesco, recently placed an order for 70 containers, and they wanted them right away."
Nulexport itself has made an effort to become a major market player, by joining various marketing consortia with other producers of different fruit.
For example, there is the Trilla consortium, which under this brand name markets produce in the European Union. This is precisely the market where the cooperative first started selling in the 1980s, with Germany at the head, today accounting for 15 percent of sales. The United Kingdom follows, and now takes 12 percent of sales, with France standing at ten percent.
Even before the Berlin Wall fell, Nulexport had initiated operations in the Eastern European countries, under the Art Fruits consortium and their brand name Vitamina, starting with Poland, Estonia, and Lithuania. The target for 1998 was Russia, but due to the economic climate there, they have decided to postpone their plans until next year, according to Arnal. In spite of this, Eastern Europe absorbs 22 percent of production, "though the fruit is of lower grade, while not of lesser quality," explains Arnal.
In 1991 the company set its sights on the United States and Canada, a difficult market "because the authorities impose a ten-day quarantine on imported clementines to prevent the spread of damaging insects." Besides, the market is dominated by tangerines grown in Florida and California. Even so Nulexport, distributing its product under the Darling brand name, has successfully placed its clementines in the high end of the market, and North America has since become its biggest client. "We started with 60 tons the first year, and in the 1998/99 exercise we'll sell 40 percent of our production there, a much larger share of the

market than the previous year due to the loss in quality of the domestic tangerines caused by El Niño."
All in all, the export trade accounts for nearly 95 percent of the company's sales.

Know-how

According to Vicente Canós, "all this has been made possible because we work year round." Normally, farm cooperatives are inactive outside the harvest season. But Nulexport maintains a technical team devoted to assisting the farmers in preparing the soil. Two agricultural engineers visit the field, advising the farmers and analyzing the soil and the irrigation water on a regular basis.
They also are in charge of experimenting with new crops. Today, Nulexport is researching new strains of Clemenules which will fruit up to the month of April. The company is striving to adapt its crops to the general change in climate. "Global warming is something that the average citizen regards as distant and unimportant, but which farmers know as a hard fact," explains Arnal, who five years ago initiated the discussion on this subject at Nulexport. "When I was a kid," he recalls, "we used to get the overcoats out of the closet on the first day in November. Due to the rise in temperature, today, we don't wear them until Christmas." This has forced Nulexport to alter the timing for the pruning of trees, the type of fertilizer used and, especially, the irrigation patterns.
Now, the cooperative is facing the challenges which have arisen from its own success. On the one hand, it has attracted a considerable number of new members, and currently there are 1,020 of them. This large number obliges the cooperative "to organize the harvest in 1,500 different locations, as some members have several groves," explains Vicente Canós. And one mustn't forget that this is a cooperative, run by its members. "It is difficult to get that many people to agree on something," Canós points out.
The success of the cooperative has encouraged many farmers to invest in a college education for their children. "This has brought about the lack of a new generation of farmers to take over from the previous generation," says Canós. "It makes sense that a farmer's son who has studied medicine will choose to work in a hospital rather than on the farm." Nulexport has started a service department in charge of working the plots which members cannot tend to themselves for this reason. A department which "fortunately is growing" says Canós, because after all "it is a source of pride for any farmer to be able to pay for university studies for his children."

***Iñigo Moré**, a lawyer and journalist, has worked for* El País *and* The Economist *group of Great Britain. Currently he runs his own business,* Mercados Emergentes.


AIR
COMPACT TURBO
ROTISSERIE

TEXT: ANA WESTLEY STILL LIFES: MENCHU ARTIME PHOTOS: A. DE BENITO/ICEX

There is something about the aroma of fresh baked bread that is irresistible. As soon as we breathe in that warm, homey familiar smell of Grandma's own fresh baked bread, our mouths water and stomach juices churn. Only those with the strongest willpower can resist the urge to buy a crunchy loaf on the spot, break off a piece and pop it immediately into their mouths. Even if our grandmothers never baked bread, we still find ourselves visualizing homey and comforting scenes around an old fashioned hearth, perhaps off in some bucolic countryside or small town, away from the mad rush of modern-day life. We can close our eyes and daydream for a few minutes. The appeal is overwhelming as there is nothing quite like freshly baked bread, still warm from the oven.

Nowadays, with the industrialization and mass production of the baking industry, usually in huge bakeries in industrial outskirts, the experience of warm, freshly baked bread became a vanishing luxury in most cities. Even the most artisan fresh breads made practically by hand in small bakeries in rural villages were more than six or seven hours old by the time they were eaten at lunchtime, and stale by night to be thrown away the next morning. Unlike other European countries such as France, Germany, and Denmark where frozen bread and pastry dough had already been introduced successfully for decades, Spain had only a testimonial offering of frozen bread dough until barely ten years ago. In a country with over 300 varieties of local breads, and small bread dispensing shops on almost every corner, the idea of bread made from frozen dough didn't seem feasible until about a decade ago when bread boutiques began to spring up in cities offering a wide variety not only of rustic Spanish breads but other whole grain or gourmet varieties from other European countries. The bread boutiques were offering "back to the village" varieties of slow leavened chewy breads that needed to be freshly baked, usually on the premises in back room electric ovens. At the same time, Spanish fast food chains offering a Mediterranean diet alternative of crunchy *bocadillos* or long thin

FROM FREEZER TO OVEN: A GUARANTEE OF FRESHNESS

Breads from Spain. Fresh crunchy home-style bread still warm from the oven: it's the ideal way to begin any meal. Spain's frozen dough and pre-baked bread industry is making that dream come true. Success has been so outstanding that the business is one of the fastest growing sectors in the food industry providing convenience and a wide range of attractive and tasty breads not only for the restaurant business but also for ever more discriminating consumers both in Spain and around the world. In only eight years production has sextupled, from 27,500 tons to 182,000 last year, expanding at an average rate of 20 percent a year. Exports also soar at averages between 10 percent and 20 percent for various manufacturers.

"submarines" made with fresh baguette bread began to pop up around cities. Bread over 20 minutes out of the oven wouldn't do if these establishments were to compete successfully with fast food hamburger chains.
Although late in introducing frozen dough, Spain caught up quickly and soon took the process one step further: half-baked bread that needs a mere 10 to 15 minutes to finish baking on the premises in small electric ovens. In less than a decade, fresh baked baguettes hot out of the oven were being sold all over Spain: from supermarkets to restaurants, to gasoline stations. Growth rates for the industry averaged 20 percent to 30 percent a year. In the last few years, frozen Spanish pre-baked breads—breads that are only partially baked needing only a final 10 to 15 minutes in the oven—are managing to compete well in France, the original land of baguettes. "The French forgive us our success there, perhaps because we are neighbors," chuckled Carlos Palou, the general director of Europastry S.A., the manufacturers of frozen pre-baked breads and pastry dough belonging to the Fripan bread group based outside Barcelona.

Chapata Bread: An Original Mediterranean Country Bread

Simultaneously, the new Spanish industry which had expanded into large scale operations in the early 1990s, developed the partially baked version of a traditional rustic chewy Mediterranean bread alternatively called *chapata, ciapata,* or *ciabatta.* This homey, flavorful bread had practically vanished from widespread consumption due to its long fermenting period and a complicated elaboration process. Variations of this dough produce the so called "wood-fired bread" *(pan de leña)*. Legend has it that this bread was originally developed in the 15th century in the Catalan-Aragón region in the northeast corner of Spain. From there, it was introduced to Naples during the reign of Alphonse the Magnanimous, King of Aragon and Sicily, where it became known as ciapata or ciabatta. Revived in a dramatic comeback over the last 12 to 15 years, the Italian name stuck in Spain where it was Spanishized to chapata.
In any case, Spanish industrial bakers were able to develop the technology for mass production and freezing without loss of flavor or aroma. Today the partially baked frozen chapatas or rustic country bread varieties rival baguettes in consumer preferences, especially in the restaurant business and bread boutiques. In exports, the chapatas draw a close second to baguettes and are capturing the palates of European connoisseurs—even in the land that gave its name to long narrow crusty loaves of white bread known in the English speaking world as simply "French bread."
From the beginning of large scale production in 1990s, Spain's frozen dough sector has enjoyed annual growth rates both in volume and in value that average over 20 percent a year. In the 1990s, the sector produced 27,500 tons and estimated total production for 1998 is expected to be 182,000 tons. "Growth has been so strong we can barely keep up with demand," explained Agustín Roqué, the secretary of ASEMAC (Asociación Española de Fabricantes de Masas Congeladas), Spain's industry association of frozen dough manufacturers. Every year companies produced new or better varieties, many designed specifically for Spain's hotel and restaurant industry, an important sector of the tourist industry. Over 40 million tourists visit Spain yearly and restaurants soon found that freshly baked chapata in individual portions, or warm and crunchy baguettes, were a much appreciated quality addition to any meal.

ESTABLISHMENTS SUCH AS PANS & CO. PRIDE THEMSELVES ON THE FRESHNESS OF THEIR BAGUETTES WHICH FINISH THEIR BAKING ON THE PREMISES AND ARE CONSUMED WITHIN 10 TO 15 MINUTES AFTER THEY ARE OUT OF THE OVEN.

Bread for the Olympics and Soaring Exports

At the same time, exports which began timidly, have also increased from 10 percent to 20 percent a year, mainly to other European countries and some Latin American nations. Far from saturation, frozen dough production represents a mere 6 to 7 percent of total bread production in Spain, according to industry sources. This compares to 10 to 12 percent in Germany, 14 percent in France, and 80 percent in Denmark where frozen dough is the norm. ASEMAC estimates that the market is far from an estimated ceiling of 20 percent. Unlike Denmark, other European countries, and the U.S., the home market or direct consumer purchase of frozen dough and partially baked bread in Spain has only barely begun. The frozen pre-baked bread sector of the industry is growing at an equally fast


COMPACT TURBO
ROTISSERIE

pace and is fast replacing the frozen raw dough business. In 1996, partially baked frozen bread represented practically half of the entire frozen dough business which includes frozen pastries and rolls. By 1998, production is estimated to be 101,045 tons out of an estimated total of 182,000 tons, or over 55 percent. Exports of this star product increase yearly at averages over 10 percent and in companies such as Berlys, founded in 1994, which has production centers outside Madrid and Barcelona, they represent averages of over 20 percent. Berlys general director Felipe Ruano, who is also the president of ASEMAC, explains that the partially baked varieties of bread have even won over traditional bakers who have found that their clients also want freshly baked bread during the later hours of the day. For restaurants and institutions, nothing beats fresh hot bread that can be prepared within 10 to 15 minutes and carried hot to the table.

Carlos Palou, of Europastry (Fripan), explained with pride that practically any variety of bread can be industrially reproduced and frozen before the baking process finishes. Europastry's brand name Fripan supplied the Olympic Village of athletes during the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. "This was a major challenge," he recalled. "We had to prepare bread three times a day for 35,000 people from around the world—many of them hungry athletes—and we had to have a sampling of international and ethnic breads from baguettes to German brown breads to Middle Eastern pita breads." Fripan soon discovered that the most popular breads chosen were baguettes and chapatas. "We soon found that we had too many pitas and brown breads, and not enough chapatas and baguettes, so it was easy to adapt." Fripan also supplies Port Aventura, Catalonia's huge theme park, with its daily bread and is the lone provider of baguettes to the Spanish submarine sandwich chain, Pans & Company (see box on page 94). The company has plans to introduce its frozen partially-baked chapata bread in the United States. "It's in line with American preferences for wholesome food as the bread is made without preservatives and chemical additives."

Fripan, one of the largest frozen dough manufacturers currently produces 20,000 baguettes an hour, six days a week, or 500,000 baguettes a week. In a year's time that amounts to 150 billion baguettes—enough to circle the world several times. A new factory is to go on line outside Madrid adding another 60,000 baguettes per hour to production and the company is planning to open a production plant in Metz, France.

EVEN FROZEN RAW DOUGH, POPULAR IN EUROPE, MUST BE THAWED AND ALLOWED TO RISE AND FERMENT BEFORE BAKING. WITH PARTIALLY BAKED BREADS, THIS TRICKY PART IS ELIMINATED AND BAKING TIME REDUCED TO MERE MINUTES.

Better Living, Better Bread

According to ASEMAC, bread consumption in Spain is surprisingly below that of other European countries. After declining from 82 kilos/per capita/per year in 1976 to a low of 55 kg/per capita/per year in 1992, consumption rose to 60.2 kilos in 1996, the latest year for which figures are available, due in part to the increasing popularity of baguettes and chapatas, and the rise of fast food baguette sandwich chains. This compares to an average of 62 kilos per person per year in France and 80 kilos per person in Germany.

"Consumption has increased because the bread is much better," concludes Carlos Palou of Fripan. "When you have a nice fresh piece of bread, especially if it is still warm, you eat more. It's as simple as that." Poorer countries do consume more breads and spend a greater proportion of the family's food budget on breads and cereals. With higher levels of living, bread and cereal consumption tends to drop only to rebound later with better and more sophisticated products. The percentage of a Spanish family's food budget spent on bread has followed this pattern. In 1958, 18.5 percent of a Spanish family's food budget went into the purchase of breads. By 1987 it had bottomed out to 7.5 percent to rise to 9.1 percent in 1997.

Berlys has found that sales are booming just as fast in exports as in national sales. Exports soar at increases of 20 percent a year to European countries, the U.S., and the Caribbean. Baguettes and chapatas have been as successful abroad as in Spain. "Partially-baked breads offer any type of establishment the option of having a gourmet bakery, right on their premises," explained Felipe Ruano of Berlys. All they need is a small electric oven to finish baking the product for the last 10 to 15 minutes. There's no mess, no contamination, no special chambers for bread rising that has to be timed perfectly, and are easy to forget in a busy restaurant." Berlys adapts its product to the taste and format preferences of other countries, adding other

A RIOJA AGAINST THE TIDE

BODEGAS LAN are part of a major industrial group committed to a new business ethos, whose ultimate goal is to give priority to the quality of its wines and, through these efforts, to become a member of the elite group of prestige Rioja wines.

