

# SPAIN GOURMETOUR

Food, Wine & Travel Magazine



Fresh:  
The New  
Spanish  
Chefs



Cheese and Wine



St. James Way



D.O. Rioja



Kaki

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May-August 2001

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In the 21st century, our obsession with globalisation often blinds us to the fact that great waves of commercial and cultural exchanges also took place in the past. In Europe, one of the best examples is the road to Santiago. For many pilgrims, it started in places as far from Spain as Riga, Warsaw, Dublin or Toulouse.

Spain Gourmetour has followed this route - at least the Spanish part of it - for our readers. Bettina Krücken here describes her impressions of the first stretch - essentially a tribute to Romanesque art - as well as commenting on the local gastronomy and places of special interest for modern-day pilgrims. At the time of writing, Sonia Ortega is travelling along the second stretch of the route and, before Christmas, will be telling you of her experiences.

Spanish gastronomy is on the move. Fourteen young Spanish chefs - seven here and seven in the next issue - with bright new ideas and great skills, some of them already having stars to their names but all the healthiest of rivals, here present one recipe each.

This is followed by a taste of Spanish cheese, still undiscovered by too many of you. Do tell us what you think!

As a child in Paris, I used to love eating the occasional kaki (you might know them better under the name of 'persimmon'). I wonder if they would have come from Valencia? Today Spain exports over 200,000 tonnes of kakis annually. Originally from China, they were cultivated along the west coast of the United States then brought to Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century, ending up in Spain. Long before the times of the information highway!

The Internet age, on-line information and the ever-present globalisation make life seem like a race to keep up. So why bother with fossils? Our new series, 21st Century Quixotes, introduces us to some Spaniards who are keen to tilt at some unusual windmills. And another new feature, Foodie's Corner, offers all the latest news from Spain and round the world on Spanish gastronomy.

Cathy Boirac *Editor-in-chief*



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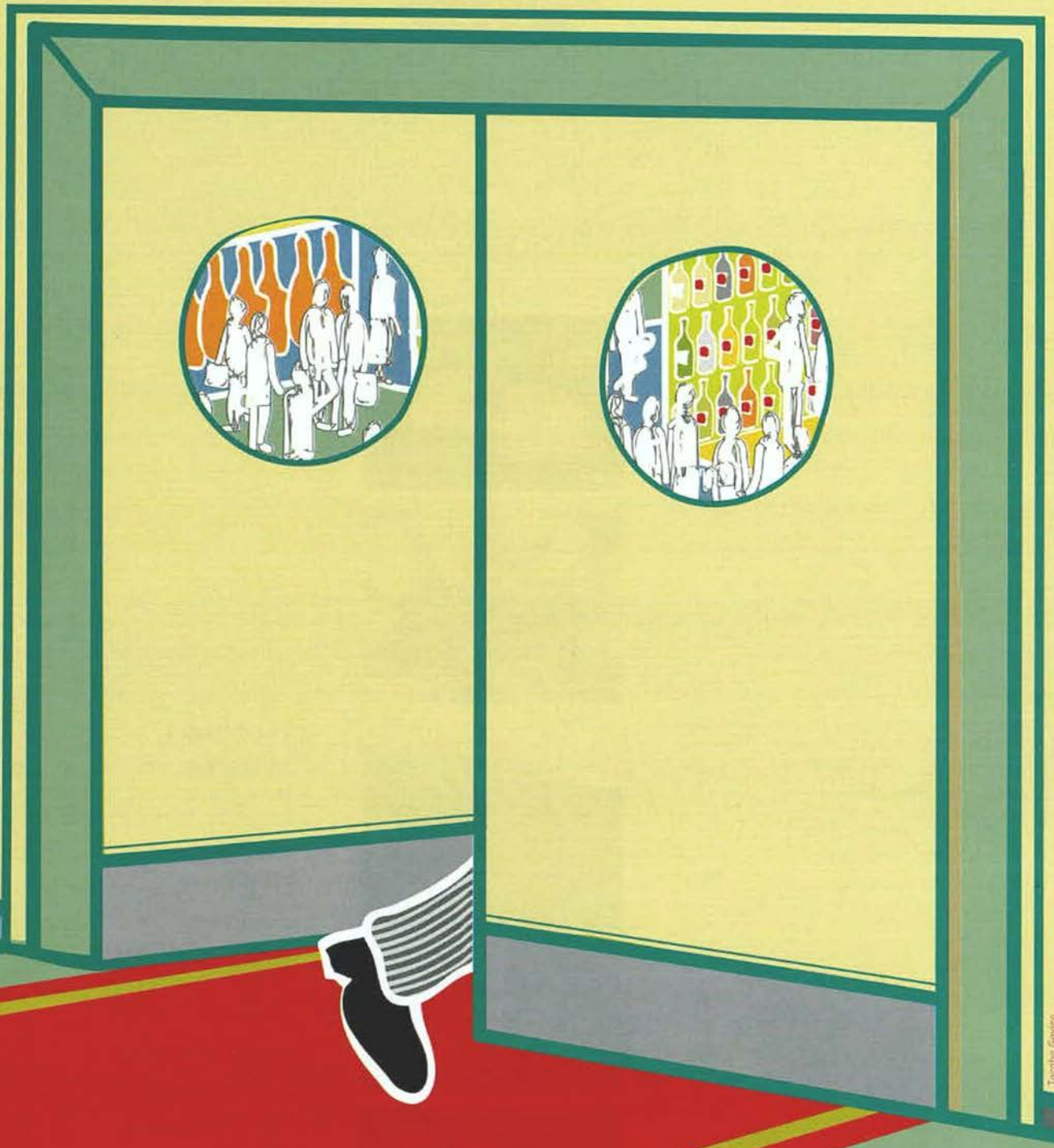
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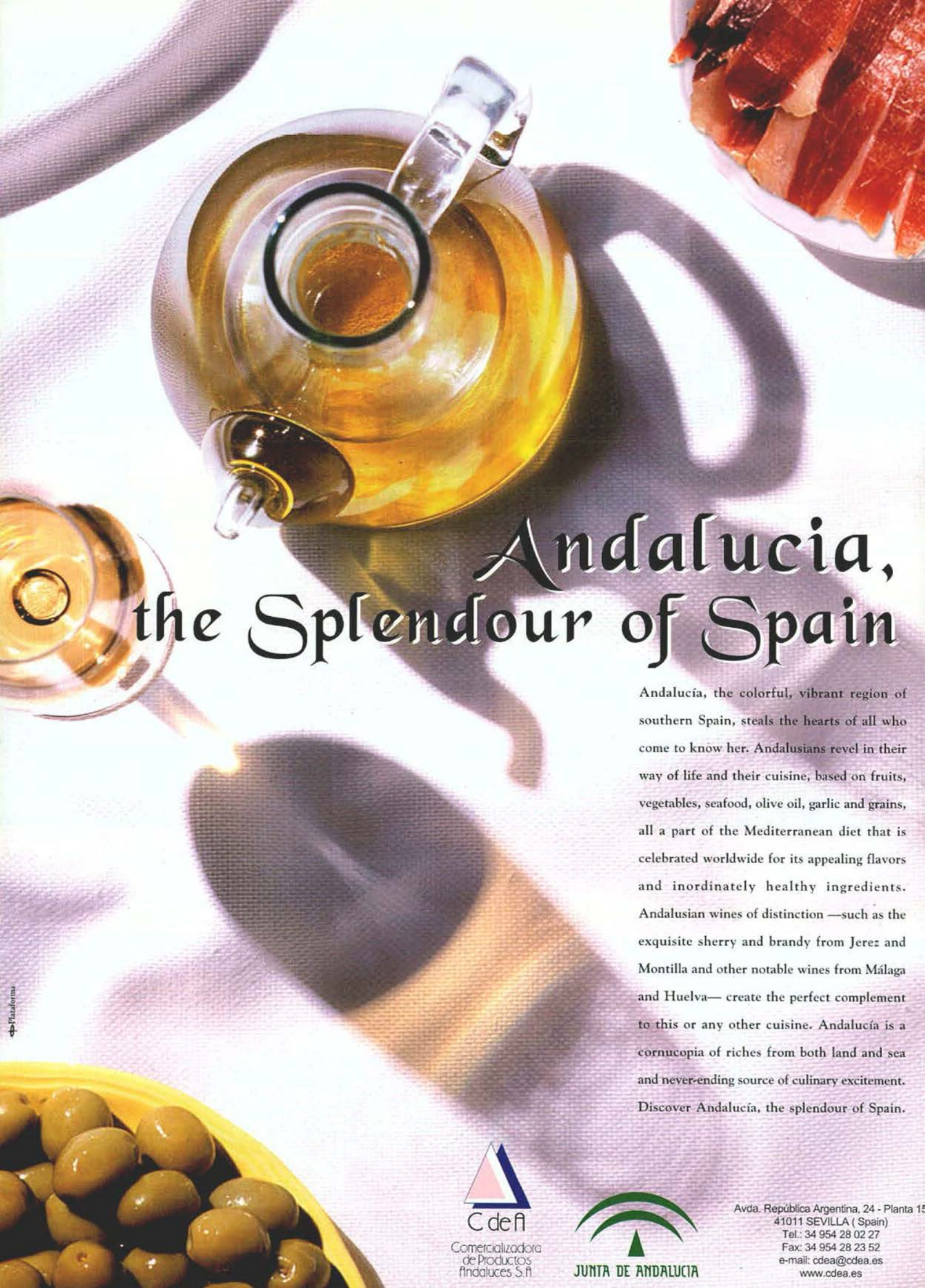