BODEGAS LAN has always grown its own vines in a magnificent estate vineyard called "Viña Lanciano". This vineyard is situated in a highly privileged part of the Rioja Alta sub-zone, bordering on the Rioja Alavesa and on the banks of the River Ebro. This zone is characterised by the influence of both the Atlantic and Mediterranean climate, allowing the production of rich, aromatic red wines with the ideal acidity and alcoholic strength for cask ageing. This unique terroir produces wines which are sold in limited quantities in numbered bottles, the cellar's highest quality Reservas. These wines have the "Château" –bottled style and are only put on sale for those vintages classified as Very Good or Excellent.

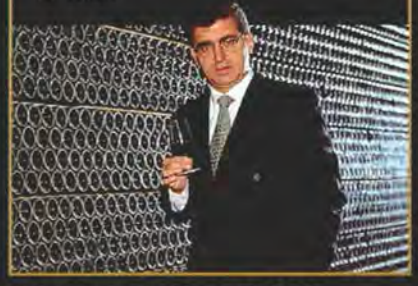
The BODEGAS LAN GROUP also has wineries in other winegrowing Denominations, for example, Santiago Ruiz in the Rías Baixas of Galicia and Covina in Labastida, Álava.

A SKILLED TEAM OF EXPERTS

BODEGAS LAN possess a skilled team of professionals with long experience in the winegrowing industry and expert knowledge of the processes of production and marketing of great wines.

Technical Staff
BODEGAS LAN GROUP

- An agricultural engineer who performs the duties of Group Technical Director and is in charge of the Research and Development Department.
- Three Biologists: One responsible for the Winegrowing Guidance Department, and the other two work in the Microbiology and Research Department.
- A Chemistry graduate who directs all the analytical and quality checks.
- Three enologists in charge of the production process and the movements of wine inside the cellar.



IN CONSTANT EVOLUTION

BODEGAS LAN are in the middle of a major programme of expansion and modernisation of their plant, with the aim of equipping them with the latest technology.

At the present time, BODEGAS LAN has completed a new ageing area with American- and French (Allier)- oak casks, being the first winery in the world that has introduced a state-of-the-art automatically controlled system for stacking casks, which performs all the movements necessary for racking the wines by robot.

During 1999 another new storage area will be constructed where all the vats will be made of stainless steel and automatically controlled

And, finally, a new vinification plant is planned, with 120 self-emptying, stainless steel vats with 35,000 litre capacity, also totally operated by robots, thereby eliminating the use of pipes for transferring grapes, must, wine and fermented grape skins and residues.

LAST AWARDS OBTAINED

The excellent quality of BODEGAS LAN wines has won great international esteem, with a presence in over 30 different countries. In recognition of their quality, BODEGAS LAN wines have received numerous awards over the years. In the last year alone, 1998, the following accolades were bestowed :

- Gold and Bronze Medals, Bordeaux International Wine Challenge 1998.
- *Prix d'Excellence* Civart – France .
- Gold Medal , Chicago World Wine Championships 1998.
- Gold and Silver Medals, and Best Spanish Red Wine Trophy, Shanghai International Wine Challenge 1998 (WINE Magazine).

A SERIOUS COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

The meticulous care which characterises BODEGAS LAN starts in the fields, checking the quality of the grapes in all the vineyards which supply them.

Pioneers in the Rioja Denomination of Origin, during the 98 harvest, this winery introduced a new system for grading the quality of the grapes. The purpose of this system is to ensure the control of optimum quality grapes and to reward the efforts of those growers able to produce them through the payment of higher prices.

This system immediately evaluates the grapes according to five parameters: alcoholic strength, total acidity, pH, colour and grey mould (botrytis) analysis (sanitary control).

BODEGAS
LAN

Fuenmayor (La Rioja) SPAIN
Tel.: + 34 941 450 950
Fax: + 34 941 450 567
e-mail: bodegaslan@fer.es

varieties of whole wheat breads... "We keep in mind that it is easier to change religion than change eating habits," he added, "so we export what they prefer in breads and pastries although varieties of baguettes and chapatas are still best sellers."

Automated Stone Fired Ovens: The Crown Jewels

Fully automated and controlled by computers, production for frozen partially-baked breads is basically no different than for any other type of bread. The only difference is that the baking is interrupted just before final browning or toasting and the pale loaves are immediately deep frozen, packaged, and stored. Even the production of most so called artisan breads from small neighborhood bakeries is fully automated. No professional baker kneads dough by hand anymore, although some still place the formed loaves with a wooden paddle or peel in a stone or brick oven. It's the mental picture most of us have of an old fashioned baker. Though picturesque, the method is inefficient for large scale production and results are generally not uniform. Bread batches vary widely in quality.

Fripan, like other Spanish manufacturers, has managed to reproduce this old-fashioned process in a fully automated and uniform way for both its baguette and chapata continuous production lines. On a recent visit to Fripan's high capacity chapata and rustic bread production lines in Barberá del Vallés outside Barcelona, Mr. Palou explained that the production lines of the chapatas and stone fired *payés*, or country breads, are the company's "crown jewels." The dough is processed without interruption from the moment the ingredients are mixed until it is deep frozen, packaged, and stored in a freezer warehouse. The initial fermentation process is initiated by a liquid preferment, called the broth or mother brew, which consists of a mixture of water, yeast, and portions of the flour, all determined by a computer. The liquid brew ferments for a few hours at 18°C (64°F) where it doubles and triples in size before being cooled to be fed along overhead tubes and pipelines where it will be mixed in with the dough, a mixture of the dry ingredients, water, and more yeast. This mother brew, every company's well guarded secret, is what gives each bread its characteristic "bouquet." The yeast of the mother brew is responsible not only for flavor and aroma but also for nutritional enrichment providing important vitamins and other nutrients.

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET HAS BEEN BASED ON THE TRILOGY OF WHEAT, OLIVE OIL, AND WINE. CHAPATA BREAD IS MADE FROM MEDITERRANEAN WHEAT FLOUR FROM CENTURY-OLD RECIPES ADAPTED TO THE TECHNOLOGY OF THE NEXT MILLENNIUM.

The type of flour is also important. Chapata bread is made from specific Spanish wheat grains that give it its texture, coloring, and taste that cannot be reproduced with imported wheat flour varieties. The initial gooey batter-like mixture undergoes a series of mechanical mixings and kneadings in open developing tanks where it is allowed to set and rise several times, doubling and tripling its size again and again. From this stage the smooth, elastic, film-forming dough then moves along various form shaping and metering devices that clip, roll, and form the dough globs into various shapes and sizes: small round individual sizes for restaurants and institutions, traditional chapata flat rectangular loaves in various sizes, elongated rustic loaves, or the round Catalan payés loaf. Customers can choose from a wide variety of sizes and formats.

Next step for the raw loaves is a tunnel oven which consists of a conveyor belt of hot stone slabs that inches slowly through a temperature-controlled oven. The hot stones duplicate the properties of an old fashioned hearth or brick oven with uniform, perfect results. Once out of the oven the pale half-baked loaves are cooled, deep frozen, packaged, and transported to an adjacent freezer warehouse for storage at—18°C (64°F). Point of sale establishments need only to place the partially baked loaves in small electric rack ovens for 12 to 15 minutes. The production line process for baguettes is similar, although rising time is much shorter and the loaves are baked in large insulated rotating rack ovens. The end result for both types of bread is always perfect, fit for a king's banquet.

Ana Westley *has been a foreign correspondent in Spain for over 20 years where she has worked for various American publications including the* Wall Street Journal *and* The New York Times. *Currently she is the managing director of M.W. Research, a communication and research consulting service based in Madrid. She continues to do occasional freelance writing.*

See Main Exporters on page 126.

Coosur is one of the leading companies in the olive oil sector in Spain. Our growth and development dates back more than 50 years, from which we have extracted the best: our ancestors' experience in the olive oil industry tradition, the produce of the world's richest region in olive groves - Andalusia - and the development of the most advanced techniques to achieve a final product of the very best quality.

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PANS & COMPANY: SPAIN'S MEDITERRANEAN FAST FOOD ALTERNATIVE

Modern day living has given rise to an explosion of fast food chains around the world. But fast food doesn't have to be synonymous with hamburgers, as Spain's Pans & Company has demonstrated with spectacular success since it was founded in 1991. Based on the belief that the main ingredients of a healthy Mediterranean diet can be assembled quickly and appealingly, the Spanish-owned company opened its first fast food restaurant in Barcelona offering *bocadillos*—baguette sandwiches made quickly with a large variety of traditional Mediterranean favorites.

Success was instant and the Spanish chain with its black, yellow, and white checkered logo has been opening annually an average of 30 new establishments. At the end of 1998 there were a total of 168 outlets spread throughout most of Spain's major cities and tourist locations and 16 outlets in Portugal. Sales increased even more spectacularly, totaling 6.2 billion pesetas (41 million US$) in 1998, an increase of 55 percent compared to the previous year. In addition to Portugal, Pans & Company has opened establishments in Germany, Puerto Rico, and Andorra, through franchises with local partners.

"The secret is based on fresh-baked bread, good tasty ingredients in multiple combinations that have made up our diet for centuries, and fast food efficiency," explained José Ramón Fernández, Pans & Company's deputy general director. "We have reinvented the traditional Spanish bocadillo with lighter and more appealing fresh baked baguettes." In just a few minutes a customer can order a large bocadillo of cured *serrano* ham with tomato, a Catalan favorite, or any variety of local Spanish cold cuts and sausages. There are variations on the Spanish potato omelet bocadillo, or classic baguette sandwiches of tuna salad, grilled chicken, or beef with lettuce, Spanish olive oil or mayonnaise, fresh tomatoes, and so on. Those more adventurous can try the various foreign specialties named for their country of origin: Norwegian smoked salmon with cream cheese and pickles, British bacon and cheese, Bavarian wieners, and, yes, even a hamburger on a baguette with the cheese of your choice.

"The bread is never over ten minutes out of the oven," Fernández insists. "Without frozen, partially-baked baguettes, we wouldn't be able to exist," he noted. Most of the company's humorous advertising is based on images of super fresh crunchy bread. The name of the chain is a mixture of the Spanish word for bread—*pan*—used in an English language plural form of the word together with "& Company." The part Spanish, part English name lends a somewhat international cachet to the chain.

Pans & Company also offers local specialties in different regions of Spain. In Barcelona you can get a *fuet* bocadillo made of a local hard thin salami type sausage and in Andalusia you can order a "serranito" a toasted bocadillo with local sausage. In Madrid, the Spanish potato omelet is served with fried green peppers and in Barcelona it comes with tomato. Clients can choose their own combinations or choose from a varied menu or specialty of the day. Salads, soups, gazpachos, and desserts complete the menu offerings, and yes, there are also chunky home-fried potatoes to boot for those who cannot imagine fast food without fries.

Clever, witty advertising has contributed to the company's success and their logo is now as familiar in large shopping malls and movie centers as the hamburger chains. Although customers represent all ages, the main clientele are young adults ages 18 through 30, although teens and children with their parents also flock to the restaurants on weekends and holidays. On week days, lunch customers tend to be young working professionals while on weekends or at leisure malls and parks, customers are of all ages, including seniors. "Our bocadillos are a healthy way to grab a quick bite to eat before or after a movie, or while shopping. Adults feel comfortable with our menu as it's food we have always been eating," Fernández added.

In the future, the chain plans to enter emerging markets such as Latin America as well as branch into other European nations.

FANTASY BETWEEN TWO SLICES OF BREAD

The *bocadillo* is something of an institution in Spain. Bocadillo means a sandwich, but not any old sandwich, for it should be made with the traditional crusty bread of Spain as opposed to modern-style pre-sliced bread.

In the home or for a picnic it is normally made with whatever ingredients are at hand (a simple filling of cold cuts, paté or perhaps potato omelet) but any self-respecting bar will have a much wider range to offer. There are bocadillos of fried squid, cheese, veal or pork steaks, various omelets and, of course, an amazing variety of sausages and cured meats...

In recent years, thanks to new sandwich franchise chains such as Pans & Company, the

humble sandwich now incorporates the latest gastronomic trends: fillings reflect the interest in the Mediterranean diet and feature a contrast of textures, colors, flavors, temperatures, etc.

After all, between two slices of good bread there are a thousand and one possibilities. And Spanish products make perfect ingredients for mixing and matching. The wide variety of cheeses and sausages, tasty seafood preserves such as bonito, anchovies, or mussels, or vegetable preserves such as red peppers... Besides, a dash of good Spanish olive oil will enhance any sandwich filling. Here, for starters, are some suggestions and variations on the sandwich theme from María Jesús Gil de Antuñano:

Classic sandwich with baguette-type loaf

Sprinkle some virgin olive oil on the bread and choose one of the following options: a) a slice of mountain-cured *serrano* ham; b) cured cheese such as Roncal; c) fresh or semi-cured Manchego cheese and anchovies from Santoña or L'Escala (sprinkle some of the juices from the can onto the bread); d) sliced *chorizo* or *salchichón* sausage or *lomo* (cured pork loin), outer skin removed.

Warm Version: wrap sandwiches in aluminum foil and place in oven at 175°C (315°F) for 15 minutes.

Pa amb tomàquet (bread with tomato)

Rubbing bread with tomato is the classic way of preparing sandwiches in Catalonia. Use a slice of country bread and: a) rub it with half a fresh tomato, add a pinch of salt, and sprinkle with virgin olive oil; b) proceed as above, but add a slice of serrano ham, lomo *embuchado* (cured pork loin), *cecina* (cured beef), Catalan *fuet* sausage, plain omelet, or cold fried hake, etc.; c) proceed as above, but before rubbing with tomato, rub bread with half a clove of garlic.

Warm bread with tomato

a) a small loaf of bread spread with abundant tomato, oil, and salt, wrapped in aluminum foil and heated for 15 minutes in an oven at 175°C (315°F); b) the same version with anchovies; d) with strips of roast pepper or *pimientos del piquillo*; c) with less oil and with a slice of *sobrasada* (smooth, paprika-flavored pork sausage), skin removed; e) a few slices of Tetilla cheese from Galicia or creamy Cadí cheese.

With chapata bread

Chapata is a flat bread with a thick crust. Prepare sandwich with: a) a few drops of virgin olive oil, serrano ham, slices of tomato, and grilled onion rings; b) plain omelet, strips of fried green peppers, and french fries; c) spread with *alioli* (garlic mayonnaise), grilled eggplant, and tomatoes, slices of fresh cheese such as Burgos, and spring onion; d) mayonnaise, ham, lettuce, tomato, chives, and hard boiled egg; e) scrambled eggs with wild asparagus and tomato slices; f) mayonnaise, smoked chicken breast, lettuce, tomato, onion, and pitted black olives.

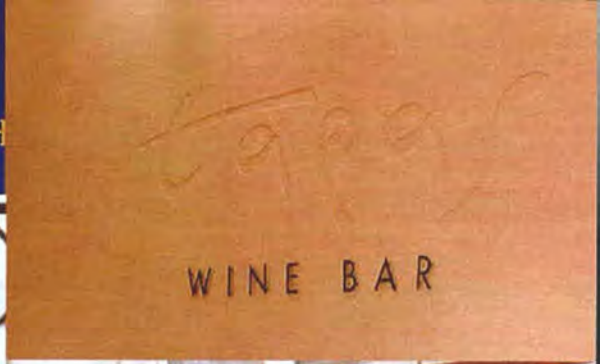
Sandwiches with Spanish omelet

Small loaves spread with mayonnaise and: a) potato and onion omelet; b) potato omelet with marinated bonito; c) potato and sausage omelet; d) potato and onion omelet with fried red and green peppers.

Sandwiches with seafood preserves

Chapata or Spanish bread with lettuce leaves, sliced tomato, and onion rings. Add: a) bonito in oil; b) sardines in oil; c) pickled mussels.


Asturiana
NORTHERN SPANISH
CUISINE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342
MARICHU

Spain's Culinary Delegation on Four Continents (I)

UNITED STATES, JAPAN, AND AUSTRALIA

For many years now, we have been reporting on Spanish gastronomy and restaurants in every region in Spain. In our new three-part series, our aim is to bring genuine Spanish cuisine even closer to our readers, so you will be able to sample it at home in your own city or country. This Spanish culinary delegation will comprise thirteen selected restaurants in New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Tokyo, Sidney, Vienna, Munich, Zurich, Paris, Brussels, Antwerp, and London.

Marichu Restaurant is a charming outpost of Basque and Spanish cuisine in New York and its chef-owner Teresa Barrenechea, who learned cooking in her mother's Bilbao kitchen, is becoming one of America's star female chefs. Just two years ago she was holding down a fulltime job as the press attaché of Spain for the Spanish Mission to the United Nations and raising four children, while cooking and supervising the kitchen at her two Marichu restaurants—one in suburban Westchester and the other in New York City. She and her husband, Raynold von Samson, who handles front-of-the-house duties and selects the wines, sold the Westchester location to concentrate on their small, charming Manhattan Marichu, which they opened in 1994, just half a block from the United Nations.

For several years, Marichu was one of Manhattan's best kept secrets, known primarily by the Spanish diplomatic community and diplomats and functionaries from the nearby United Nations, and they gave it high praise. Carlos Horno, the director of Turespaña, Spain's official institution for tourism, has called Marichu, which is named for Barrenechea's mother and uses many family recipes from her kitchen, "the most authentic Spanish restaurant in the United States."

Especially since the publication of Barrenechea's book *The Basque Table*, many top gastronomic figures are discovering Marichu, among them the editors of *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Food & Wine*, and *Saveur* magazines and star chefs such as Park Avenue's David Burke, Windows on the World's Michael Lomonaco or Jean-Louis Palladin of Napa Restaurant in Las Vegas. Many other gourmets have been introduced to Barrenechea's food at prestigious James Beard Foundation events, at which she often has been invited to cook, and at cooking events around the U.S. In October, Spain's prestigious National Academy of Gastronomy awarded Barrenechea's *The Basque Table* the 1998 National Gastronomy Prize for Best New Publication.

Even in Spain, it is hard to find better versions of Marichu's Spanish classics such as *gambas al ajillo* (shrimp sizzled in garlic and oil), *patatas a la riojana* (potatoes cooked with chorizo, Rioja-style), and *arroz con leche* (creamy rice pudding with cinnamon). Barrenechea's Spanish Basque food transports lovers of *El País Vasco* back to Bilbao, San Sebastián, and that wonderful gastronomic region's lovely mountain villages and fishing ports.

Beautifully represented are such Basque dishes as *porrusalda* (a leek, carrot, and potato soup), *sopa de pescado Larruskain* (a fish and shellfish soup with white Rioja wine), and *pimientos de piquillo rellenos de bacalao* (red piquillo peppers stuffed with cod and surrounded by a typical Bilbao-area *salsa vizcaina*, made from peppers and onions). Also superbly rendered is the classic dish from the fishing village of Guetaria, *chipirones en su tinta* (baby squid in an onion-based sauce colored with squid ink). Marichu's simple, delicious, and light desserts include *tarta de Arrese*, a lovely, smooth custard pie-like dessert with raspberry sauce that was inspired by a pastry shop in Bilbao.

At Marichu, Raynold von Samson's wine list offers some of the best Spanish wines available in New York. He includes many Spanish wine discoveries such as the tart, lively Basque white wine Txomín Echaniz Txakolí; good white Albariños from Galicia; superb *rosados* from Julián Chivite (Navarra)

and Muga (La Rioja); and reds such as Señorío de San Vicente (La Rioja), and he always has a number of fine classic aged reds from La Rioja, Ribera del Duero, and Catalonia on his list.

Marichu is a small, intimate restaurant decorated with beautiful color photographs from the Basque Country and colorful Spanish ceramic plates. In good weather, Barrenechea and von Samson open the little patio in the back, where diners can sip a fine Spanish wine, dine on the chef's authentic food, and, for a couple of hours, find it hard to believe that they are not in the Basque Country of Northern Spain.

Gerry Dawes

Marichu Restaurant
342 E. 46th St.
New York, NY U.S.A.
Phone: (1 212) 370-1866

The Taberna del Alabardero, Padre Luis Lezama's elegant, decade-old Spanish restaurant in Washington, D.C., has become one of the capital's top dining spots.

Founded in April 1989, Taberna del Alabardero, has completed a decade as one of America's top Spanish restaurants, gaining critical acclaim from such magazines as the *Washingtonian* as one of the capital's top ten restaurants.

Decorated in classical Spanish style, the restaurant is the elegant brainchild of the famous peripatetic restaurateur-priest, Padre Luis Lezama, who has established other branches of his Taberna del Alabardero in such places as Madrid (the original flagship restaurant), Marbella's Puerto Banus, and Seville. Lezama also owns Madrid's top-rated Café de Oriente; the charming old Madrid restaurant, Carmencita; and a hotel and restaurant school in Seville. Frequented by diplomats, congressmen and senators, and members of the White House staff, Washington's Taberna is a first-rate Spanish culinary ambassador to the American capital.

Executive chef Josu Zubikaraí, a Basque from near San Sebastián, has been at La Taberna since the beginning. Zubikaraí worked in Bilbao with chef Ángel Lorente at Hotel Ercilla's Restaurante Bermeo, often rated the top hotel restaurant in Spain. He also did a stint in Andalusia at Marbella's prestigious Hotel Los Monteros, before joining the Taberna del Alabardero group, where he worked as a chef in all the group's restaurants. Over the years, his menu of sophisticated, beautifully presented dishes has evolved into an amalgam of classic Spanish and Basque dishes and modern signature dishes whose ingredients always evoke the flavors of the Iberian Peninsula.

Trucha marinada con juliana de jamón (house-marinated trout with julienned serrano ham) is a modern interpretation of a classic Navarrese trout-and-ham dish. Classic wood-oven roasted *piquillo* peppers are presented at La Taberna as a mousse and they are also served stuffed with *gambas* (shrimp), *setas* (mushrooms), and *espinacas* (spinach).

Taberna del Alabardero
1776 "I" Street, N. W.
Washington, D.C. 20006 U.S.A.
Phone: (1 202) 429-2200

Such classics as *gazpacho* in season, *sopa de pescados y mariscos* (Spanish fish and shellfish soup), *ensalada de bacalao y naranja* (a salad of salt cod and oranges in a vinaigrette made with sherry vinegar), and *cogollos con boquerones* (a salad of baby bibb lettuce with Spanish anchovies) are menu mainstays.

Paellas and Spanish rice dishes at La Taberna are elevated to the level of haute cuisine. There are paellas with lobster; with chicken, rabbit, duck, and fresh vegetables; and with pescados y mariscos (fish and shellfish), all of which take their yellow-gold color from Spanish saffron, the world's most precious spice. The *arroces*, or rice dishes, include *arroz negro*, a rice dish made with seafood and colored with squid ink; *arroz con verduras*, saffron rice with vegetables; and *arroz con bacalao y coliflor*, a rice preparation with salt cod and cauliflower, a traditional dish of the Spanish Lenten season.

From among nine dessert offerings at Taberna del Alabardero, patrons might select *tarta de compota* (a Basque dried fruit tart), *cúpula de castañas con aroma de mandarinas* (a chestnut bombe with mandarine essence), classic *leche frita* (a sublime fried custard) with walnut ice cream, or something called *El Chocolatero*, a chocoholic's fantasy.

The wine list at Taberna del Alabardero includes some of Spain's top producers. One can find such front-line Spanish Chardonnays as Palacio de Muruzábal and Augustus, Jean León, Miguel Torres Milmanda, and Miranda d'Espiells from Penedés. Galicia is represented by a collection of stellar white wines such as Guitián Valdeorras Godello and such wonderful Rías Baixas Albariños as Lusco, Fillaboa, Gran Bazán, and Organistrum. One entire page is devoted to the red wines of the Ribera del Duero D.O. and from Castilla-León (Vega Sicilia, Pesquera, Teófilo Reyes, Abadía Retuerta) and another to the red wines of La Rioja. At Taberna del Alabadero, Padre Luis Lezama has proved to be the high priest of Spanish cuisine in the nation's capital.

Gerry Dawes

Cafe Ba-Ba-Reeba!
2024 N. Halsted
Chicago, IL 60614 U.S.A.
Phone: (1 773) 935-5000

Since 1985 a first-rate Spanish restaurant focusing on tapas has been a prominent fixture on the dining scene of America's great heartland city, Chicago.

Cafe Ba-Ba-Reeba!'s executive chef-partner Gabino Sotelino, one of the leading chefs in the American Midwest, has a heartfelt credo for his 13-year old Spanish restaurant and tapas bar. "Cafe Ba-Ba-Reeba! is a part of me," says Sotelino. "Here, we present Spain to you with all the color and inspiration of these cultures in our food, our decor, and our service. When you come to my restaurant, for the sherry, the *sangría*, or the food, you will feel like I feel in my soul—the soul of Spain."

Sotelino, who was born in the northwestern city of Vigo to a Galician mother and Basque father, is also vice president, executive chef, and partner of two other top Chicago restaurants, the awarding winning Ambria and Mon Ami Gabi.

After beginning at 14 as a kitchen apprentice at Madrid's prestigious Hotel Ritz, Sotelino worked in a number of distinguished European hotel kitchens before becoming executive chef at Chicago's top-ranked Le Perroquet restaurant.

Exhibiting an enviable mastery of both Spanish and French cuisine, in 1997 Sotelino was named Perrer-Jouet Best Chef (Midwest region) by the James Beard Foundation, America's most prestigious gastronomic organization. He was also awarded the Medalla del Mérito Nacional de España, a distinguished award given by the King of Spain to a Spanish native living outside Spain. Cafe Ba-Ba-Reeba! has been given *The Wine Spectator's* Award of Excellence for its wine list and *Chicago Magazine's* Critics' Choice Award.

Called "a Technicolor tapas bar" in a recent Chicago Magazine article, Cafe Ba-Ba-Reeba! is indeed a colorful restaurant, big enough to accommodate 360 people with seven seating areas and an outdoor patio in season. The popular tapas scene draws its clientele from a broad range of Chicagoans and out-of-town visitors and may include college students, upscale professionals, off-duty Chicago chefs, and culinary luminaries from around the country.

Multicolored tiles, reminiscent of Barcelona, decorate the bar and a large stylized mural painting shows people having drinks and tapas at a Spanish *tasca*. Glass cases display tapas, desserts, fruits and vegetables, and beautiful, hand painted, glazed Spanish ceramic pitchers, plates, and vases.

Serrano hams, *chorizos*, garlic strings, and *pimientos choriceros* (dried red peppers) hang from metal railings suspended from the ceiling.

Cafe Ba-Ba-Reeba!'s well-thought-out menu is decorated with the image of an exotically beautiful young Sevillana

dressed in the typical flamenco costume of Seville's fabulous April Feria. A mouth-watering range of tapas makes up a third of the menu. Cold tapas include such Spanish classics as *patatas con alioli* (garlic potato salad), *jamón serrano* (Spanish mountain ham served with Spanish olives), and *berenjena asada con queso* (roasted eggplant salad with tomatoes, sherry, and goat cheese). Patrons can also choose from a selection of 20 hot tapas including *champiñones rellenos* (buttery mushrooms with garlic, spinach, and Manchego cheese), *solomillo con Cabrales* (grilled beef tenderloin glazed with Cabrales cheese), *pulpo a la plancha* (seared octopus with Spanish olive oil), and vegetables dressed with a cava (Spanish mèthode champenoise sparkling wine) vinaigrette.

The middle of Cafe Ba-Ba-Reeba!'s menu is dedicated to reasonably-priced, Valencian-style *paellas* and *arroces* (rice dishes) using Spanish Alcazaba rice and Spanish saffron. *Paella valenciana* is made with chicken, pork, and green beans; *paella mixta* has chicken, monkfish, pork, and shrimp. Delicious *arroz a banda* is served with the shrimp, squid, and monkfish used in the stock in which the rice was cooked. Exotic *arroz negro* is a superb dish of squid and shrimp in rice colored with squid ink. Ba-Ba-Reeba! also offers several Spanish regional meat or fish specialties and desserts such as flan with citrus caramel sauce and *queso y membrillo* (Spanish quince terrine with Manchego cheese).