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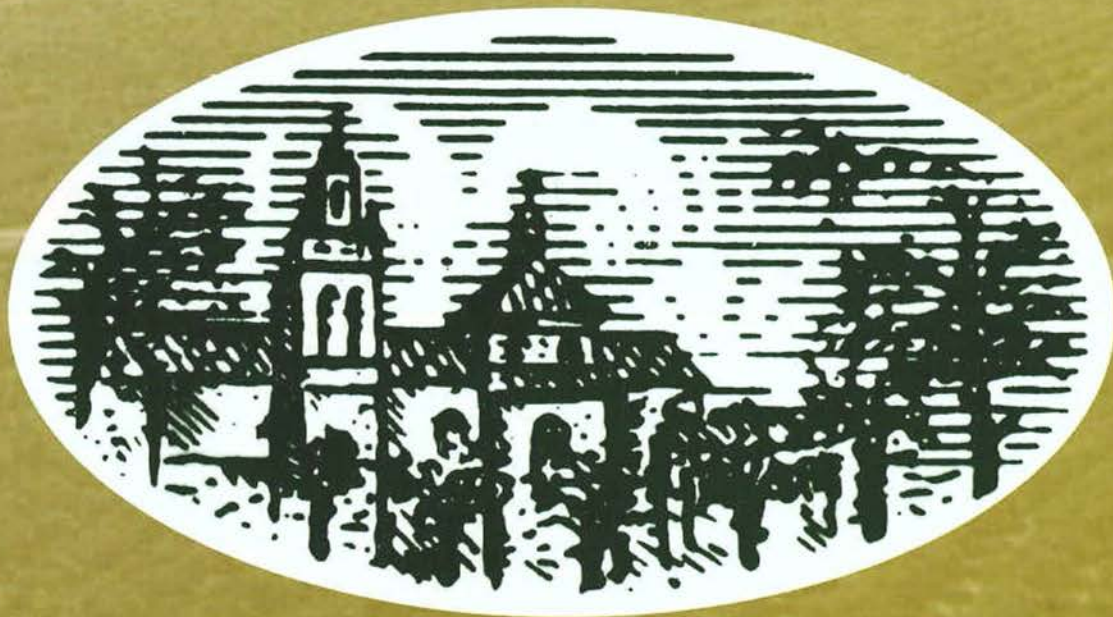


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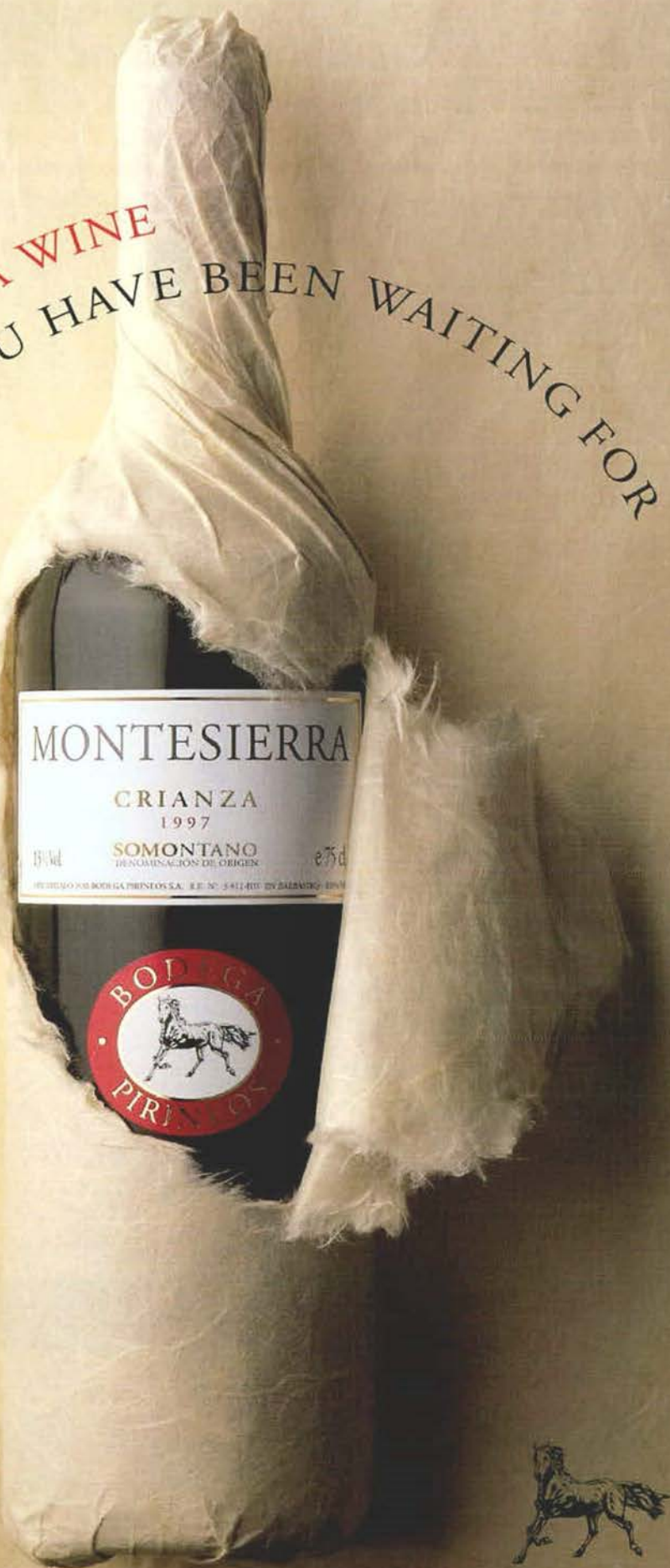
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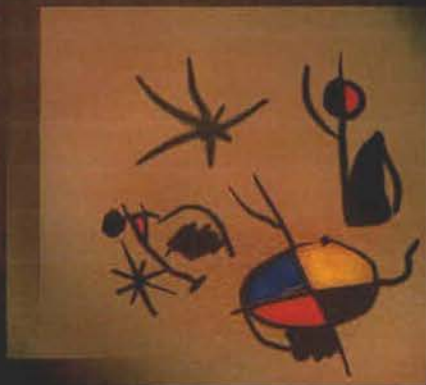
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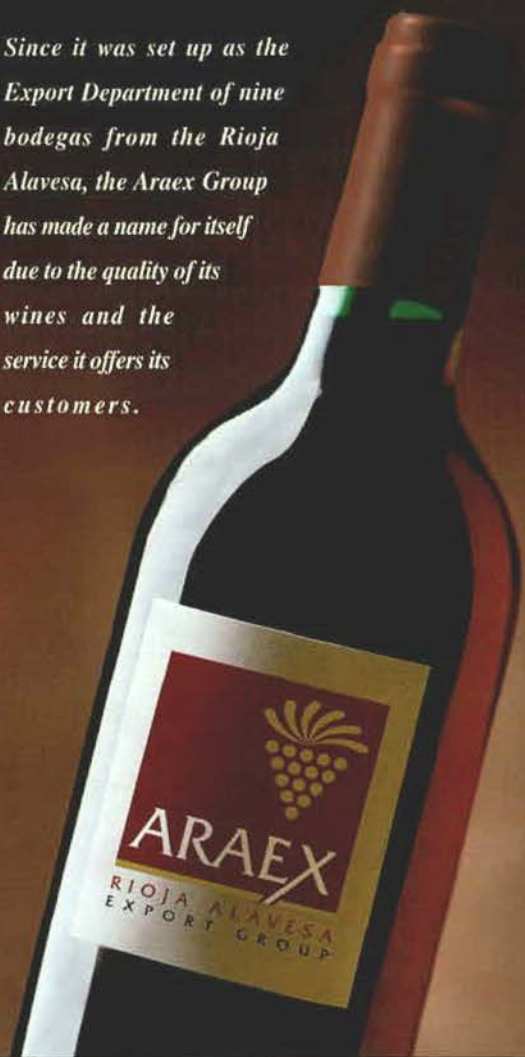




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*Matters  
of Import.  
Part 4*

## Sending Owls to

One good way of finding out how Spanish wines are received and perceived abroad is to talk to the people that import them. They keep a constant eye on consumer requirements and tastes, and make their selections from the wineries and brands most adept at meeting these demands. Their hands-on knowledge of the international wine scene also gives them the power to influence patterns of consumption and 'make' the wines they opt for.

In the fourth part of our series with a view to identifying the image enjoyed by Spanish wine outside Spain itself, takes us to three traditionally wineproducing countries: Switzerland, Austria and France. As in the last three issues our selection necessarily represents just a small, but valuable sample.

ALTHEBNS



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TEXT  
ÖTHMAR STAHELI

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TRANSLATION  
SYNONYME

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## In Switzerland, Rioja Is Not the Only Wine on the Table

With a per capita consumption of over 43 liters per year, people in Switzerland rank among the top wine drinkers in the world. They also have a longstanding special relation with Spanish wine, which spread throughout the Swiss Alps hand in hand with the food of the Iberian Peninsula. On the heels of the two neighboring countries, France and Italy, Spain has become the third largest source of bottled red wine imports in Switzerland, with a market share of almost 20 percent.

Spanish wines have for over a century been a fixture on the Swiss market. The opening up of Europe when railroad links were created and the simultaneous drop in Swiss wine production around 1900 combined to turn what was once an autonomous wine-producing country into a wine-importing country.

In the year 2000, over 12 million bottles of Spanish red wine were imported in

Switzerland, i.e. three times more than ten short years earlier. Since 1980, the number of bottles of quality red wine imported from Spain has in fact been multiplied by ten. Over the same period, the quantities of bulk wine from Spain fell from 37 to 14 million liters and now, 40 percent of all Spanish red wine arriving in Switzerland comes in bottles. With the increase in imports of bottled red wine,

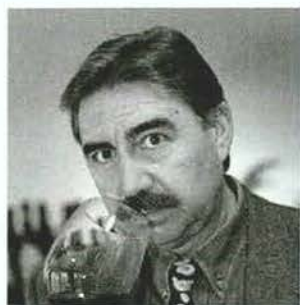
not only the value of the goods supplied rose sharply, but the selection of available wines also improved considerably. If, in the past, there was not much choice for anyone looking for something other than Rioja and Navarra among the D.O. wines, today it is possible to find virtually every type of quality Spanish wine on the Swiss market. Wine selections have come a long way.