The wine list is a fine collection of Spanish wines featuring cavas from Penedés; white wines from Rueda, Rías Baixas, Navarre, Alella, and Penedés; rosados from Navarre; and a large, selection of well-chosen red wines from La Rioja, Ribera del Duero, Navarre, Penedés, and Priorato, along with lesser known discoveries from such areas as Jumilla, Toro, and La Mancha.

Particularly exciting is the by-the-glass offering of 22 first-rate sherries (finos, manzanillas, amontillados, palo cortados, olorosos, creams, and raisiny Pedro Ximénez). For after dinner sipping, there are several excellent Solera Gran Reserva Brandies de Jerez.

Ba-Ba-Reeba!, still going strong after more than a decade, is a premier ambassador in the United States for some of the best food and wine products Spain has to offer.

***Gerry Dawes**, the restaurant critic for* Gannett Suburban Newspapers, *New York, also writes about Spanish food, wine, and travel for numerous magazines.*

In the heart of Sydney's Little Spain, you will find Casa Asturiana, a family-run restaurant offering tapas and other Spanish dishes in as authentic a manner as possible so far from home.

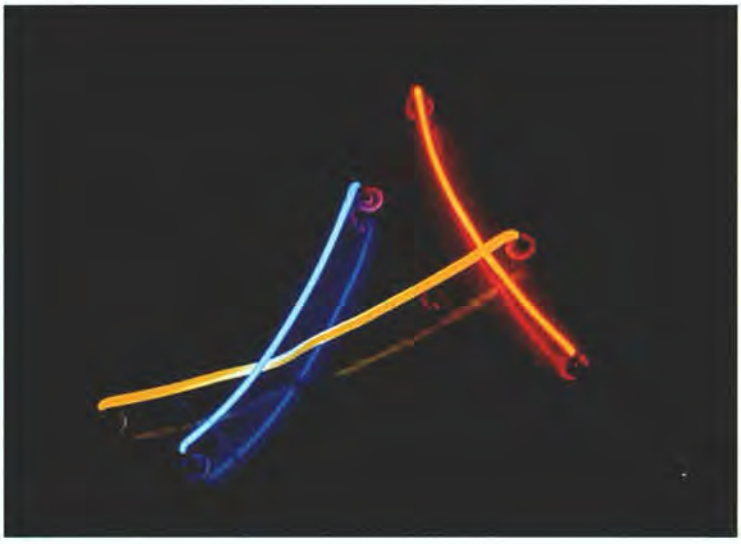
Sydney's Little Spain spreads its delicious, garlicky effluvium over a city block tucked in between the cinema district and Chinatown. It consists of a Spanish pub, the Spanish Club, a delicatessen and a handful of restaurants, the best of which is, at the moment (as it has been for the last six years) without question, Casa Asturiana.

As the name implies, it is owned by Asturians, the García Villada family, who emigrated from Sama de Langreo in 1962. Mother María is the spirit in the kitchen, casting a stern eye over every aspect of the menu. Beside her in that kitchen is eldest son Lorenzo, the fire, the entrepreneur. Simply put, Lorenzo proposes, María approves or disposes with counsel from Father José, who can be found behind the cash register most nights. Brother Julio and Lorenzo's Australian wife Monika run the floor.

Yet there is little that is Asturian on the menu. When the restaurant began, six and a half years ago, the family was keen to cook the food of their region. But the truth was, back then, Australians knew little of Spanish food, let alone Spanish regional food. From the beginning, the core of the menu was tapas. Even that needed some explaining, although today, we're more at home with the idea. "I've noticed in six years most people in Sydney know what tapas are, and even some of the five-star hotels have a tapas menu," Lorenzo said, "but if someone doesn't understand, I tell them it's Spanish *yum cha* (for the benefit of the readers, yum cha is Chinese tapas) and they get it immediately. Even if Australians are more likely to eat a variety of tapas as a main meal (like the English, we eat much earlier than the Spanish), we love the idea of an infinite variety of small delicious plates.

And indeed Casa Asturiana and its tapas were an immediate success. Patrons instinctively knew that here was a restaurant offering more than the usual "Spanish" restaurant with bullfight posters on the walls, serving chicken and chips and paella.

Although the decor at Casa Asturiana is not all that different from others in Little Spain, burnt wood tables, rough cast walls (there is a curious stained glass copy of a Picasso that portrays Francoise Gilot) the presence of the Asturian cider pouring machine on the wall is a clue that



Casa Asturiana
77 Liverpool Street
Sydney 2000 Australia
Phone: (61 2) 9264 1010

this one is different. Further evidence of the success of the family's avowed mission of "recreating Spanish cuisine as closely as possible and practicable," is to be seen on the plates leaving the kitchen.

A tapa of *hígados de pollo* is rich and creamy; *pulpo a feira* (boiled octopus with *pimentón* and sprinkled with olive oil) a recreation of the superb Galician marketplace dish; *pimientos asados* are slowly roasted and sumptuous; and if *chorizos a la sidra* betray the family's origins, the occasional appearance of Yabbies (fresh water crustaceans) *en salsa picante* are a tribute to their new home.

There is, of course a paella, and some Asturian rice dishes translated for the Australian palate such as *risotto* (we understand Italian and we understand Chinese). But if you really want Asturian dishes, I'll let you in on a secret.

María García Villada has some genuine Asturian *fabes* (large and buttery-textured dried beans) under lock and key in her home, and she has turned up an Asturian husband and wife team who make a perfectly acceptable *morcilla* (blood sausage). If you order in advance, you will be served a *fabada asturiana* (the famous slow-cooked bean dish) or, indeed, any other specialty, including Lorenzo's favorite, the *potaje de verduras al estilo asturiano* (a vegetable and morcilla stew), which once languished, unordered, on the menu for three months. "It's the cabbage," he told me, "Australians don't like cabbage." I wish I'd known about it.

I reviewed this restaurant for the *Sydney Morning Herald* when it opened in 1992. Because I was not that familiar with the food of Asturias, I took with me a friend from Madrid whose summers as a child were spent at a family holiday house near Luarca, in Asturias. During the course of the meal, he observed that he was feeling homesick. It seemed to me at the time—and I wrote in the review—that such a remark was "at once accolade and analysis. For Spanish food at its best is not haute cuisine, nor even the flamboyant inventiveness of the Italians. It is the world's best home cooking." On a good night, that is what Casa Asturiana delivers.

John Newton *is a journalist, novelist, and food writer whose book,* Wogfood, *traced the history and contribution of Mediterranean immigrants on the way Australians eat today. He has a particular love for Spain and spends as much time as he can in his house on Mallorca.*

El Pati de Barahona restaurant is a small, charming piece of Mediterranean Spain in the hustle and bustle of Tokyo.

The Japanese have always been fascinated with the customs and traditions of foreign lands and in a city as large as Tokyo it is not surprising that there are countless restaurants serving cuisines from all over the world. Yet until two years ago there was no representative of Spanish cuisine that was up to the standard of other Western-style restaurants in the Japanese capital, including that culinary temple, the French-inspired Taillevent-Robuchon. That lack was put aright when Spanish chef José Barahona Viñés opened his Pati de Barahona.

"When I was asked to open a Spanish restaurant in Tokyo seven years ago I accepted, because I was young and eager for new challenges and fresh experiences," recalls the chef-proprietor. "The original idea was to come here to work for a few years, then to return to Catalonia where I had been working up to then in my mother's small restaurant in Lérida. But my plans changed because, aside from the fact that I married a Japanese woman, I also wanted to do something of my own in Japan, so I opened this restaurant."

José already had work experience and had trained with some of the top chefs in Spain, including Josep Bullich of Barcelona's La Dama, and now he is making great strides in Japan, often in collaboration with the Tourist Office of Spain.

The restaurant is on the ground floor of a building in the Hibiya area, the heart of Tokyo's financial district, and it is patronized by executives working for the major companies, not only Japanese, but branches of the numerous foreign firms there. The dining room decor is modern with a Mediterranean touch, reflecting the nature of the cuisine. The furnishings are simple, with a basic white and blue theme, and the colorful framed silk scarves which adorn the walls generate a warm, friendly ambiance.

The menu clearly points to José's Mediterranean origins. The starters change seasonally and the creative spirit of this Lérida chef is evident in the way he combines details, as is the *ensalada templada con pescadito frito* (warm salad with fried fish), or the *escalivada con sardinas marinadas* (salad of roasted vegetables with marinated sardines). The offer is not restricted to Catalan specialties: the *sopa de ajo* (Castilian garlic soup) and the *gazpacho andaluz* (the re-

freshing cold soup of Andalusia) also fulfill their role as ambassadors of Spanish cuisine in Japan.

"Although I am a Catalan and the basis of my cuisine comes from my mother, who is a 'Leridana' through and through, I don't mind breaking with tradition to achieve the level of cuisine which I seek. I use the best Mediterranean ingredients, such as lentils from León, sherry vinegar from Jerez, and even Feta cheese from Greece."

There is no shortage of the ingredients he needs for his personal cuisine in Japan, he assures, pointing for instance to the ample offer of fish dishes which are present on the menu year round, for the Japanese are as enthusiastic about seafood as the Spanish. As they are also very fond of rice, there are always a few Spanish dishes based on this ingredient, including an authentic *arroz negro* (black rice, whose color comes from the ink of the squid or cuttlefish used). More and more of José's customers are becoming addicted to his *arroz caldoso* (a rice stew) and *arroz con almejas y espinacas* (rice with clams and spinach) which has an exquisite, mild flavor in which all the ingredients come into play.

The wine list features Spanish wines only and, although it is not very extensive, it includes the major wine growing areas, starting with reds from Rioja, Navarre, and Catalonia, and ending with the sparkling cavas of Catalonia. The house wine is a reasonably-priced Señorío de Sarria, both red and white, from Navarre.

A starter of rice with clams and spinach accompanied by a Raimat Chardonnay '96 followed by bream in tomato vinaigrette with a Señorío de Sarria Reserva '88 would make a perfect meal for those who want to enjoy the flavors of the Mediterranean at this little corner of Spain in Tokyo.

Mari Watanabe *writes on Spanish gastronomy. She has published four books in Japanese and contributes to various Japanese and Spanish publications.*

Photos: New York, Gerry Dawes/ICEX; Washington, D.C., Taberna del Alabardero; Chicago, Peter Barreras/ICEX; Sydney, Oliver Strewe/ICEX; Tokyo, Matao Ogata/ICEX; Munich, Alfredo Sinesi/ICEX; Vienna, Aioli and Lalo Jodlbauer/ICEX; Zurich, René Begert/ICEX; Brussels, Ángel Vega/ICEX; Antwerp, Harry de Schepper/ICEX; Paris, Avelino Estévez/ICEX; London, Nick Milner/ICEX.

See Recipes on page122.

El Pati de Barahona
Fukoku-Seimei Building B2f
2-2-2, Uchisaiwaityo, Chiyoda-Ku
Tokyo, Japan
Phone: (81 03) 35 970 312

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Text: **Jeremy Watson**

PABLO NEUSTADT/ICEX

WINEMAKERS AT WORK: INTERCHANGE OF TECHNOLOGY IN SPAIN AND ABROAD

The arrival of "flying winemakers" in Spain has coincided perfectly with the explosion of investment in the industry, and is creating one of the most powerful forces in the world wine scene for the 21st century.
Given the technology now available in the vineyard and *bodega* (winery), Spain is one of the best environments in which to plant vines and make good wines. The majority of vineyards are at high altitudes on calcareous clay or slate soils, the summer climate is hot during the day and cool at night, while the winters are cold. The air is dry, the growing conditions are healthy and quality and quantity fairly consistent from year to year. So it is not surprising that winemakers come to Spain to test their skills.

There is no word in Spanish, or French, or Italian for that matter, for what the New World describes as a "winemaker," yet these are the oldest wine producing countries in the world. However, tradition has it that the owners of the vineyards and the cellars were invariably separate people, so viticulture and vinification were independent of each other. This division of labor persisted even on many single estates. A winemaker is the person responsible for the complete production process from the soil to the bottle, and the Europeans are rapidly adopting this concept.

In the beginning, flying winemakers were usually Australian, but today, they emanate from many different countries, indeed, anywhere outside the region or country in which he or she has come to work. Probably better described these days as "visiting winemakers," some will physically make the wines themselves to their own specification, working in a winery that has agreed to share their space and facilities. Others come with the objective of improving already good wines by advising and helping the existing team to get the best out of the raw material with better use of technology and equipment, and encouraging the production of wines with characteristics that are popular in export markets. These two groups will usually have invited themselves in, but also prominent are those who work in a consultative capacity, having been invited by producers wishing to further improve their wines. But it is not all one way traffic, and some Spanish winemakers work in several other regions of Spain, and a select few are taking their skills abroad.

Ever since the Phoenicians brought the vine from the Middle East to Spain, around 2000 B.C., outside influences have been a factor in the development of wine the world over. The Romans brought winemaking skills and commercialization to Spain during their occupation in early A.D., and it was the conquistadors who first took vines to the Americas in the 16th century. Then, two hundred years later, the British introduced to Jerez the style of winemaking that ensured that sherry became one of the great classic wines.

The development of the Spanish wine business during the 20th century owes a lot to the Phylloxera that emerged in France in the 1890s, when it devastated the vineyards of Bordeaux. The French producers migrated across the Pyrenees, bringing their knowledge and experience to Rioja and Navarre, and plied their trade there until the bug caught up with them. During their stay they improved the viticulture and vinification, and, above all, introduced effective wood aging. More recently, the new technology, not least in the vineyards, that has been developed by New World countries, stung the Europeans into action, and they were astute enough to encourage some of these winemakers to bring their skills over.

JOAN REIG/SOBREMESA

Miguel Torres

Nevertheless, a lengthy period of insularity, during the middle of the 20th century, had held back developments in Spain's wine industry, and it was only in the late 1970s when more liberal times arrived that producers realized they had a lot of catching up to do. Miguel Torres had already set out his stall and was leading the way by being Spain's first true winemaker in modern terms. He focused on the vineyard, especially, and introduced the latest technology and stainless steel equipment into the bodega. In particular, he questioned all established and traditional practices. He also became one of the first foreigners to make wines in Chile from French varietals like Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc, and went on to make Marimar Torres Chardonnay and Pinot Noir wines at their estate in the Sonoma Valley in California. Now he is planting vineyards in China in Hebei Province south of Peking.

A stimulus to changes in winemaking was the revisions to the wine laws in 1979 to meet the requirements of the European Union that Spain was preparing to join. These new regulations required shorter periods of oak aging, which in turn, encouraged more fruit-driven wines. However, this was not enough, and producers accepted recommendations to seek the help of foreign winemakers, or allow customers to introduce them to work alongside the existing teams.

Old World, New World

One of the first to be consulted was the doyen of French experts, Emile Peynaud, whom Marqués de Riscal asked to advise them where they could best produce white wines outside Rioja. It is clear that the choice of Rueda was the right one, and four years ago, Francisco Hurtado, Riscal's winemaker, invited Hugh Ryman, an Englishman based in Bordeaux, to Rueda to make improvements, while in 1998, he invited Paul Pontalier, the winemaker at Chateau Margaux, to Rioja, with the intention of making even better wines there. Ryman's impact on the Sauvignon Blanc and the indigenous Verdejo was immediate, and both new wines have been widely acclaimed since the 1995 vintage. Clearly we shall have to wait a little while to experience the results of M. Pontalier's participation.

The first truly "flying" winemaker in Spain was the Australian Nick Butler, who came to Príncipe de Viana in Navarre at the instigation of Tony Laithwaite of The Sunday Times Wine Club in Britain. "And," says Antonio Barero, export director of the bodega, "the results were immediate, especially for the whites. The inspiration was to introduce an outside influence to make changes to long-established traditions and practices, especially because Nick Butler started in the vineyard with the picking of the grapes." He also made changes throughout the vinification process, focusing on the elimination of oxidization, longer maceration periods with slower, cooler fermentations, aiming to create fruit driven, crisp, fresh wines.

Francisco Hurtado

A. DE BENITO/SOBREMESA

The introduction of temperature controlled fermentation coincided with the arrival of foreign winemakers, in the late 1970s. It immediately ensured livelier styles of wines. Certainly Torres was the pioneer of this technology in Catalonia, and, probably, all of Spain, but another to adopt it early was Rodríguez y Berger at Cinco Casas in La Mancha. Again it was the influence of a British customer, this time Grants of St. James', led by two Masters of Wine, Colin Anderson and Angela Muir, who persuaded Protasio Rodríguez to introduce the system. "That he did so within three months, took us completely by surprise," said Muir, "and the improvement to the white wines was everything we hoped for at the time."

HEINZ HEBEISEN/ICEX

Carlos Falcó

At the same time, Carlos Falcó, the Marqués de Griñón, who is an agronomist, was developing a superb Cabernet Sauvignon at his Malpica estate near Toledo. In what were previously considered impossible conditions in Spain, because of the intense summer heat, Falcó grew his vines on wires with drip irrigation. Marketed as Dominio de Valdepusa, his results are excellent, not only the Cabernet, but also the Syrah, Chardonnay, and Petit Verdot, the last of which Michel Rolland says is the best he has tasted.

In the vineyard, Falcó also consults Dr. Richard Smart, whose Smart-Dyson system of canopy management based on the grapes' need for sunlight rather than the direct rays of the sun, has proved highly successful. "It significantly improves the quality of grapes through even ripening, and makes harvesting much easier," says Carlos Falcó, who is exploiting his own winemaking skills in Argentina, at Mendoza in the foothills of the Andes. Working with leading French varietals, he has achieved particular success with Dominio de Agrelo, a Malbec from the Luján de Cuyo vineyard. But, more importantly, he has rediscovered the classic Spanish Tempranillo which was formerly thought a nonentity in Argentina. It has resulted in two first class wines—Marqués de Griñón Duarte, a blend with Malbec, and a single varietal Tempranillo aged in new oak for six months.

Michel Rolland followed Peynaud, after the latter's retirement, and has covered several assignments, including Bodegas Palacio in Rioja, when under the stewardship of Jean Gervais, with whom he developed the Cosme Palacio red and white wines. He also advised René Barbier S.A. in the Freixenet Group in the Penedés, on the production of a Chardonnay, the success of which has persuaded the company to develop an indigenous varietal—the white Xarel-lo—which is being launched in early 1999.

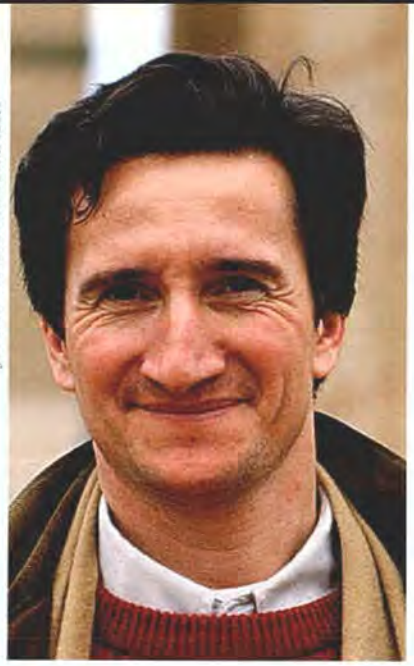
One of the problems with some flying winemakers is the similarity of style and character of their wines, no matter in which region or country they are made. Bodegas y Bebidas was determined to avoid this cloning when they invited Mitchelton Estates of Australia to join a venture developing new wines in Valdepeñas and Ribeiro. From the outset, it was agreed that a combination of the best of the Old and New Worlds would be preferable. The five-year project began during the last drought in the early nineties, with winemaker Don Lewis, who, on seeing the spartan conditions at Casa de la Viña in the middle of a Manchego desert, was heard to remark, "I wouldn't even plant a cactus here!" But, both sides adapted to each other and their cultures, and produced highly successful and competitively priced wines under the Solana brand. In its first year, the red from Valdepeñas won the "Wine of the Year Award" at the International Wine Challenge in London.

Peter Bright, an Australian winemaker living in Portugal accepted Peter Dauthieu's invitation to make wines at the cooperatives in Villafranca de los Barros and Villalba de Barros in Ribera de Guadiana in Extremadura. What was a solo project for Viniberia, Dauthieu's Cádiz company exporting wines to northern Europe, has blossomed and now includes two Spanish winemakers—Teresa Ameztoy from Rioja and Miriam Chivite from Tarragona. They are making wines in the D.O. La Mancha at Vinícola de Castilla, in Manzanares, and SAT Santa Rita at Mota del Cuervo, and, in Manchuela, at two cooperatives in Villamalea and Villarta, with Cencibel (Tempranillo), Viura, and Airén.

Again these are initiatives driven by the customers rather than the producers, because many buyers, the major ones in particular, believe varietal names on labels are essential. So, Bright and Dauthieu seek out good indigenous varieties wherever they can, and the need for good Garnacha from old vines brought them together with Agapito Rico, from Jumilla, and Juan Carlos López de la Calle at Artadi in Rioja, in a combined project in Navarre at two cooperatives in Lerga and Artazu.

Michel Rolland

JEAN PIERRE LEDOS/SOBREMESA



JOSÉ M. CASTILLO/SOBREMESA

Jacques Lurton

Jacques Lurton's first venture in Spain was to make wine in Rueda, where his success encouraged him to form a company and build a bodega at Nava del Rey under the name Belondrade and Lurton. Peter Sissek also came from Bordeaux to establish Hacienda de Monasterio at the village Pesquera, and has put the bodega in the forefront of the Ribera del Duero. He also makes Dominio de Pingus, a boutique wine of his own, which, in a very short time, has become one of the most prized wines in Spain.

Gatecrashers

Many winemakers have sought out opportunities, usually on behalf of customers in export markets, and another French winemaker in Rueda is Gaetane Carron, who was at Concha y Toro in Chile. She is collaborating with Ángel Calleja at Agrícola Castellana in Rueda, producing Verdejo and Tempranillo (Vino de la Tierra Medina del Campo) for Western Wines and their clients in Britain. Her assistant, Laurence Segat is at Centro Españolas in La Mancha with Miguel Ángel Valentín, carrying on the good work of Ed Flaherty and Katrina Muller in previous years.

New Zealander Alastair Maling, from International Wine Services in Britain, is enthusiastic about their involvement with Bodegas San Gregorio in Calatayud, where he is making wines to customers' specifications. Wherever Maling makes wine, and he is also working at Covinca in Cariñena, Piedemonte in Navarre and Pirineos in Somontano, he chooses the host bodegas on the basis of the wines they are already making. Calatayud was their first venture, and, using only indigenous varieties—Tempranillo and Garnacha—they account for about seventy percent of the total bottled production of the bodega, all of which goes to top British retailers.

"The biggest problem was the very traditional way they made their wines," said Maling, "but it highlighted the reason we chose Calatayud—good, healthy fruit in an excellent environment, and then the bodega, because they are making good wines." He was delighted by the quickness to learn, if frustrated by the difficulties in persuading farmers to change. But results have exceeded expectations. "1996 was the first and good," added Maling. 1997, a difficult vintage for all red wines in Spain, was "better, and 1998 has all the signs of being excellent. Nevertheless we expect to make even better wine in 1999," said Maling.

Antonio Álvarez, manager of the bodega until the end of 1998, declared the arrival of Maling and his team as "A revolution! It has improved the technology and equipment in the bodega and introduced us to export markets." At first they found it all difficult to understand, and the new system made them very nervous. The investment required was hard to find, and the analysis and studies very tough. "But, we knew others were doing the same thing, and successfully. We agreed because of the economic arguments, and we knew it would improve the prestige of the bodega. The sales have proved us right."

It is noticeable that the wines for the national market, have improved with the influence of the foreign input. Though they find the intensely fruit driven wines, made for export, are still a bit too much for most Spaniards, San Gregorio does have *Madrileño* customers stopping by, on their way from Zaragoza, to buy some of the "English wine."

This experience is reflected by comments of respected Spanish experts, who have shown less enthusiasm for these new wines than their foreign counterparts. But, the taste in Spain is changing, especially amongst new, younger wine drinkers. The problem is familiar to Castaño in Yecla, who invited Dave Morrison, another Australian, to help them make wines. "We have found it difficult to sell some of these new wines through our distributors in the nation-

Peter Sissek

JEAN PIERRE LEDOS/SOBREMESA

al market," said Daniel Castaño, "but our success with exports is offsetting this disadvantage." They are pleased with the results, not least with the Monastrell single variety—known as Mourvèdre in France—which has enormous unexploited potential, and there are over 40,000 hectares (98,840 acres) in Yecla, Jumilla, and Bullas. But what does it all cost? 360,000 bottles seems to be the answer, as that will amortize the fees and expenses of a flying winemaker.

Spain's New Generation of Winemakers

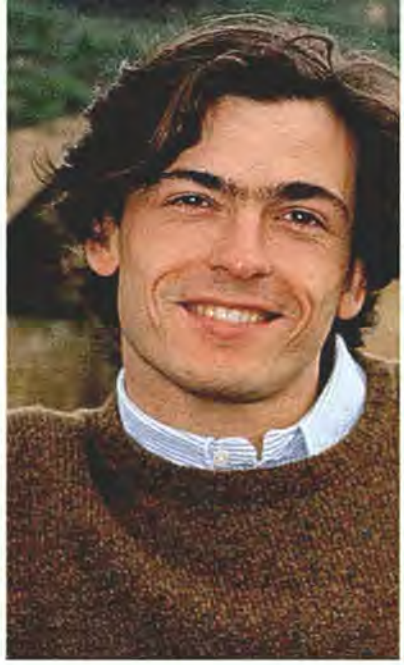
The evolution of a breed of Spanish winemakers working in other regions of Spain has been led by Carlos Falcó, who makes his Durius wines in the River Duero valley without Denomination of Origin, Rioja wines with Arco Bodegas Unidas, and in 1998 started making an experimental wine blended from individually elaborated Tempranillo, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Syrah, at Alfaro in the Rioja Baja, to be called Dominio de Susa. Also in Rioja, Fernando Chivite will start making wine at the company's new acquisition, Viña Salceda outside Elciego, and the Codorníu winemaking team are applying their skills at Bodegas Bilbainas in Haro. Meanwhile winemakers from Rioja Bodegas like La Rioja Alta, Lan, and Murrieta are seen regularly working in Rías Baixas! These are specific situations where winemakers apply their skills elsewhere in their company's installations, but it is a further example of the integration of winemaking across Spain, coinciding with the greater movement of people and services throughout the country during the past twenty years.

Telmo Rodríguez, the innovative winemaker at Remelluri in the Rioja Alavesa, is another working outside his own region, both in Rueda and Navarre. He trained for five years in Bordeaux and can be considered a leader among the new generation of young people who will carry on the work of the flying winemakers and consultants. The wine revolution in Spain has seen the emergence of an amazing number of young winemakers, who were trained in the enological schools and universities of Spain, France, and the U.S.A. They are not hamstrung by tradition, and their adoption of new practices is one of the key issues.

As well as Miguel Torres making wines in Chile, California, and China, and the Marqués de Griñón in Argentina, Codorníu is delighted with the results they are achieving in the Napa Valley with Chardonnay and Pinot Noir still wines. They are expanding into Sonoma, where they have acquired 163 hectares (402 acres) in the Alexander Valley, and will also plant Cabernet Sauvignon. Freixenet has also bought another 175 hectares (432 acres) in the Sonoma Valley, to add to the 210 (518 acres) already producing grapes both for their traditional method, sparkling Gloria Ferrer, and for still wines, while in Mexico, they are producing a multivarietal traditional sparkler called Soler Vive. But perhaps one of the most unexpected projects is that of Vega Sicilia at their new company, Bodegas Oremus in the Abaújszántó mountains of Hungary, where they make wines under the very select appelation of Tokay (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 40).

Winemaking is an international business these days, and producers the world over are exchanging ideas and information with increasing openness and regularity. Australians, New Zealanders, French and Americans in Spain, and Spaniards in Argentina, California, Chile, China, and Hungary, are a testimony to that. And who are the winners?—we are—the consumers.