### In the Beginning... Was Rioja

A good example providing proof that even the traditional importers with large bottling capacity are betting on the import of bottled quality wine is the Scherer & Bühler company, founded in 1837. Michel Laperrouza, the general manager of the company located in

### Rafael Pérez

The mandatory bottling in the production region has played a decisive role in the improved quality of Rioja wines.



Meggen, explains, "The prerequisite conditions have been created by the Spanish producers themselves over the past ten years, with their fantastic gains in quality. The increasing demand of Swiss customers is keeping us on the go. During our visits to the Spanish wine-producing areas, we now observe that fine wines are being produced not only in the major, well-known areas, but also in virtually unheard of terroirs as well. It is truly a fascinating job to be the first to bring our discoveries to the market." Laperrouza is highly optimistic concerning the fu-

ture of Spanish wines on the Swiss market. "The simple fact that imports of bottled wine have risen by 50 percent over the past four years is proof that Swiss consumers appreciate Spanish wines." His optimism is not, however, without limits. That is due to the price increases, some of which were drastic, that started with the Rioja wines. "I hope that the Spanish producers are aware of the fact that the steady development of exports to Switzerland is possible only with reasonably stable prices. Sharp increases and sudden drops quickly result in chaos on the market and the immediate replacement of the product in question." For decades, Spanish wines in Switzerland have been runners up to the Italian and above all the French wines. They did not have a good reputation and for years were viewed as "cheap and nothing special." That sit-

### Jean-Claude Vaucher

Without a doubt, Spain today is one of the countries with the most potential for quality wines in all of Europe.



uation has been changed, according to the general manager of Schenk S.A., Jean-Claude Vaucher, thanks to the Rioja wines. "Their dynamism and the high product quality in the end helped Spanish wine in general." The hefty price increases for D.O. Rioja wines, due in particular to the mandatory bottling in the production region, benefitted above all the rest of Spain. Consumers started to look for wines from other regions in Spain and they found them. "This contributed to the development in Switzerland of virtually unknown, but

prestigious D.O. wines such as Priorato, Toro, Cigales, Ribera del Duero and Ampurdán. Due to the specific situation on the Swiss market, even lesser known D.O. wines, for example Navarra, Utiel-Requena, Valencia and Valdepeñas were in a position to profit."

### Image Versus Price

In spite of the fact that consumers have been confronted over the past few years with unsettling price increases, Spanish wines can still count on an undiminished degree of affection on the part of the Swiss. "A good image in spite of what is clearly still a disturbing trend in prices," according to Rafael Pérez, the director of the Vinothek Santé, founded in Zurich in 1991. "The clear improvement in the quality of Rioja wines has certainly contributed to

that image. In my opinion, the mandatory bottling in the production region has played a decisive role. Thank goodness, the days are behind us when importing Spanish wines meant a Rioja transported in large tanks and blended in Switzerland."

However, for Rafael Pérez, a factor even more important than the export requirements for D.O. Rioja wines concerns the developments in Spanish vineyards. "The reason for the current prosperity of the Spanish vineyards is a new generation of brave vintners who not only have solid technical training in wine growing, but have also shown a capacity to take business risks. They have renovated the largely neglected vineyards and cleaned up the dingy old cellars. Their good grapes, which were previously often sold to large wine companies, now go into making characteristic wines in every part of the country

### Michel Laperrouza

The steady development of exports is possible only with reasonably stable prices.



that can stand up to the comparison with the best wines from the old and traditional wine regions.

### Modern Wine-growing Techniques

According to Frank Ebinger, the positive changes on the Spanish wine scene are due not only to the subsidies from Brussels for the agricultural sector, but also to a new generation of wine experts that have now taken control in Spain. The owner of the Zürich-based Casa del Vino, which deals exclu-

sively in Spanish wines, is of the opinion that influences from the French neighbors have also played an important role. "Many wine experts studied at the University of Bordeaux and then earned their stripes in vineyards all around the world. The accumulated know-how is now being invested in Spanish vineyards and cellars, but without abandoning their rich traditions." Frank Ebinger thinks the current success of Spanish wines on Swiss markets may be explained by the quality of modern, top-rank products which in turn encourage competition between producers and lead to increasingly better wines. "In comparison with twenty years ago, the wines generally have a fresher and fuller taste. The barrels are newer and are not used as long. Even the labels have been dusted off and now the general impression conveyed by a bottle is up to high inter-

### Martin Wiederkehr

The D.O. is the means to avoid slides in quality.



national standards." Today, Iberian wines are a standard feature on the wine menus of virtually all the best restaurants in Switzerland. For Ebinger, that is a clear sign of the improved image of Spanish wines. The innovative businessman also feels that when virtually forgotten regions increasingly bring worthy products to the market, we may be sure that the Spanish wine scene will remain dynamic.

The purchasing director and wine expert for the C. August Egli-Gruppe, Martin Wiederkehr, oversees one of the largest assortments of Spanish wines on

### Frank Ebinger

The Spanish wine scene will remain dynamic.

the Swiss market. In his opinion, the *Denominación de Origen* is a critical factor. "Spain has such a wide array of local grape varieties and specific denominations that it would be impossible to make all their names known to consumers. That makes the denomination of origin, and consequently the work of the Regulatory Councils, all the more important."

In the opinion of Martin Wiederkehr, the various denominations of origin play different roles on the Swiss market. Rioja is firmly established in all market segments. Navarra is a major name in the medium and low-end segments, whereas Ribera del Duero is present almost exclusively in the high-end segment. Priorato will remain a niche product. For decades, Rioja has been represented by a number of brands, primarily in grocery stores. A major part of the Navarra



reputation is due to the "Don Pasqual" brand created by the Schuler company. Generally speaking, the image of Spanish wine in Switzerland, emphasizes Wiederkehr, is very good because it evokes hedonistic ideas and impressions, with the sun, fun and pleasure. "The positive image has not only stimulated demand, over the past few years it has also driven the prices up. That could turn out to be counterproductive, however, I do not see any problems for Spanish wine on the Swiss market if violent swings in the prices can be avoided."

In the opinion of Martin Wiederkehr, the products currently in danger are particularly the traditional wines from the Rioja, Ribera del Duero and Navarra D.O.s. "They could well lose their leading positions on the Swiss market. Not to wines from other countries, but to the competition from their own country, to denominations and wineries capable of realistically evaluating their own quality and market potential."

*Othmar Stäheli is the publisher and editor in chief of the Schweizerische Weinzeitung, the official publication of the Swiss wine trade association.*

*Photo credits on page 140.*

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**TEXT**

PETER MOSER

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**TRANSLATION**SYNONYME

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## Austria: Small but Quality Conscious

For some years now, drinking habits have been changing in Austria, which was long considered, with good reason, to be a white wine country. Traditionally, red wine was mostly imported, though the situation began to change with the Alpine republic's accession to the E.U. Retailers started to offer a previously unheard of range of imported wines, and new chains opened their doors, popularizing wine drinking among younger target customers. Austrian wine makers also got the taste for red wine, producing some excellent reds, though still in small quantities, which met with an enthusiastic response both from restaurants and consumers. We asked four well-known wine dealers what the secret of success was.

Wein & Co, Austria's most successful wine chain with sixteen busy outlets, has always taken care to encourage the customer over the threshold, using modern marketing to seek and gain access to a younger public. New World wines, particularly from Australia, have always been a hit. I asked the marketing manager, Willi Balanjuk, about developments in the Spanish wines carried by Wein &

Co. in recent years. "The image of Spanish wine is heavily influenced by Rioja, which defines the product as good, economical and consumer friendly. The wines are found to be harmonious and soon ready for drinking. There is, however, little interest in 'fine wines,' with the exception of Pingus and Vega Sicilia. We take Rioja as setting the general price level for all Spanish wines at around

18.17 euros (\$15.32), and we feel the price-quality relationship is of tremendous importance. This is born out by the effects of the rise in Rioja prices between 1999 and 2000, which caused a sharp fall in sales for the whole of the Spanish selection. So it's clear to us that developments in Spanish wines are highly price sensitive. As long as prices remain stable, developments are positive. If

price rises are pushed through in parallel with France or Italy, however, sales are likely to suffer." Asked about awareness of grape varieties and regions, Balanjuk replies that customers are largely unacquainted with any grape varieties except Tempranillo or regions other than Rioja, Ribera del Duero and Penedès. Sherry and, particularly, Cava suffer from this "nobody" image.

**Willi Balanjuk**

We see Rioja as setting the general price level for all Spanish wines.

**Strong Development**

Somebody who has taken great pride in pushing the quality of Spanish products is Christian Lerner from the wine and delicatessen importer Festival. He claims to have noticed some development in their image as high quality, along with the price-quality relationship, and that they are also increasingly recognized and in demand. "It's in their difference from other wines. Spanish wines have distinct characteristics, which are evident even in 'modern' wines due to the grape varieties used—Tempranillo, Garnacha, Graciano. The special climate, which is notably different from other traditional European wine regions, also has an effect. The 'terroir' factor is also important and is increasingly recognizable in wines from the Ribera del Duero, Penedès and Priorato areas, and, as

always, there is the use (or partial use) of American oak barrels to produce softer, more velvety wines. A further reason for these special characteristics is the age of the vineyards, many of which were planted before the onset of phylloxera. We at Festival feel that the biggest difference from other European wine regions is that Spain is currently the Continent's most exciting wine country. The main developments have taken place in previously quite unknown regions where tremendous investment (subsidized by the E.U., of course) and the work and enthusiasm of some first-class enologists have resulted in the creation of some very interesting types of wine. Really wonderful wine discoveries are there to be made all over Spain right now. We expect sales to rise sharply if quality continues to improve in the future and pricing policy remains reasonable, with appropriate support from producers, the Regulatory Councils and ICEX (Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade). Of course, more articles about Spanish wine in specialist journals such as Falstaff & Co. would also help, because analysis of customers' habits clearly shows quality is increasingly in demand as well as

**Christian Lerner**

Spain is currently the Continent's most exciting wine country.



price (in this regard, 'written' quality in the form of journalists' assessments are particularly important)."

We talked with Peter Jiresch of Wienothek 18 in order to sound out an importer who deals exclusively in Spanish wines and spirits from 16 D.O. regions, including wines from nine Rioja estates. He delivers 70 percent of these products to wholesalers and 30 percent is sold direct. "My current opinion is that Rioja remains the Spanish wine region *par excellence*. New regions are of course always interesting, but they are still little known to the general public." Spanish wines enjoy a good image; the country stands for tradition, competitive estates and a strong price-quality relationship. As far as La Rioja is concerned, however, it must be said that the 50 percent rise in prices over recent years has hurt demand. As ever, the cus-

tomers is looking for wines priced at around 18.17 euros (\$15.32). The grape varieties are not well known and consumers make their choice based on the estate and the region. White wines and rosés are fundamentally poor sellers. Cava has a poor image and is basically unsellable here. "Promotion campaigns have so far been pretty poor and importers have been insufficiently involved. Wine tours with journalists and opinion leaders might be an idea. Awareness of the various regions also needs improving, because they are all pretty well unknown except for La Rioja. Nevertheless, our overall feeling is that the market will continue to grow in Austria."

**Red Wine Trend**

Thomas Schulz of Schulz & Partner is Austria's best-known specialist in Spain and the majority of his customers are in the business to business segment. He sells 85 percent to wholesalers and wine dealers, a further ten percent to the gourmet restaurants and the rest to private customers. His company moves between 15 and 20 percent of an-

## Peter Jiresch

Promotion campaigns have so far been pretty poor and importers have been insufficiently involved.



nual Rioja sales in Austria. "We only carry red wines in our selection with the exception of the Bornos Sauvignon Blanc from the Rueda D.O. region. If Vienna had as many Spanish restaurants as Italian, consumers would soon notice that some Spanish whites are a better buy than similarly priced standard wines from Venice and Friuli or the rather inferior Tuscan *bianchi*, which contrive to be both overpriced and 'cheap' at the same time.

"The price-quality relationship is certainly an important feature of the wines, which still compares very favorably with the usual benchmark of Chianti Classico, despite continual price rises over the last four years. The price of a good Rioja *crianza* is still a good 30 percent lower than a good Chianti Annata, which is not a particularly common wine, although of course the same could be said for the Rioja *crianza*. Even at

the very top, Spain offers a wider range than Italy, even if you ignore around five really overvalued products that suffer rather from the 'Pétras' syndrome. Image is only really a factor in La Rioja and Ribera del Duero (perhaps to some extent in Penedès), but it has been much polished with consistent improvements in quality, probably because a wine-exporting country like Spain has to measure itself against international competition and produce wines that are keeping in touch with consumer preferences (especially in the U.S.A. and the U.K.), or at least provide a compromise.

"The other key factor is that Spanish wine producers have finally realized that good wine will only come out of the cellar if quality grapes are used. This was still not an issue in the Iberian Peninsula in the 1980s. My impression is that the producers we represent in Austria have made the necessary investments and taken appropriate quality measures in their production processes. Certain producers are highly prized by connoisseurs and I believe that their wines are probably among the best in the world. On the other hand, wines from regions such as Navarre are almost completely ignored, al-

## Thomas Schulz

I hope both restaurants and consumers will prove rather more ready to experiment.



though the liberal policy followed by the Regulatory Council, which allows international grape varieties, means that many excellent and economical wines are made there." Asked about the outlook for Spanish wines in Austria, Thomas Schulz says, "Primarily, I would expect producers to stabilize and even slightly lower prices, which would make even good quality *reservas* more attractive again. Quality is generally good in any case. I would also like to say at this point that I hope both restaurants and consumers will prove rather more ready to experiment and that other wine-growing regions as well as La Rioja and Ribera del Duero will be accepted. I also hope (though there is not much choice) that a major Austrian wine and lifestyle magazine might present some of the wine regions and estates. A comparative tasting could even be arranged and publicized, not just for the Rioja but

perhaps for wines from the Ribera del Duero, Navarre, Toro and other regions, and maybe for certain top wines independent of their regions of origin.

*Peter Moser is one of Austria's leading wine writers and the editor of the internationally renowned wine magazine Falstaff. He writes articles for numerous publications aimed at both specialists and the general public and publishes a wine guide on a two-yearly basis. He regularly travels to Spain, as well as lecturing on the country and its wine regions.*

*Photo credits on page 140.*

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TEXT  
RAOUL FERNÁNDEZ

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TRANSLATION  
JENNY MCDONALD

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## The Challenge of the French Market

Spain and France have much in common when it comes to wine. Vines and methods similar to those of the Bordeaux region have helped regions such as the Rioja or Catalonia to establish a reputation for quality.

French consumers today are showing a growing interest in discovering foreign wines and this is leading a number of dealers to express their faith in the future of the neighboring Spanish wines.

In the words of Nicolas Bertino (of Laplace-Jarrousse, the distributor for Torres and other Spanish wines and spirits), "Spanish wines are still good value for money, even though the Rioja *crianzas* have just raised their prices by 20 percent, and Penedès by ten percent. Other points in their favor are the top quality of certain prestige brands—Vega Sicilia, Torres, Pesquera—and the fact that some are able to suc-

cessfully compete with Bordeaux wines." This opinion tends to be shared by most distributors of Spanish wines in France who suggest that Spain has the edge over other foreign competitors because it is still one of the favorite holiday destinations for the French. "With Spain being so close to France, vacationers can try out Spanish wines on their home ground," explains Jean-

François Jeannot (owner of La Guildive and distributor for the Osborne group—sherry, Rioja wines, for Masachs—Penedès wine, and for Spanish spirits). Another advantage is pointed out by Christopher Cannan (of Europvin, which specializes in French and foreign wines, importing and distributing many Spanish wines), "The Spanish custom is to deal only in

goods that have already been aged and are ready to drink."

### Customer Confusion

In spite of these advantages, the French public knows as little about Spanish wines as they do about their own. "Confusion reigns," says Nicolas Bertino. "Torres is wrongly thought of by most French

consumers as a denomination. The Spanish Denominations of Origin tend to be known only to wine specialists."

Olivier Bartolone (of OL-SAM) confirms this, "The French public is only acquainted with those Spanish D.O.s that have carried out special campaigns as Rioja has done, or if they have been specifically brought to their attention. Wine waiters have played a very important role in helping French consumers discover foreign wines." Whereas with French wines the *Appellation* takes precedence over the brand (with a few rare exceptions), Spanish wines are often sold the other way round, giving the brand name first. This is confirmed by importers. J.F. Jeannot agrees that the brand seems to be the most reliable quality factor. "Sometimes the denomination is forgotten altogether, to the extent that most people think Torres comes from the Rioja although its winery is in fact in the Penedès area of Catalonia."

Claude Bernard Levy (of VINESPA, the distributor for several D.O.s: Rioja, Sherry, Priorato, Ribera del Duero, Navarra, Valdepeñas and Rueda), adds, "Most of our customers are professionals—the large wine cellars, specialist

### Christopher Cannan

An advantage for Spanish wines is the custom to only deal in goods that have already been aged and are ready to drink.



shops and medium to high class restaurants. The most important of them—Ducasse, Faugeron, George V, Veyrat and Haerberlin—want great wines from the best-known areas, such as Dominio de Conte and Alba de Bretón from the Rioja, Condado de Haza and Alenza from the Ribera del Duero, Fra Fulco and Clos Mogador from the Priorato in Catalonia."

The Torres importer, Nicolas Bertino, says much the same, "We are lucky to have the exclusive distribution rights for a brand which in itself is a guarantee of quality, and most of our customers are well aware of this."

On the matter of communication and the promotion of Spanish wines, opinions are mixed. The local wines have an almost monopolistic position and only a few of the larger wineries have sufficient financial backing to consider large-scale operations.

Claude Bernard Levy confesses, "I've tried tasting sessions in collaboration

with Spanish restaurants and I've been present at the Paris Fair on ten occasions but the results have always been poor."

Nicolas Bertino is not so sure after a recent positive experience. "In April 1999, we set up a partnership amongst the Flo chain of stores, the D.O. Montilla Moriles, ICEX (Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade) and the Transmédia agency to promote two Alvear wines and one Pérez Barquero. The 14 Paris stores held a Spanish week with special decor and foods. Three *venencidors* went from store to store to serve the wines and offer *tapas*. The week's results were 600 bottles sold but, more importantly, 47,000 sales opportunities."

Olivier Bartolone agrees but adds, "Promotion can help to develop knowledge of the product and improve its future potential but it can only be done by a D.O. or an organization, never by a single producer."

### The Importance of Image...

Of all the foreign wines on sale in France, Spanish wines are the best known. When asked to name the region their favorite Span-

### Nicolas Bertino

Generally the Spanish denominations of origin are only known to wine specialists.



ish wine comes from, many French consumers say Rioja.

Christopher Cannan explains, "Spanish wines have never had the negative image in France they had in Great Britain a few years ago."

In general, Spanish wines enjoy a quality image, to the extent that some of them have come to be seen—like fino—as elitist, intellectual wines. J.F. Jeannot complains, "Sherry has such a British image, but it's really tremendously convivial and accessible. It has everything it needs to be a popular drink."