Jeremy Watson *was director of* Wines from Spain *in London for thirteen years, until he came to live in Spain and work as a consultant and writer on Spanish wines.*



P. SANCHO-MATA/ICEX

Telmo Rodríguez

WINEMAKING IS AN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS THESE DAYS, AND PRODUCERS THE WORLD OVER ARE EXCHANGING IDEAS AND INFORMATION WITH INCREASING OPENNESS AND REGULARITY.

May in Madrid

May in Madrid, when the month-long Feria de San Isidro festival, named for the city's patron saint, takes place is one of the best, most beautiful times to be in Spain's capital city eating and it will always be dearer to me than April in Paris.

Last fall Ruth Reichl, the restaurant critic of *The New York Times*, wrote that one could eat in the average restaurant in Italy better than in the average restaurant in France. Many people, especially among the Europeans who swell the ranks of Spain's 40 to 50 million visitors each year, are saying that eating and drinking in the average Spanish *mesón* is on a par with the *trattorias* of Florence and Milan. I'm sure Reichl would probably say the same about Spain, if she knew its dining scene as intimately.

Given a choice, I certainly would much rather sample Spanish food and wines in Madrid's wonderful restaurants, *tabernas*, and *tascas* these days than eat and drink in other European towns. The restaurants in Spain's capital city are usually relaxed, often colorful, and the food and wines are better than ever. The cost, while not cheap, is usually far less in Madrid than the sticker shock prices for meals in New York, Paris, or London and the experience is far less likely to disappoint.

During the past five years, I have been to Spain some thirty times and in and out of Madrid more than that. I have eaten in at least 50 different restaurants in Madrid and scores of *tapas* bars during this period, keeping notes on every meal and every wine I have had. I am happy to be able to share with readers of *Spain Gourmetour* some of my recent gastronomic experiences in Spain's capital.

El Amparo, Puigcerdà 8. Tel: 914 316 456. The consulting chef at El Amparo, on a little cul-de-sac in the fashionable Barrio de Salamanca, is Martín Berasategui, one of Spain's top culinary stars. Eating at El Amparo is next best thing to eating in Berasategui's eponymously-named, Michelin two-star restaurant outside San Sebastián. It features superb, creative food and a well-chosen wine list that includes many of the Basque Country's up-and-coming stars.

Príncipe de Viana, Manuel de Falla 5. Tel: 914 571 549. Family member Javier Oyarbide oversees the elegant modern dining room in this stellar outpost of modernized, upscale Navarrese home cooking in Madrid. Rivaling the best restaurants in Spain, Príncipe de Viana also has a superb wine list featuring such jewels as Chivite Colección 125 Reserva 1994 and CUNE Viña Real Reserva 1990 to accompany *tórtola* (turtle dove) with *foie gras*.

Viridiana, Juan de Mena 14. Tel: 915 234 478. Decorated with scenes from Luís Buñuel's movie, *Viridiana*, and scores of beautiful *azahareros* (North African ceramic-and-metal containers for dispensing orange or rose water), chef-owner Abraham García serves some of Madrid's most unusual and creative food such as ravioli stuffed with *huitlacoche* and squash blossoms with anchoa chili salsa. The wine list features such jewels as Álvaro Palacios L'Ermita Priorato 1994 and Bodegas Bilbaínas La Vicalanda Rioja 1991.

Las Cuatro Estaciones, General Ibáñez Ibero 5. Tel: 915 536 305. Located in northwestern Madrid and a little hard to find, this very modern restaurant with impeccable service, great food, and a fine wine list is owned by Miguel Arias, a friend of King Juan Carlos I of Spain.

El Chaflán, Pío XII 34 (Hotel Aristos). Tel: 913 506 193. Located in northern Madrid, this modern restaurant's young chef, Juan Pablo Felipe, tries to focus on the primary flavors of his topnotch ingredients and serves his creations with interesting regional wines and sherries by the glass.

This is a selection of tapas bars and tascas in the Plaza Santa Ana/Literary Quarter area (near the Prado Museum and such top hotel choices as the Ritz, the Palace, and the Villa Real).

Las Bravas, Pasaje de Matheu 5, Álvarez Gato 3; and other locations: The place for *patatas bravas*, exceptional fried potatoes with a piquant sauce.

Terra Mundi, Lope de Vega 32. A hot new Galician restaurant and tapas bar which serves *empanadas*, house-cured fish and shellfish products, and a good lineup of Albariños.

Punto y Coma, Plaza Santa Ana (corner of Prado and Príncipe Streets). An excellent tapas stop with interesting wines by the glass.

Cevecería Alemana, Plaza Santa Ana 6. Famous as a bullfighter's haunt frequented by Hemingway. Try Ramón Bilbao Rioja, draft beer, *tortilla de patata* (Spanish omelet), *almejas* (clams), or *calamares a la romana* (battered deep-fried squid rings).

Cervecería Santa Ana, Plaza Santa Ana 10. A lively sidewalk café for mostly cold tapas and sipping cold beer or wine as you watch the people parade.

La Moderna, Plaza Santa Ana 12. An excellent tapas and wine bar with a dining room and sidewalk café. La Moderna offers interesting, ever-changing selections of up-and-coming and classic wines and *denominación de origen* ham, cheeses, olives, and *chorizo*.

The exciting new Nuevo Latino restaurant trend in the United States, especially in New York, is having major residual benefits for Spanish food and wine. Young Latino and American chefs have created a "pan-American" fusion of culinary ideas drawn from American southwestern, Caribbean Rim, and South American cuisines, all of which have some elements inspired by Spain. Along with such South American staples as yucca, *malanga*, plantains, and *boniato* and dishes such as *arepas*, *ceviches*, and *chimichurri* lamb leg, the flavors of Spain are finding a place on these modern, cross-pollination menus and most places feature a great selection of Spanish wines. Ironically, the demand by modern palates for lighter food has prompted many young Latino chefs to substitute Spanish olive oil in dishes that traditionally called for large amounts of lard and palm oil.

At **Patria, 250 Park Ave. South, tel: (212) 777-6211**, star chef Douglas Rodríguez, who sparked the movement in New York, serves dishes such as empanada *Cabrales*, filled with Spanish Cabrales cheese and pears; a sweet corn empanada filled with *bacalao* (salt cod) and served with goat cheese and tomatoes in aged sherry vinaigrette; *arroz con mariscos*, Spanish saffron-scented seafood rice with lobster and a red Navarre piquillo pepper sauce; and a selection of Spanish artisan cheeses. Patria has a long, superb selection of Spanish wines that runs the gamut from white Rías Baixas Albariños and Navarre rosados to Ribera del Duero, Rioja, and Priorato red wines.

At the new **Calle Ocho, 446 Columbus Ave., tel: (212) 873-5025,** Alex García, Rodríguez's former sous chef, does a field green salad with warm Spanish goat cheese; *ropa vieja*, a shredded beef empanada with tomato and shaved Manchego cheese; and spice-rubbed salmon on saffron *paella* with clams and a tomato chorizo broth. Calle Ocho's wine list also features nearly 20 Spanish selections, including *cava* sparkling wines from Catalonia (see Glossary on page 134), a Godello from Valdeorras, and red wines from Jumilla, Navarre, and La Rioja.

At **Bolivar, 206 E. 60th St., tel: (212) 838-0440,** upcoming chef Larry Kohler works alongside established master chef, Andrew D'Amico, to create exciting pan-American dishes that

incorporate such Spanish ingredients as Cabrales, sherry vinaigrette, and saffron. Bolivar's Spanish wine list includes over 30 selections, plus six Spanish wines by the glass, ten dessert sherries, and several Spanish brandies, including Miguel Torres and a selection of Solera Gran Reserva Brandies de Jerez.

Chicago's benchmark Spanish restaurant, Ba-Ba-Reeba! has been joined by **Brío, 10 West Hubbard Street, tel: (312) 467-1010,** an exciting new Spanish restaurant, which opened in March. The four owners of the popular, authentic Bistrot Zincs in Chicago, are making their first foray into Spanish cuisine. *Brío,* a Spanish word synonymous with high energy, vitality, and spirit, reflects what the owners hope to create, both in the rich diversity of their food offerings and in an upscale, contemporary ambiance.

Like the owners' other restaurants, Brío features a 17-foot long zinc bar (the group's trademark), which was crafted specifically as a tapas bar for this location. The main dining room, is decorated with original art from Spanish artists, *azulejos* (Moorish-inspired tiles) from Seville, and furniture from Barcelona. Chicago's Instituto Cervantes provided guidance and introductions to Spanish artists and craftsman.

Executive chef Michael Tsonton's opening menu featured his interpretations of regional dishes from around Spain. Tsonton puts a modern twist on many Spanish classics such as *sopa de ajo* (garlic soup, in which he substitutes a duck egg for the traditional hen's egg); *pollo del cortijo,* pan-seared free-range chicken in Rioja wine sauce; and *flan* flavored with pan-roasted coffee, cinnamon, and orange. Tsonton seeks to emphasize "the very healthy core ingredients of the Spanish diet." Brío's wine list is 90 percent Spanish and features 20 sherries, which are kept in a special refrigerated display case and offered by the glass.

From November through February, the producers from Castellón along Spain's fertile Mediterranean coast north of Valencia are brightening up the North American winter, exporting thousands of crates of their wonderful clementines. Finding them everywhere from Shoprite and Grand Union supermarkets to well-known gourmet shops such as Zabar's in New York, I ran through at least ten boxes this winter of these easy-to-peel, juicy, sweet little citrus gems. The old catch phrase, "I'll bet you can't eat just one salted peanut (or Spanish almond)," applies equally to irresistible Spanish clementines, which are one of the healthiest, most fun-to-eat snacks on the market.

Citarella, with two locations on Manhattan's Upper East Side and Westside, (1313 Third Ave. and 2135 Broadway; tel: (212) 874-0383; citarella@worldnet.att.net), offers some of New York City's best selections of meats, fish, and fancy food products. Recently, Citarella dedicated its monthly newsletter to "Spain's Stellar Food Flavors," highlighting half a dozen Spanish extra virgin olive oils (Nuñez de Prado, Duque de Baena, L'Estornell Organic, and others); eight of "Spain's Great Cheeses," including Cabrales, Mahón, Roncal, Idiazábal, and Manchego; and such products as manzanilla olives, organically grown piquillo peppers, white asparagus from Navarre, *ventresca* (the delectable underbelly of tuna or bonito), saffron, serrano ham, and Spanish anchovies.

For the past several years, **Fairway, 2127 Broadway, tel: (212) 595-1888,** another famous Westside Manhattan store, has carried a superb collection of Spanish *quesos,* chosen by American cheese guru Stephen Jenkins, author of *The Cheese Primer* (Workman Publishing). Jenkins thinks Spanish artisan cheeses are among the best in the world. He accurately forecasted the rise to world fame of the spectacular Extremaduran cheese, Torta del Casar, several years ago, when he wrote, "I predict this cheese, made in Extremadura and currently only known to cheese connoisseurs in Spain, will emerge over the next few years as one of the superstars of European cheeses."

The flavors of Spain and those wonderful Spanish wines have never been easier to encounter in the United States than they are now.

***Gerry Dawes** has been traveling the gastronomic and wine roads of Spain for 30 years. His articles and/or photographs have been published in* The New York Times, Food & Wine, Playboy, Martha Stewart Living, The Wine News, The Wine Enthusiast, Santé, *and many others. In October 1998, he was the first foreigner to receive the prestigious* Cena de los 11 Vinos *wine award in Madrid.*

QUICK RECIPES FOR CECINA

Recipes Selected by Carlos Domínguez Cindón
Wines Recommended by María Jesús Gil de Antuñano

Wafer-thin Slices of Cecina and Sheep's Milk Cheese Dressed with Pimentón and Garlic Oil

In this native version of *carpaccio* three flavors from Castilian cooking—tender cured beef, hard sheep's milk cheese, and smoky *pimentón*—make a great dish. Carlos Domínguez Cindón, chef-proprietor of Vivaldi Restaurant in León, was inspired by the texture of *cecina* made from silverside, which is very like raw beef.

SERVES 4:
400 g chunk of cecina, frozen for 30 minutes
50 g medium strength dry sheep's milk cheese

FOR THE FLAVORED OIL:
150 ml (10 tbsp) extra virgin olive oil
1 clove of garlic, skinned, and crushed
20 g (1 heaped tbsp) sweet La Vera pimentón
1/2 tbsp white or red wine vinegar
1 wine glass of water

First make the oil. In a large, heavy-bottomed pan heat the oil with the garlic. When it is golden add the pimentón, wine vinegar, and water. Cover and cook for a few minutes before removing from the heat. Leave to sit until the rusty orange oil floats to the top, skim it off—leaving the flavoring in the pan—and allow to cool. You can make this a day ahead. Remove the slightly frozen cecina and cut it into wafer-thin slices with a meat cutter. Arrange the slices, overlapping slightly, on a plate and shave the cheese thinly over the top. Serve while the meat is still cold, dribbling oil over it.

Recommended wine: A red *reserva* (see Glossary on page 134) D.O. Bierzo, made of 100% Mencía grapes. This wine has a powerful nose reminiscent of red berries and coffee, including balsamic and even milky aromas. In the mouth it is full of taste so can stand up to the garlic and paprika dressing on the cecina and to the strong ewes' milk cheese. Its slight sensation of wood and smoke should enhance the similar flavors in the La Vera pimentón and in the cecina.

Pan-fried Chick-peas and Cecina

This homely dish grew out of the *cocido maragato*, a one-pot stew famous for being eaten back to front—that is, first the meat, then the *garbanzos* or chick-peas, and finally a soup of the stock. The chick-peas could be quickly reheated later as a dish in themselves. Locally they would be the small, wrinkled variety called *pico de pardal*—linnet's beak—but they can be replaced by any other good buttery-soft chick-peas already cooked in a rich mixed meat stock. It might be made, for example, with a boiling fowl, pig's trotter and ear, and cecina scraps.