Along the same lines, Oliver Bartolone adds, "The image of a holiday wine may be clear for those who are frequent visitors to Spain, but the main interest of Spanish wines is that they offer a genuine alternative. They form part of a palette of foreign wines that attract customers on the lookout for something new and

### Jean François Jeannot

Priority is given to the brand, sometimes the denomination is even forgotten altogether.



should be something of a find for them.” A find that offers excellent value for money. This, when seen in the framework of operations to promote Spain or Mediterranean products, Spanish weeks, etc., is often the key factor, at least according to Claude Bernard Lévy. “Some of our customers are tired of the excessively high prices of Bordeaux or Bourgogne wines. A very good 1996 Rioja might cost 36 F. You’d never find a 1996 Bordeaux at that price.” Olivier Bartolone suggests that dining with a theme is an interesting idea. Consumers sometimes like to offer the right wine to go with a specific regional cuisine (a *paella*, for example) and in such cases price is an essential factor. “I think a wine is good value for money,” he says, “when, even if prices have gone up, it is still possible for everyone involved—wholesaler, retailer and customer—to do well.”

### ...and the Media

The influence of the media is of capital importance. An article can make or break a reputation, and trends set by wine writers have a direct effect on consumers.

As stated by Claude Bernard Lévy, “The market should continue to develop slowly. Spanish wines have a niche in the market which fluctuates in line with fashion, information, etc. A report in the *Revue des Vins de France* or a mention in a Parker book does much more for foreign wines in general and Spanish wines in particular than a tasting session with invited specialists.” Christopher Cannan is optimistic about the development of the market for Spanish wines. “Spain is next door to France and in recent years has been making tremendous efforts in the area of quality. Every year a new wine appears on the market, new Spanish enologists are discovered and the press is eager to cover every detail of the wine phenomenon. Where previously we could only sell two boxes of a Spanish wine, today we can sell several hundred bottles.”

Will the market start to flourish? We can but

### Claude Bernard Lévy

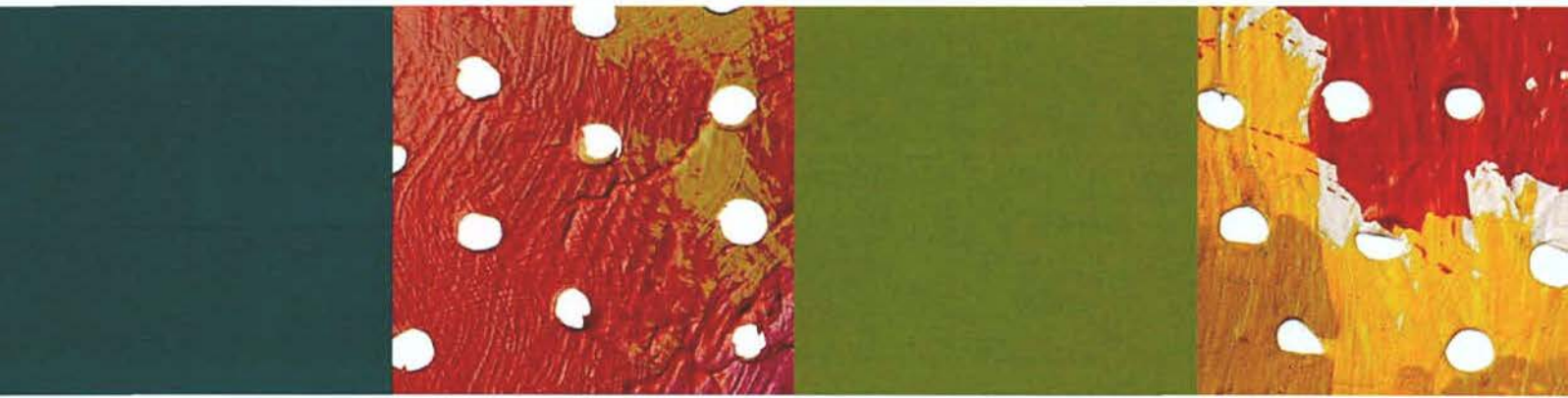
Some of our customers are tired of the excessively high prices of Bordeaux or Bourgogne wines.



hope. If Spanish wines can be brought down from that high shelf for curiosities or holiday souvenirs to become a quality alternative, they certainly have a legitimate place on this difficult market.

**Raoul Fernández**, a food and wine writer. After writing for *Saveurs* and *La Bonne Cuisine*, he now contributes to the food and wine sections of *Le Chasseur Français*.

Photo credits on page 140.



# Fresh



There is a buzz of excitement in Spanish kitchens. In the last two decades the chefs who catapulted Iberian cooking to a place on the world restaurant map have also been training dozens of young cooks. Now they are beginning to run their own kitchens. The results are impressive: Juan Mari Arzak and Ferran Adrià say this is the best generation ever of cooks to have emerged

# The New Spanish Chefs. Part 1



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TEXT  
VICKY HAYWARD

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PHOTOS  
TOYA LEGIDO/ICEX

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in Spain. It is not just a question of dazzling technique, or that there are so many young cooks working around the country. It is also the fresh ideas and friendship between them which is marking a sea change. Here we focus on seven young cooks from the

Basque Country and Catalonia, and explain what makes this generation special. In the next issue, we will be looking at seven cooks from other regions, and the themes behind their cooking. We have left their recipes to speak for themselves.



## Who Are the New Spanish Cooks?

There's a joky Spanish acronym, JASP, which stands for *Joven Aunque Sobradamente Preparado*—Young But Astonishingly Prepared—a yuppie-like label dreamed up by an advertising agency for the new generation of highly qualified young Spaniards. Certainly, the new generation of cooks fits the prototype. Some started by studying cooking or hotel management at college; all have worked under big names in modern Spanish or French cooking; and most have rounded out that experience by taking courses with other chefs and patissiers, attending cooking competitions and

congresses, and reading extensively. The books on their shelves are not only by kitchen gurus such as Michel Bras, Michel Guérard and Pierre Gagnaire, but also by writers on dietetics, kitchen gardening and oriental culture. Travel is a new influence. **"It's never a question of copying, but of looking again at your own products in a new light"** (Elena Arzak). The result today is a group of several dozen young chefs with extraordinary command of technique—drawing on Spanish, French, Japanese, Italian or Swiss cuisines—and a wide range of interests, some of which

feed back into their restaurants: fine art, travel, jazz, typography, gardening, photography, motor-biking, literature, philosophy, zen and (some things never change) football.



## Why Are They an Exceptional Generation?

They stand on the shoulders of giants, and they know it. **"Given the maestros who came before us, it was logical this generation was going to happen"** (Isaac Salaberria). Leading Basque food critic Rafael García Santos analyses it this way. "We're in the opposite position to the French today. Nothing was going on here, then a very small minority of cooks worked a revolution and implanted an avant-garde ideology, which has produced a general renaissance. That avant-garde ideology and a sense of idealism attracts young people." To flesh out the storyline, in the late 1960s much-loved Basque chef Luis Irizar (see box, page

46) set up a pioneering professional cooking school near San Sebastián. There, ten years later, in the late 1970s, a group of Basque chefs created a regional version of nouvelle cuisine called *nueva cocina* which made waves throughout Spanish restaurants. Two of them, Juan Mari Arzak and Pedro Subijana, remain mythical maestros and chefs today. Things slowly gathered momentum. In the 1990s Martín Berasategui injected multiple modern French influences and his own creativity into modern Basque cooking while Ferran Adrià's radical retake on cooking technique and eating esthetics in Catalonia provoked

French chef Joël Robuchon to call him "the best cook in the world." Other influential figures have been Catalan Santi Santamaría and Manuel de la Osa, the Manchego prototype of the self-taught solitary figure singlehandedly reshaping his own regional cuisine. All of these chefs have been teaching intensively in the last decade. **"We're the generation who've seen auteur cooking from below, we've watched our maestros cooking what they believed in. You cannot go back on that"** (Andoni Aduriz).

## 3

Have  
Social and  
Economic  
Factors Contributed  
Anything?

To a certain degree, by opening up new opportunities. The market has changed: young Spaniards, both men and women, eat out regularly and more adventurously. **“Global culture has its good points. Young people carry a lot more information in their taste**

**buds”** (Aitor Elizegui). Banks have loosened up on their loans to students and new businesses. Exotic food products are far more widely available. Kitchen technology has changed dramatically. Finally, as the market has grown, so too has a critical debate aired in restaurant

guides, cookbooks, magazines and other food writing. All the young cooks acknowledge this has been an important stimulus.

## 4

Where  
Do the Young  
Cooks Work?

The main centers are still the Basque Country and Catalonia. In particular, three of the chefs portrayed in this issue come from the San Sebastián area, one of Europe's great gastronomic meccas, with a total of 12 Michelin stars for a population of around 200,000 people. Its vibrant cooking tradition—popular as well as *alta cocina*—has been fueled by tourism, proximity to France, a unique radius-of-reach for produce, and

its cooking schools. Neighboring Bilbao is also a blossoming restaurant center. “The big change here has been a new generation of chef-proprietors who never existed before,” comments Ana Larrañaga, editor of *Gastronomika*, the Bilbao-based food magazine. Some of the young cooks were born, grew up and still work in family restaurants. Others have responded to the expense of city-center premises with lateral thinking about

restaurant sites. Some have gone to the country, or relocated in soft-city zones. Others have left their home region in search of new markets or struck deals with hotels.

## 5

What,  
Then, Is This  
Generation  
Cooking?

There is a shared belief in produce-led cooking with a local identity from foods which belong to the restaurant's environment. Within that, dishes divide into one of two strands: renovated regional cuisine or creative auteur cooking open to global flavors. **“It's a way of saying: look, this is what we create, this is what we think. It's a way of saying we don't have to conform and follow classical**

**canons.”** (Jordi Parramón). The Basque influence is clear in bold flavors and sauces developed from cooking juices; Adrià's impact can be seen in the interest in kitchen technology, in new textures such as hot gelatins, and in the emphasis on avant-garde visual presentation. But this is not designer cooking, nor is there any interest in fusion beyond natural linkups with native styles (for example,

Japanese and Basque fish cookery). Instead there is a return to simplicity, or rather, apparent simplicity, which reveals complex aromas, textures, flavors and temperatures as you eat.



What Are the  
 Other  
**Issues**  
 on the Agenda?

Firstly, an equal interest in cheap everyday produce (farmyard chicken, citrus fruits, sardines) and gourmet luxuries (foie gras, truffles, caviar), and, in parallel, in popular regional dishes as well as haute cuisine. That links into other wider values. **"I won't have strawberries on the menu when there is a seasonal glut because it's immoral that food is destroyed to maintain prices"** (Sergi

Arola). All agree that a professional cook should deliver healthy meals that leave you able to work, play or go for a walk after you leave the restaurant. But what really seems to unite them is a belief in friendship, mutual respect instead of rivalry, and the empowering of one another through information sharing and mutual support. Many of them studied and worked together and, on their occasional

days off, they'll often drive long distances to eat each other's food and talk. "There's no fear of copying," comments Mikel Corcuera, food critic for *El País* in the Basque Country. "They take it as a compliment and move on to do something different."



What About the  
**Future?**

This generation is clear that the next one will be just as exciting. **"Pouff! They're amazing, their training and ideas... I can see it already in our own kitchen team"** (Ramón Freixa). One of the biggest changes will be the likely influx of new female talent currently beginning to work its way through the cooking schools. "It is sure to happen sooner or later," says Luis Irizar, who is still watching as Spain's *alta cocina* continues to gather momentum. Now, signifi-

cantly, his school is run by one of his daughters. "More women in the kitchen will affect what is cooked. The perfect team is half men and half women. The men are fast, but the women are more sensitive, with a special eye for detail." At the moment, though, it is more common to find the cooks' girlfriends or wives helping run the reception and dining area. For one thing that has not changed is the dedication and long hours in the kitchen— "a fifty- or sixty-something hour

week," as one of them calls it—which are needed to achieve haute cuisine's magic balance between art, craft and business. As Isaac Salaberría puts it, "You have to love what you are doing, not care about winning prizes, just be happy cooking."

**Vicky Hayward** is a writer, journalist and book editor whose articles about the arts, travel, social issues and food are published internationally. She is senior editor of Booth-Clibborn Editions, London. She lives in Madrid.



## FEATURED COOKS: THE FACTS

### Names and addresses

#### Basque Country

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### Recipe anthologies

#### *Agua, el arte de buen comer*

(Water, the Art of Eating Well), ed.  
Juan José Lapitz, Ediciones B,  
Madrid, 2000 (recipes for dishes  
with water from 78 restaurants, in-  
cluding many where the younger  
chefs have worked and trained, plus  
a few of their own).

#### *El gran libro del aceite de oliva*

(The Big Book of Olive Oil), ed. José  
Carlos Capel, Cajamar, Madrid,  
2000 (recipes from 58 cooks, includ-  
ing half a dozen of the younger  
chefs).

#### *Lo mejor de la gastronomía 2001*

(The Best of Gastronomy 2001),  
Rafael García Santos, Deston,

Madrid, 2000 (restaurant guide with  
detailed critiques of chefs' new dishes  
and developing styles; includes  
virtually all the chefs in this article).

#### *Los genios del fuego*

(Geniuses with Fire) Pau Arénos,  
Península, Barcelona, 2000 (a study  
of the new movement among  
Catalan chefs, including Adrià and  
Parramón).

### Individual chefs' books

#### *Celebrar el Milenio con Arzak y*

*Adrià* (Celebrating the Millenium  
with Arzak and Adrià), Península,  
Madrid, 1999 (Elena Arzak  
collaborated on the recipes).

#### *Pa, oli i vi*

(Bread, Oil and Wine), Ramón  
Freixa, Ambit, Barcelona, 1999  
Magazine *Tabula 0* (huevo/egg) and  
*Tabula 1* (bacalao/salt-cod), editors  
Andoni Luis Aduriz y Santos  
Bregaña, Editorial Aurrera, San  
Sebastián, 2001

# Andoni Luis Aduriz



Aduriz was just 26 years old when he began running the kitchen at Mugaritz, a converted cider farm in paradisiacal countryside close to San Sebastián. The first Michelin star came a year later, since then he has been "synthesizing things," as he puts it, in landmark dishes such as wood-grilled duck foie with a sea lettuce stock given body by Bomba rice. "You know what I love about that dish?" he asks. "The iodine and the foie's slight bitterness, plus the third invisible element holding them

together: the flavor and aroma of the wood smoke!" Mild mannered, serious and very dedicated, his menu eliminates canapés and petits fours ("they're a distraction"), avoids more than three elements on a dish ("that way, each one of them has to be really good") and holds back all the creamy richness until the wonderful puddings and cheeseboard. The distilling of many complex flavors, textures and aromas into just a few elements relies on immaculate technical precision accumulated during nine

years at cooking school and in seven restaurant kitchens—including two years at Zuberoa and El Bulli, with shorter spells at Neichel, Arzak, Alkalarre and Berasategui. But, he says, technique is not enough. "It can be a trap. One should create simply to match the produce. You need deeper values." Today, he splits a 16 to 18 hour day between the kitchen and the vegetable garden, with breaks for reading, and the odd trip to the Guggenheim or the beach. "You reach a point where you have



to be completely alone to develop personal criteria. I've forced the pace, but at least I feel I'm on the road towards my own style."

**Favorite ingredients:**

"Right now herbs, wild greens and plant shoots. I'm experimenting with a hundred different food plants in the kitchen garden. All kinds of oils fascinate me too."

**Roast Turbot with Hot Citrus Vinaigrette and Diced Citrus-rind Comfit**

This recipe takes time, but anyone can make it. I would recommend using a slightly gelatinous fatty fish. The emulsified vinaigrette replaces the vinegar traditionally used in Basque fish dishes, and is far more aromatic. The comfit, the third element, has an intense flavor that explodes in your mouth.

**Serves 4:**

- 1 turbot fillet, weighing 800 g (1 lb 7 oz)
- 1 pinch of fine cooking salt
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) mild extra virgin olive oil
- 1 pinch of Maldon salt flakes

**Comfit:**

- 5 citrus fruits: 1 lemon, 1 grapefruit, 1 orange, 1 mandarin, 1 lime
- 100 g (3 1/2 oz) sugar
- 100 ml (3 1/2 oz) water

**Vinaigrette: (prepare 12 hours ahead)**

- 60 ml (4 tbsp) each of fresh grapefruit, lemon, orange, mandarin and lime juice (you will need more than one of each fruit)
- 60 ml (4 tbsp) passion fruit juice, sieved of seeds

- 2 heads of garlic, skinned and thinly sliced
- 600 ml (1 pt) extra virgin olive oil
- 4 g (1/6 oz) powdered agar

To make the vinaigrette, squeeze the fruit juices and bring to a boil in a stainless steel pan. Remove. In a large heavy-bottomed pan, heat the sliced garlic gently in the olive oil until just golden, remove the pan from the heat, cool until the oil is the same temperature as the juice (to avoid fizzing) and mix the two together. Cover in a cool place for at least 12 hours. Strain.

To make the comfit, slice off one end of each fruit to give it a level base, set the fruit on that and shave off slices of zest and pith approximately 4-5 mm (just under 1/4-in) thick with a very sharp knife. Blanch each type of fruit skin separately, drain and refresh, repeat three times. Place the sugar and water in a heavy-bottomed saucepan and bring to a boil. Cook the sliced rinds in the sugar syrup, each fruit in a separate pan, for about a minute each, leaving to cool in the syrup. Remove the rinds and cut into 4 mm (1/6 in) squares. Shortly before serving, soak the agar in cold water for a few minutes until it becomes elastic. Remove; drain well. Heat 100 ml (4 fl oz) of vinaigrette in a saucepan, add the agar gelatin and dissolve away from the heat. Mix back into the vinaigrette; heat gently.

Salt the turbot. Heat the olive oil in a heavy-based pan and sauté the fish until golden. Cook the fish for 5 minutes in the middle of a very cool, dry oven at ten percent humidity (or with a dish of water on a lower oven rack) and preheat to 110°C (225°F/gas mark 4-5). Warm four

deep plates. Spoon four tablespoons of the vinaigrette onto each plate. Divide the fish into four fillets and place one on each plate, putting two squares of each type of comfit around the fish. Season with a little salt.

**Recommended wine:**

Sergio Otero, Mugaritz's sommelier, suggests a Rueda Superior D.O. Verdejo varietal. "It mirrors the dish's fruity citric aromas, and light acidity and contrasts well with the fish fat."



## Elena Arzak

Aged 32, younger than many of the kitchen team, Elena Arzak is cool and collected checking finished dishes before they are carried out to the dining room. Her inheritance is formidable: a centennial family restaurant set up by her great grandmother and launched to worldwide fame and three Michelin stars by her father Juan Mari, co-founder of Basque *nueva cocina*. Now it is Elena who runs the team of 28 cooks, mostly male and including some of San Sebastián's top cooking talent. She is impressively undaunted. "I've always thought I would see how it goes, do what I can and quit if I stop enjoying it." She opted for a six-year training in Switzerland, London, Paris and Roanne (France) before starting to work alongside her father and her mother, Mayte, who helps manage the restaurant. Father and daughter create new dishes in intense daily sessions in a small laboratory-like kitchen on the restaurant's first floor. Elena describes the process: "We work the same way that my father did with my grandmother. Basically,



I present a dish and then we discuss it." Juan Mari puts it this way: "It's like musical generations. I'm an old rocker and she's heavy metal." They clearly love working together. Today, a signature style of the menu is the subtle thread of global flavors—tamarind, hibiscus, yeast, rhubarb, mango skin, molasses, coconut, smoked chocolate—woven around a central core of supreme quality traditional local produce like hake or Pyrenean beef. Elena acknowledges that her base values, like those of her father, are Basque. "I'm very influenced by my environment. What I really like is to work with ex-

ceptional raw materials and respect a boundary: not altering the produce too much. You can do a lot with spices, flavor contrasts and technique, but still keep a natural style."