SERVES 4:
100 ml extra virgin olive oil
1 clove of garlic, skinned and crushed
350 g chick-peas, soaked overnight and cooked in rich meat stock (see above)
150 ml reserved chick-pea stock
200 g cecina, cut into small chunks

Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy-bottomed pan and fry the garlic clove in it until golden. Add the chick-peas and their reserved stock, lower the heat to a gentle simmer and cook slowly for 10 minutes until the stock is completely absorbed.
Meanwhile heat the cecina chunks through in a heavy-bottomed frying pan; dry-fry for 5 minutes and toss the chick-peas with them briefly. Serve immediately on warm plates.
Recommended wine: A young '95 red from the D.O. Bierzo, clean on the nose and refreshing in the mouth to lift the flouriness of the chick-peas. Its fruity, balsamic aromas give it flavor and allow it to resist the potency of the fried garlic and the smokiness of the cecina. Its youth and grassy finish should lighten the aftertaste.

Shirred Eggs with Wild Mushrooms and Cecina

A great contrast of textures, with the egg cooked very briefly in the mushrooms' own heat so it remains creamy and very soft. Carlos Cindón makes this with young *Boletus pinicola*, the creamy fleshed, brown-capped wild mushrooms that grow in pine forests. Other types are fine providing they are still young and small, with plenty of flavor and aroma.

SERVES 4:
450 g young, small wild mushrooms
175 ml extra virgin olive oil
1 clove of garlic, skinned and thinly sliced
200 g cecina, cut into thin julienne strips
4 egg yolks, lightly whisked
Sliced cecina, to serve (optional)

Finely slice the mushrooms. Heat the olive oil and sauté the garlic, mushrooms—allowing them to sweat for a few minutes—and cecina strips. Toss everything together in the pan briefly so the mushrooms and cecina are heated through but not overcooked.
To serve, put the egg yolk in the center of the serving dish, spoon the sautéed mushrooms over the top and surround with the cecina slices. Toss the mushroom with the eggs at the table so they scramble or shirr softly.
Recommended wine: Although the cecina is strongly-flavored, the smoothness and delicacy of the *Boletus* and the creaminess of the egg that is added at the last minute mean that a good partner would be a white D.O. Toro made from Malvasía grapes. Its creamy notes, not to mention the exotic touches of tropical fruit and the smoky finish, will blend wonderfully with this dish, bringing out the flavor of the cecina.

Astorgan Hot Red Cabbage Salad with Cecina, Walnut, and Roast Fatback

Although this is not a traditional dish it is built around the flavors of Astorgan cooking. The *maragatos* who traded away from home for months grew red cabbages in their kitchen gardens since they kept well on the plant or once picked while they were away.

SERVES 4:
400 g red cabbage, trimmed and finely chopped
100 ml extra virgin olive oil (0.4), for frying
2 cloves of garlic, skinned and chopped
300 g cecina, cut into fine slices
100 g fatback, diced
Seeds from 1/2 pomegranate, optional

FOR THE WALNUT VINAIGRETTE:
60 ml extra virgin olive oil (0.4)
20 ml red or white wine vinegar
50 g shelled walnuts, very finely chopped

Make up the walnut vinaigrette and allow it to sit for at least 30 minutes, whisking the oil and vinegar to an emulsion with the very finely chopped walnuts.
Blanche the cabbage for 10 minutes and drain it well, squeezing dry. Pick a lidded and heavy-based frying pan, cover the entire base with olive oil and sauté the garlic until golden. Add the cabbage, toss well in the garlic and oil and cook, covered, for 10-15 minutes so the cabbage sweats out its deep purple juices. If you are using the pomegranate, stir in the seeds.
Meanwhile oven roast the diced fatback on a baking sheet lined with greaseproof paper for 15 minutes in a very cool oven (110°C/225°F, Gas Mark 1/4).
Put the hot cabbage and its juices on a warm serving dish, lay the sliced cecina over the top to allow it to warm through and scatter the crispy fatback on top of that. Pour the vinaigrette over the top and serve.
Recommended wine: In spite of the blanching process which mitigates to some extent the strong flavor of the cabbage, the accompanying wine needs to be carefully chosen. My choice would be a young, red D.O. Bierzo, made from Mencía grapes and subject to carbonic maceration. This wine's aromas of red berries, milk, and fresh vegetables would lighten the heaviness of the cabbage dish. Another completely different possibility would be a white wine, also from the D.O. Bierzo, but made from Gewürztraminer grapes. This is a clean, fresh wine that is both balanced and flavorsome. The sweetness of the grapes would make a pleasant contrast to the cabbage.

SWEET RECIPES

Recipes and wines selected by María Jesús Gil de Antuñano

Santiago Almond Cake

SERVES 4:
FOR THE BASE:
3 tbsp oil
3 tbsp milk
100 g flour
1 pinch of salt
1 tbsp sugar

FOR THE CAKE DOUGH:
4 eggs
200 g raw ground almonds
200 g sugar
Zest of 1 lemon
1 tsp ground cinnamon
Confectioners sugar

Place the flour in a bowl and mix it with the oil, milk, salt, and sugar. Knead to form a dough, shape into a ball, wrap in cling film and place in the refrigerator for 30 minutes. Roll out very finely and line a greased, round tart tin with a removable base.
Beat the eggs with the sugar, lemon zest, and cinnamon until very frothy (15 minutes with an electric beater). Gradually add the ground almonds by hand to prevent the eggs from losing their volume. Fill the pastry base and bake at 160°C (320°F) for about 30 minutes.
Cut out the shape of a St. James cross or a scallop shell from a sheet of card, place the template on the center of the cake and sprinkle confectioners sugar over the hole. Lift off the template carefully.
The pastry case is used to prevent the filling from running out of the tin. If the tin used does not have a removable base, pour the almond mixture directly into the greased and floured tin.
Recommended wine: White, oak-fermented Albariño from the D.O. Ribeira Sacra with a slightly sweet, creamy touch. The pear and banana aromas of this wine blend perfectly with the lemon and cinnamon used to flavor the almonds. The freshness of the Albariño grapes lightens the rather heavy almond filling.

Tocinillo de Cielo (Egg Yolk Pudding)

SERVES 8:
12 eggs
500 g sugar
200 ml water
1 lemon rind

Place the water in a pan, add the sugar and lemon rind, stir to dissolve, and place over a gentle heat. Allow to boil gently for 10 minutes. Coat a ring-shaped mold 20 cm (8 inches) in diameter (or 16 confectionery molds) with this syrup. Pour the syrup back into the pan. Break up the 12 egg yolks with two whites in a bowl with a wooden spoon, without beating in any air. Trickle the syrup (after it has been used for coating the mold it will not be so hot) in a thin stream over the eggs, stirring constantly. Strain the mixture and fill the mold or molds. Cover with aluminum foil or tie a napkin over the top of the mold to collect any drops of steam. Small molds should be covered with foil. Using a double boiler, cook the large mold for 20 minutes and the small ones for 10 minutes. Leave to cool in the water. Turn out onto a serving dish. The small molds should be turned out into confectionery paper cases.
Recommended wine: This is such a sugary dessert that I wouldn't dare accompany it with the usual sweet wine, such as a Pedro Ximénez from Jerez or a Montilla-Moriles. To lighten the cloying flavor of the eggs, a better choice would be an Amontillado D.O. Jerez, made of a blend of Palomino and Pedro Ximénez grapes. This is a sweet wine with a muscatel flavor that is both smooth and light.

Catalan Cream

SERVES 6:
1 l milk
6 egg yolks
250 g sugar
1 tbsp cornstarch
1 cinnamon stick
Lemon rind

FOR THE CARAMEL CRUST:
4 tbsp sugar

Boil the milk with the cinnamon stick and the lemon rind. Beat the yolks with the sugar and cornstarch in a thick-bottomed pan and strain in the boiling milk, stirring all the time. Place over a gentle heat and stir until the mixture thickens but without allowing it to boil. Remove from the heat and stir occasionally until it cools then pour the cream into individual oven-proof dishes. Sprinkle with the remaining sugar and burn with a hot iron until the surface caramelizes. (A red-hot slotted spoon may serve the purpose.)
Recommended wine: A sweet, Moscatel varietal wine from the D.O. Empordá-Costa Brava. The wine's orange and lemon zest aromas would team up with the flavoring in the cream itself and its strength would not allow it to be overpowered by the caramel topping. Another possibility might be a Garnacha varietal wine from the same denomination.

Segovian Custard Cake

SERVES 8:
FOR THE CAKE:
6 egg yolks
3 egg whites
3 tbsp cornstarch
300 g sugar
300 ml water
Lemon rind

FOR THE CUSTARD:
3 egg yolks
1 egg white
4 tbsp water
125 g sugar

FOR THE MARZIPAN:
250 g ground almonds
250 g confectioners sugar
A few tbsp water
1 egg white

Start by making the cake. Beat the 6 egg yolks with the 3 whites for 15 minutes. Gently add the cornstarch by hand, taking care not to flatten the eggs. Pour the mixture into a rectangular pan measuring 35 x 20 x 5 cm. (14 x 8 x 2 in) that has first been greased and lined with foil. Cook in a dish of water in the oven for 15 minutes. Dissolve the sugar in the water, add the lemon rind, and cook this syrup for 15 minutes. Pour hot over the cake as soon as it is taken out of the oven without removing it from the dish.
For the custard, first dissolve the sugar in the water and cook for 5 minutes. Break up the egg yolks and white in a thick-bottomed pan, add the syrup and, stirring constantly, cook over a gentle heat until the mixture thickens. Cut the cake in half, place one half on top of the other to make it taller then top with the custard.
For the marzipan topping, knead the ground almonds with the confectioners sugar and the egg white, adding 1-2 tsp water as necessary. Roll out the dough to a thickness of 1/2 cm and cover the cake with it, cutting off any excess. Press on firmly, sprinkle with confectioners sugar and mark with lines forming diamond shapes using a red-hot knife.
Recommended wine: With such a delicate dessert as this, we need a sweet wine having a variety of aromas to partner the almond in the marzipan and the smooth custard filling. A Moscatel varietal from the D.O. Navarra, with its complex aromas—mushroom, damp earth, and the orange aroma that is typical of this variety—and a smooth, long taste, should blend well with the various flavors of the cake.

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RECIPES FROM SPANISH RESTAURANTS ABROAD

White Beans with Clams

Recipe and wine recommendation: Taberna del Alabardero, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

SERVES 6:
350 g (12 oz) of white dry beans
1 small onion
1 green pepper
300 ml (10 oz) of clam juice
6 or 7 small clams per person
Salt to taste
Soak the dry white beans overnight in cold water

Put the beans in a casserole and cover them with clean water. Then add the onion and the green pepper cut in very small pieces and bring to a boil. Cook everything together on low heat until the beans start to dry out. Then, add the clam juice until they are tender (depending on the strength of the stove, it might take approximately an hour and a half to cook). After that add the clams. Then, cook everything together for about five to ten minutes, until the clams are opened. Add salt to taste.
NOTE: The beans do not have to be totally dry. Add more clam juice as needed.
Recommended wine: Las Campanas Rosado 1997 (D.O. Navarra) or Conde de Valdemar Tinto de Crianza 1996 (D.O. Rioja) or Marqués de Riscal Reserva 1994 (D.O. Rioja)

Potato and Chorizo Stew Rioja-style

Recipe and wine recommendation: Marichu, New York, U.S.A.

SERVES 6:
60 ml (1/4 cup plus 2 tbsp) olive oil
1 medium onion, minced
2 *chorizo* sausages (about 5 oz), removed from their casings and diced
1 tbsp hot *pimentón* (Spanish paprika)
5 medium baking potatoes peeled and cut into chunks (see note)
1 tbsp salt
1.5 l (6 cups) water

In a stockpot or other large pot, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion, and cook it for about 5 minutes, until it is softened. Add the sausage, and cook, stirring, for about 1 minute, or just until the meat begins to brown.
Add the potatoes, paprika, and salt, and stir well. Add the water, increase the heat, and bring the contents to a boil. (Add a little more water, at least enough to cover the potatoes by 2 cm/1 in, if you prefer the stew more soupy.) Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover the pot, and simmer gently for about 30 minutes, until the potatoes are tender. Ladle the stew into shallow bowls, and serve.
NOTE: The original recipe calls for chestnut-size pieces of potato. It's important to use starchy potatoes, such as russets, since the potato starch is the only thickener. If the stew seems to need a little extra thickening, crush a few potatoes against the side of the pot before serving.
Recommended wine: Marqués de Cáceres Tinto de Crianza 1994, (D.O. Rioja)

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Pisto Manchego (Ratatouille)

Recipe and wine recommendation: Cafe Ba-Ba-Reeba!, Chicago, U.S.A.