*Favorite ingredients:*

"Summer squid caught by rod-and-line has wonderful flavor and texture, and makes great stock. Of flavorings, I love star anise and powdered licorice for savory and sweet dishes."

## Smoked Albacore Tuna with Fresh Figs and Pine Kernels

My first dish we ever put on the menu was a pyramid-like Basque salad, or *tontor*, of tuna; this is another early summer dish.

*Serves 4:*

- 600 g (1 1/4 lb) albacore tuna
- Olive oil, for brushing the fish

*Sour sauce:*

- 2 onions, skinned and very finely chopped



- 1 green pepper, trimmed and finely chopped
- 25 ml (3/4 fl oz) olive oil
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) honey
- 20 g (just over 1/2 oz) sugar
- 20 ml (1 tbsp + 1 tsp) sherry vinegar
- 25 ml (3/4 fl oz) red wine
- 1 l (1 3/4 pints) vegetable stock
- Salt, to taste
- Powdered ginger, to taste
- 50 ml (just under 2 fl oz) mild extra virgin olive oil (0.4°)

#### Tomato triangles:

- 300 g (10 oz) onion, finely chopped and sweated
- 500 g (1 lb) fresh tomato, skin and seeds removed

- Powdered licorice root, to taste
- Powdered ginger, to taste
- Worcestershire sauce, to taste
- 35 g (1 1/4 oz) agar, soaked and dissolved in 50 ml (just over 1 1/2 fl oz) water
- 100 g (3 1/2 oz) green pistachios, skinned and chopped
- Soy sauce, to taste

#### Vinaigrette:

- 100 ml (3 1/2 fl oz) extra virgin olive oil
- 10 g (1/2 oz) chopped sun-dried tomato, seeds removed
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) light molasses
- Soy sauce, to taste

#### Fig garnish:

- 60 g (2 oz) fresh figs
- 50 g (1 1/2 oz) pine kernels
- Fresh tarragon leaves

If you have a cold home-smoker, prepare it with chestnut wood chips and smoke the tuna. Cut the fish into 12 rectangles, brush with olive oil and keep to one side.

Make the sauce. Sweat the onion and pepper in olive oil until very soft but hardly golden, add the sugar and honey, moisten with the vinegar and cook until reduced. Add the wine and reduce again. Add with the vegetable stock and cook for 10 minutes. Strain and reduce to thicken. Season to taste with salt and ginger. Whisk in the olive oil.

Make the tomato triangles. Cook the onion and tomatoes to a puree in a heavy-based pan. Season with the ginger, licorice, Worcestershire and soy sauces. Measure out 330 ml (11 fl oz) puree, stir in the agar, dissolved to an elastic texture, and leave to set. Cut into rectangles and coat with the chopped nuts, pressing them in well. Griddle or lightly dry fry, and cut each rectangle diagonally into two triangles. Reserve.

Whisk together the vinaigrette ingredients. Trim the figs, press into tubular shapes and griddle or briefly dry fry with the pine kernels. Fry the tuna briefly on both sides in a lightly oiled hot pan. To serve, place three tuna pieces on each plate. Add the tomato triangles and the figs and pine kernels to one side, nap the fish with the sour sauce and the triangles with the vinaigrette. Decorate with tarragon leaves.

**Recommended wine:** Juan Mari, Elena and their sommeliers suggest a wine from one of the following denominations: Txacoli, or Navarra (a cask-fermented white), or a Rioja (a cask-fermented varietal Viura wine).

## BUBBLING UNDER: NAMES TO WATCH

Ten more Basque and Catalan names to watch over the next few years.

**Andoni Arrieta**

After making his mark with dishes blurring the traditional sweet savory divide, Arrieta, aged 26, has begun to run his own kitchen, Landatxueta de Loiu, in Bilbao.

**Oriol Balaguer**

This bespectacled 28-year-old patissier and dessert chef, now at El Bulli, has just published a masterful book on restaurant puddings that are elaborate, playful and beautiful.

**Sergio Benages**

Still only 22-years-old, but already with a major résumé and a striking modern style, Benages has just returned home to Girona to cook at La Cuina de Can Pipes.

**Nando Jubany**

After cooking in his parents' restaurant from the age of ten and training around Spain, Nando's established a name for brilliant remakes of local dishes at Can Jubany, Vic.

**Álvaro Martínez**

Exotic, vibrant contrasts mark the cooking of this 30-year-old chef at Cubita Kaia, the modern counterpart of his parents' traditional eatery, also in Bilbao.

**Josean Martínez**

After taking over the kitchen at the Guggenheim Bilbao last year, Josean won a major young cooks' prize in San Sebastián at the age of 23.

**Ángel Palacios**

Currently at La Broche, aged 25, Palacios has shown his mastery of every area—but especially desserts—and is tipped as a name for the future.

**Marc Singla**

Cooking at Talaia Mar, Barcelona, aged 29, Singla serves a modern procession of small *tapas* and tasting dishes marked by radical deconstruction and other modern ideas.

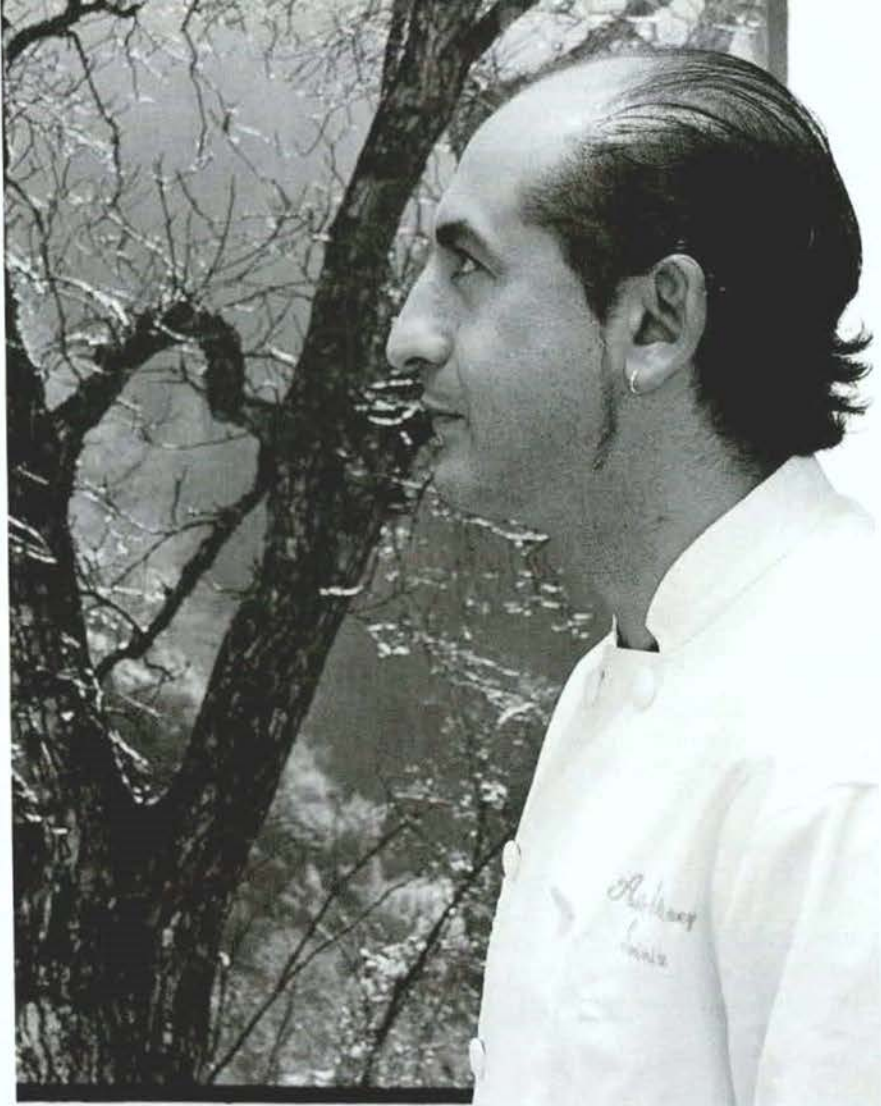
**Gorka Txapartegi**

This is very refined Basque haute cuisine, with some Mediterranean flavors, at La Alameda, the family restaurant in Fuentarrabia, now with a Michelin star.

**Jordi Villa**

Aged 27, Villa is making a name for himself at Alabardero in Barcelona with Catalan dishes with unexpected modern twists that change the form but not the underlying idea.

## Aitor Elizegi



"I think it's important that a lot of us felt we were playing when we started out," says Elizegi. "I always wanted to do something with my hands. I loved drawing and painting as a child." Today, aged 34, he is settling into his bold new restaurant, Gaminiz, in a futuristic technology business estate close to Bilbao airport. Designed as an open-plan modernist Basque farmhouse, the light-filled bar and dining room look onto the kitchen; all three, and the upstairs dining room, open onto the world outside. "It's a discipline for us, a way of being accessible, normal, open to people." It's also a good symbol for Elizegi's cooking, which gives a new architectural cut to consciously regional dishes—"looking for volume, structure, something simple but clear"—and adds perspective from the outside world. This is not fusion, but the links between Japanese and Basque fish cookery are clear in dish-

es like a thin squid soup with lemon grass, squid rings and a pork-fatback brochette. His love of drawing has produced a clear esthetic. "There was a time when people were making lots of circles, under Robuchon's influence, but, without getting too pretentious about it, I think the lines should be straight." He makes light of the years of hard work behind his success today: after cooking school at Galdakano he spent time at the Hotel Bermeo, then Andra Mari (a hothouse of young cooks) and his first restaurant, also called Gaminiz, in a country village. "I enjoyed myself there more than making money." But he is at pains to point out that creating new dishes is not easy. "Sometimes an idea may come from handling food, from its smells and so on. The most difficult way is sitting in front of a blank sheet of paper, but that's why you have to do it, because it's the hardest way."