SERVES 4:

3 red peppers
1 pinch black whole pepper
1 clove (0.5 oz) garlic, peeled
1 pinch thyme
1 pinch rosemary
3 Spanish onions
4 tomatoes
3 yellow squashes
3 zucchini
2 eggplants
3 suntan peppers (*jalapeños*)
250 ml (1 cup) extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp fresh basil, chopped
60 g (2 oz) goat cheese, crumbled

Wash and remove tops and seeds from green and red peppers. Dice. Wash and remove stem from eggplant and dice. Wash and remove stem end from zucchini and yellow squash. Cut in half lengthwise then into 1 cm (0.5 in) slices. Wash and core tomatoes, medium dice. Remove both ends from onion, cut in half. Medium dice. Wash jalapeños and cut in halves, remove seeds and dice finely. Place each type of vegetable in a large mixing bowl and toss with olive oil, salt, and fresh ground pepper. Place vegetables on sheet pans and place in 180°C (350°F) oven for approximately 15 minutes (until vegetables are half cooked). Place all vegetables in a large mixing bowl, season with rosemary and thyme, salt and pepper to taste.
Add the cup of olive oil, mix well. Sprinkle with goat cheese before serving.
Recommended wine: Carchelo Monastrell Tinto 1996 D.O. Jumilla or Arboles de Castillejo Tinto 1996 D.O. La Mancha

Tuna Roll

Recipe and wine recommendation: Casa Asturiana, Sidney, Australia

SERVES 6:

1 kg fresh tuna (red meat only), finely chopped but not mashed
100 g very finely chopped serrano ham
8 finely chopped pitted green olives
Medium very finely chopped white onion
50 g plain flour
1 tbsp salt
60 ml olive oil
2 whole fresh eggs

FOR THE TOMATO SALSA:

500 g chopped, peeled, and seeded tomatoes
1 finely chopped medium white onion
120 ml (0.5 cup) dry white wine
Spanish olive oil

For the tomato sauce fry tomatoes white wine and onion in olive oil and allow to reduce. Pass the salsa through a sieve. Retain.
For the tuna roll mix all ingredients in a stainless steel bowl except the olive oil, adding flour slowly until the roll holds shape. Massage the mixture with hands until well blended. Form the mixture into a roll on a cold surface. Place the oil in a pan large enough to hold the roll and gently fry it over a medium heat. Turn gently so as to cook all over. Place roll in suitable shallow pan and add tomato salsa and simmer gently for 5 minutes.
Remove roll and slice into portions. Place portions on plate and cover with tomato salsa.
Recommended wine: Faustino V Rosado from D.O. Rioja

Bream With Tomato Vinaigrette

Recipe and wine recommendation: Pati de Barahona, Tokyo, Japan

SERVES 1:
Half a gutted, filleted, and boned bream
1 tsp garlic, chopped and marinated in oil
1 tsp chopped parsley
Olive oil
1 tsp garlic butter

FOR THE TOMATO VINAIGRETTE:
1 clove of garlic, finely chopped and sautéed in oil
1 tbsp pine nuts
1 skinned and seeded tomato, chopped into small pieces
Basil
3 or 4 white mushrooms, finely sliced
Extra virgin olive oil
Semisweet red wine vinegar

Sauté the bream in a little olive oil, first skin side down, then turn and sauté the other side. When cooked, add the garlic marinated in oil, the parsley, and the garlic butter.
Serve the fish very hot. Pour over the vinaigrette and sprinkle with a few drops of the vinegar.
Recommended wine: Señorío de Sarriá, Reserva'88

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

Weight
METRIC/OUNCES & POUNDS

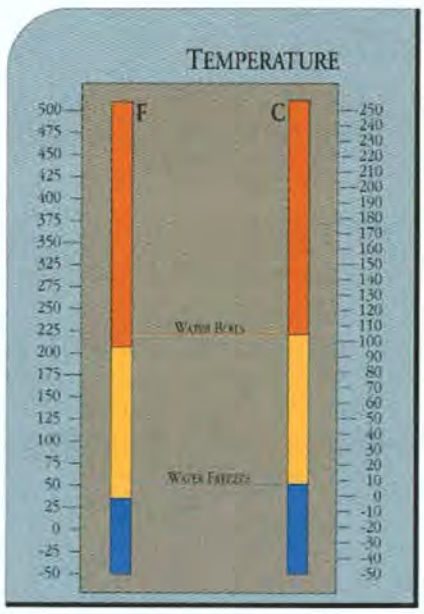
10 grams = 1/3 ounce
50 grams = 1 3/4 ounces
100 grams = 3 1/2 ounces
250 grams = 8 3/4 ounces
500 grams = 1 pound + 1 1/2 ounces
1 kilo = 2 pounds + 3 1/4 ounces
1/2 ounce = 14 grams
1 ounce = 28 grams
1/4 pound = 110 grams
1/2 pound = 230 grams
1 pound = 450 grams

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

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



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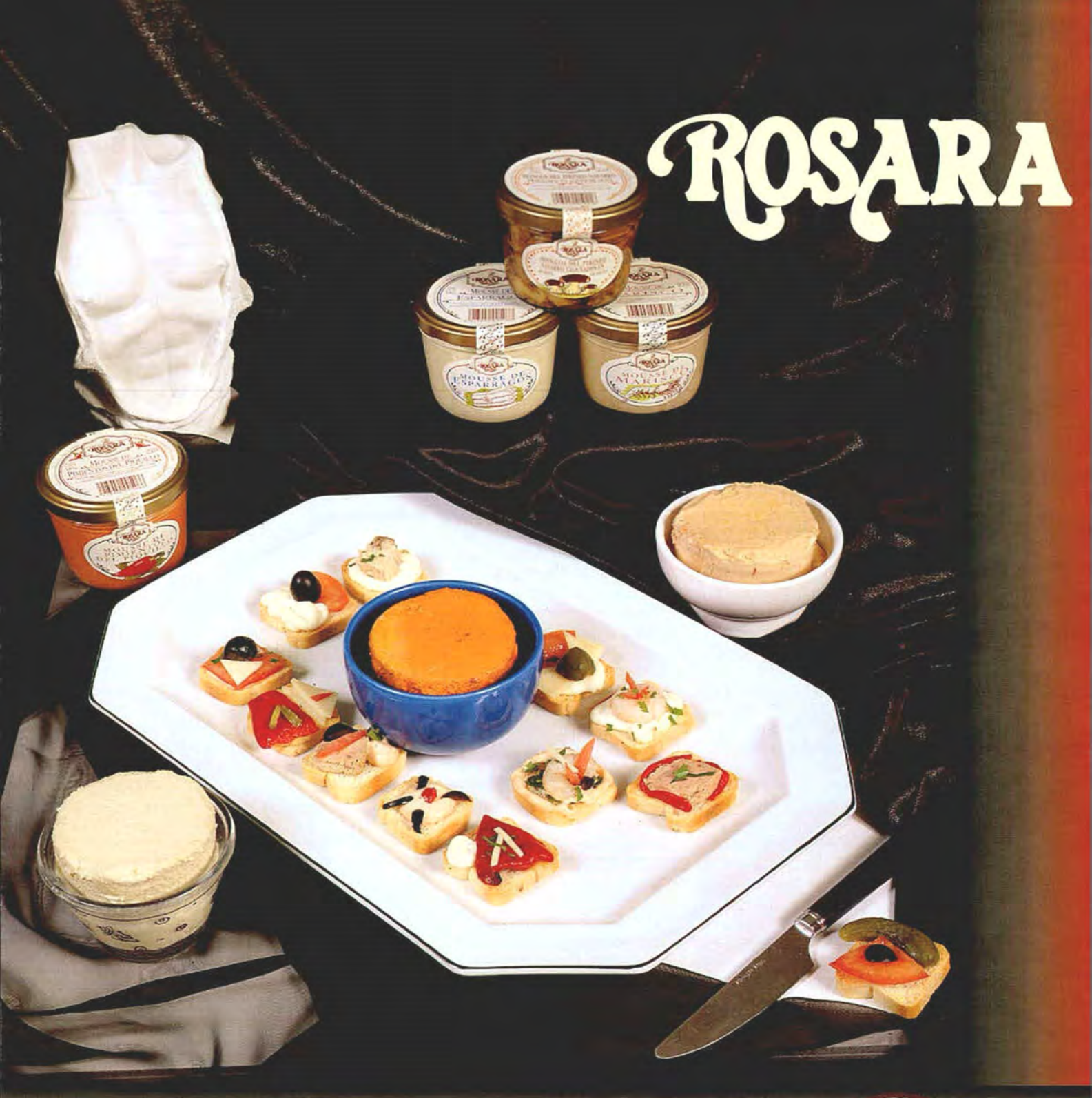

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The Crown of Aragon's Archive

The idea for a series on Spain's extraordinarily rich historical archives came to me many years ago when I was invited to take part in a "Meet the Press" program that used to be produced by the current affairs division of one of the big U.S. television networks. The celebrity invited to the show was the late José María de Areilza, the Count of Motrico, a very distinguished Spanish diplomat and politician who combined a penetrating intelligence with worldly, aristocratic graces and an ironic wit.

Areilza, who at the time was Foreign Minister (1975-76), was quizzed about Spain's transition to democracy but, towards the end of his interrogation, the program anchorman threw in a question about some scandal involving the CIA which was the hot news of that particular day as far as the U.S. public was concerned. "Oh, spies," said Areilza and he suddenly looked intensely bored. "We've known all about them in Spain for centuries. They come and they go, you know. If you're interested," drawled Areilza, "I'll take you to our national archives in Simancas and I'll show you all the records of the spy network that reported to king Philip II 400 years ago. There's nothing new about spies and their scandals, my dear boy, its all as old as the hills." The famous anchorman could scarcely hide his irritation at the Spaniard's patrician putdown and he mumbled something about having to leave Madrid early the next morning to host another program in some other country.

Awesome Archives

"Good, for Areilza," I thought to myself. "There is no harm at all in waving the flag of Spain's very long history and her extraordinarily rich historical archives." As a student I had fancied myself a specialist in Spanish history and had approached with awe the records of ages past that are stored away in Simancas, the fortress town high on the plateau of north Castile.

The same reverence had enveloped me when I first visited the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, a much older archive than the one in Simancas. The Crown of Aragon's archives, in Barcelona, essentially tell the story of the independent medieval kingdom that existed in northeast Spain prior to the country's unification in the late 15th century.

This archive was kept in a palatial home, the Palacio de los Virreyes, alongside Barcelona's handsome gothic cathedral and its reading room looked out onto a quiet renaissance cloister.

Returning recently to the Archive I discovered that it had been relocated in 1994 to a new development in Barcelona's northern outskirts and that it now occupies a low slung and functional, concrete and glass complex. It was in this somewhat drab and nondescript building that I met Carlos López Rodríguez, an intense young man and, since last year, the archive's chief librarian and director.

Not surprisingly the move out of the Palacio de los Virreyes had been somewhat traumatic. "Historians were sentimentally attached to the old building," said López Rodríguez. But the contents of the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón are, of course, unchanged and they are undoubtedly more safely stored now than they were before.

Storing the Past

In 12 large deposit rooms that resemble giant strong boxes, protected by fire alarms, temperature controls, and massive steel doors, stand row upon row of huge hide-bound volumes and of boxes containing parchment documents. They have been placed chronologically along their shelves—the oldest record dates from 844—and they are classified according to their subject matter.

There are volumes and boxes that detail the expenses of the royal household, others that deal with diplomatic correspondence and many, many more that contain innumerable royal writs and executive orders. If all the shelves were lined in a single row they would stretch for some eight and half kilometers (5.28 miles).

Peering into the gloom of the different deposit rooms with pride and familiarity López Rodríguez said: "When you think about it, what is stored here is a very explicit expression of power." I understood exactly what the chief librarian meant. A royal archive such as this one is essentially a statement that says an awful lot about who is in charge.

Bureaucratic Power Statements

Just like military might in the Middle Ages was expressed by the storage of weaponry and suits of armor and by the maintenance of war horses and trained knights, so political muscle was stated by archiving innumerable chancery documents that were produced by an army of bureaucrats, by officials, controllers, and scribes.

Power was not just expressed by conquering territories and defending them; power also consisted in administering the law in these possessions, raising their productivity, and extracting revenues from them through a variety of devices. This additional exercise of power implied a stream of documents issued by the royal household that dealt with every conceivable subject and it involved a painstaking attention to detail which ensured that every

decision made was duly recorded in the royal archives.

The uses of bureaucratic power were properly understood by Jaume I, who reigned as King of Aragon and Count of Barcelona from 1213 when, aged nine, he succeeded his father who had been killed in battle, until 1276. Known as James the Conqueror because his exploits included the capture of Mallorca and of Valencia from the Moors, Jaume repopulated the conquered territories by handing out parcels of land to his Catalan knights and he used these retainers to create an active farming and mercantile class loyal to his crown.

A Picture of Medieval Society

In order to keep a close track of what was happening in his expanding empire, the conqueror king set up an archive. One is tempted to think that those who insisted on records being properly kept did so in order to perpetuate their name in history but the truth is rather more pedestrian. They instituted archives in order to control their subjects and keep the royal finances in the black. Rigorous bookkeeping is, as López Rodríguez put it, "the mark of an advanced civilization."

Jaume's bureaucratic impetus was maintained by his successors and the following century the first full time archivist was appointed by the Aragonese crown to properly catalogue and store the growing amount of paperwork that officialdom was producing. More than 200 years were to pass before the rival kingdom of Castile set up a similar archive in Simancas.

The historical fascination of the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón is its peerless record of how society was organized and run in the 13th and 14th centuries. Arguably only the Papacy's archives, in the Vatican library, grant the professional historian such a continuous and complete a picture of the Middle Ages.

As López Rodríguez showed me parchment scrolls that dated back 600 and more years I was reminded of that sense of a seamless and timeless history that Areilza had tried to explain to the CIA-obsessed television presenter in that long-forgotten program.

Here in the neat gothic handwriting of the official recorders and in the spidery script of the king's signature or that of his representative was a chronicle of petty disputes and of passionate discourses, of contested inheritances, and feudal prerogatives. It is a story based on spy-like intelligence gathering by the power of that time that has continued unchanged down the ages.

***Tom Burns**, Madrid correspondent for the* Financial Times, *is the author of a trilogy on Spain's transition to democracy. He has worked as a journalist in Spain for more than 20 years and studied Modern History at Oxford University.*

ARCHIVO DE LA CORONA DE ARAGÓN

The 11th century supremacy of the earldom of Barcelona, later to be united to the crown of Aragon, was based on the submission to it by rival barons. In this keynote document, dated 1058, the count of Cerdanya recognizes Ramón Berenguer I, (1035-1076) count of Barcelona, as his feudal lord. Known as El Viejo, the old, Ramón Berenguer I drafted a system of government, known as the Usatges, which was one of the earliest feudal codes in medieval Europe.

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 1,000 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 percent 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.

DENOMINACIÓN DE ORIGEN (D.O.)

Denomination of Origin is an official designation covering products whose raw materials are produced and manufactured within a specific geographical area, and which have distinctive qualities and characteristics due, mainly, to the natural environment, manufacture, and aging methods.

DENOMINACIÓN ESPECÍFICA (D.E.)

The Specific Denomination covers products characterized by a relation to their geographical setting, with the use of certain raw materials, a determined method of production and/or manufacture, but differs from a D.O. in that these three factors do not necessarily have to coincide.

Each D.O. or D.E. is managed by a Consejo Regulador (C.R.) or regulatory council, which sees to the enforcement of the regulations

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