### *Favorite ingredients:*

"I think caviar is one of the few luxuries that is worth it. It's a gem. Otherwise, fish in general, with white wine. At home we'd just have the wine..."

## Oysters with Seaweed Tempura and Caviar Junket

I'm very marked by having worked in a port for six years. I think a restaurant needs to be within reach of the sea. Raw fish had always interested me so Japanese cooking is something I could identify with and it has influenced some dishes.

### Serves 4:

- 8 fresh oysters
- 100 ml (3 1/2 fl oz) extra virgin olive oil, for marinating
- 200 ml (7 fl oz) balsamic Modena vinegar, for marinating
- 10 ml (2 level tsp) Maldon salt flakes
- Extra virgin olive oil, to serve
- 20 mache leaves

### Junket:

- 90 ml (3 fl oz) sheep's milk
- 4 drops rennet essence (1 per mold)
- 1 level tsp (5 ml) ground black pepper
- 25 g (3/4 oz) caviar

### Mushroom and pistachio cream:

- 150 g (5 oz) wild mushrooms
- 30 g (5 oz) skinned green pistachios
- 100 ml (3 1/2 fl oz) extra virgin olive oil
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) egg white

### Seaweed tempura:

- 100 g (3 1/2 oz) sea lettuce, rehydrated
- 1 egg white
- 80 g (2 3/4 oz) plain flour
- 100 ml (3 1/2 fl oz) bubbly water
- 5 ml (1 level tsp) yeast granules
- Pinch curry powder
- Extra virgin olive oil, for deep frying

Shuck the oysters, marinate them in the olive oil and vinegar for 3 minutes and slice them thinly, flattening them first between cellophane or plastic wrap. Freeze until just before serving.

Make the junket with the sheep's milk, pasteurizing it first at 60°C/125°F. Divide the caviar between four 1/2-3/4 fl oz (15-25 ml) molds, stir the pepper into the milk and pour it over caviar in the molds. Add a drop of rennet essence to each and leave to set.

Sauté the wild mushrooms with the pistachios in olive oil. Drain well and puree the mixture in a thermomix or blender, adding the olive oil and egg white, to give a smooth emulsion. Make the tempura batter, season with the curry powder and dip the sea lettuce in the batter. Fry until golden in the olive oil and drain on kitchen paper towels.

Allow the oyster slices to thaw dressed with the mushroom and pistachio sauce. On each plate place the slices, overlapping; to one side place the miniature junket and two sea lettuce tempura. To the other side place some Maldon salt flakes, extra virgin olive oil, and mache.

### Recommended wine:

Aitor suggests a Basque white Txacoli D.O. wine.





# Isaac Salaberría



Isaac Salaberría's knack for reshaping haute cuisine around down-to-earth flavors may be inherited. Born in his family's fourth-generation country restaurant near San Sebastián, Fagollaga, he started cooking alongside his mother and aunt from the age of 15. One of his own favorite dishes, now a classic on his menu, defines the style: a charlotte of pig's trotters made with lots of vegetables, wrapped in a *pâté confitado*. "I like its simplicity and the cheap ingredients," he explains. Shy and soft spoken, he plays down his instinctive gifts. "You could say I'm more of a glutton than a chef. I never went to cooking school because I knew it would be a disaster. I was a rebel at school, the one with the bad marks." But Isaac, now aged 30, has studied in his own way. Extensive reading—he quotes Guérard as his key reference book—and three years of cooking experience at Arzak and Via Veneto, in Barcelona, have left their mark. So, too, have eating adventures around Asia and Latin America. "In Asia, I love the search for perfection. In Latin America, the vegetables, fruits and wines." New dishes this year have included roast Iberian pork fatback with truffle-infused almond milk; and walnut ice cream, with coffee granita, mascarpone sauce, and a biscuit. On a day-to-day basis, Isaac is rarely away from his work, starting at 7:30 a.m. in the market, then returning to the countryside to cook. He shuns social and media events. "Outside the profession people have a very unreal idea of what it is to be a cook. Above all, it's very hard work. Some come in a flash, but most take months, even years to perfect the flavors."

#### *Favorite ingredients:*

"I like everything: shellfish, offal—liver, pig's trotters and so on—and also nuts, which give you a lot of textures and flavors. Among larder products, I like dairy products, olive oil and Modena vinegars."



## Fried Lobster with Consommé and Nut Brittle

This is one of a line of dishes I've been developing over the last year and a half, replacing traditional sauces with thinner stocks flavored with vinegars and spices.

### Serves 4:

- 4 fresh raw lobsters
- Fresh chervil leaves and finely chopped chives

### Nut brittle:

- 120 g (4 oz) green pistachios
- 120 g (4 oz) skinned, untoasted almonds
- 100 g (3 1/2 oz) skinned unsalted peanuts

### Consommé:

- 1 onion, skinned
- 1 leek, trimmed

- 1 carrot, trimmed and peeled
- 4 lobster heads
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) brandy
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) tomato puree
- 800 ml (1 1/2 pts) water
- Egg white, to clarify
- Salt to taste
- Young leek shoots
- 1 star anise

To make the consommé, sauté the vegetables in olive oil, add the lobster heads, brandy, tomato puree and water, cover and cook gently over low heat for two hours. At the end, clarify with egg white, salt to taste and keep warm.

Remove the lobster meat from its shell, reserving the tail and claws for this dish. Grind the nuts in a blender (do not worry about any oiliness making them cling together). Coat the lobster tails in the nut brittle. Before the final stage of cooking, heat four deep serving dishes. Place

the star anise and young leek shoots in a large 600 ml (1 pt) container, pour over 400 ml (14 fl oz) consommé and leave to infuse for 25 seconds. Pour off into a heated serving jug.

Fry the lobster tails and claws. On each plate scatter some finely chopped chives and chervil leaves, and arrange two of the claws with a tail on top. Serve the infused consommé in its jug so each person can pour as much as they want around the lobster.

### Recommended wine:

Xavier, Fagollaga's sommelier, recommends an Albariño D.O. wine with grassy aromas, or a white Somontano or Txacoli.

## MAESTRO OF MAESTROS: LUIS IRÍZAR

Any story on modern Spanish cooking would be incomplete without mentioning Luis Irizar, who pioneered professional training for cooks back in the late 1960s and helped to found Basque *nueva cocina* with ex-students and other chefs. Nicknamed "maestro de maestros" within the profession, now aged 70 and still running his school in San Sebastián, Irizar's perspective on the gathering momentum in modern Spanish restaurants is unique. "Everything stopped for twenty years after the Civil War," he explains. "Nothing happened—or rather, everything deteriorated." Unusually, he left Spain in the 1950s and worked in Paris and London, where he ran the in-house training of chefs at the Hilton. Then, in 1967, a friend suggested he should use his experience and set up a school in a working restaurant to help Basque restaurant cuisine back on its feet. Ten years after it opened, in Zarauz, came the *nueva cocina* movement. The rest is his-

tory. "Today it's the other way around from my era. Now chefs come here from abroad to find out what is going on. The standards are very high for the new generation. Their access to the kitchens of the previous generation of chefs, doing work-practice with them, has changed everything for the new generation." Today Irizar not only runs his own school, but also acts as consultant to state-run cooking colleges. Where does he see things going in the future? "The difficulties with sourcing good produce are affecting us already and will change cooking styles a lot. We need to combine accessible prices and use the problems to keep encouraging creativity and new ideas."

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# Sergi Arola

"Although I was born in Barcelona, I've always felt that I belong to the region just north of it, the Ampurdán," explains Arola, who signed on at municipal cooking school to find more time to practice bass guitar. "My wife, Sara, is from Rosas, and that's where our home is." Arola's Catalan roots can be felt in a two-way axis in his cooking: a focus on regional flavors, played off against his radical contemporary technique learned from Ferran Adrià, of El Bulli, where Arola worked for three years. Aged only 28, he then took the leap to work on his own, moving to Madrid to set up his own restaurant, La Broche, where he softened Adrià's sometimes surreal techniques and gelatinous textures to a more straightforward but pointedly modern style. Last year the restaurant relocated to a cool, white-on-white minimalist city center dining room, linked to a hotel, and Arola picked up a second Michelin star. Signature dishes include marinated sardines stuffed with herring roe and a tiny bread crust with tomato on top. He is a self-confessed perfectionist, but elusive about describing his cooking style, preferring to put the emphasis on the people who cook and eat with him. "I'd call my style complicity





with the clients—the food has to please them.” Likewise, his main achievement is “the team who works with me. We eat together, we work on new dishes together and so on.” The restaurant is now closed on weekends so he can spend more time with his wife and daughter. “You cannot be professionally available 24 hours a day.” He is clear about what sets his generation apart as chefs. “Proper training has become the norm, and for the first time traditional *alta cocina* has come together with a revolutionary understanding of technique, and one of the world’s greatest traditions of regional cookery.” But, in the end, he argues, “instinct comes above technique and produce. Instinct is sacred.”

#### *Favorite ingredients:*

“Sardines. They are simple and humble, but with endless potential. Marinated sardines are like a talisman on my menu. At home, I am almost vegetarian although I don’t like the word. Let’s just say I eat a lot of vegetables.”

## Salt-cod with Samfaina and Pil-pil Soup

#### *Serves 4:*

- 4 pieces of salt-cod, rehydrated and desalted in at least two changes of water
- Abundant extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 head of garlic
- Herbs: thyme, rosemary and bay leaf
- Large handful of washed spinach leaves

#### *Samfaina:*

- 1 sweet red bell pepper
- 1 green bell pepper
- 1 eggplant (aubergine)
- 1 zucchini (courgette)
- 5 ml (1 level tsp) finely chopped fresh garlic
- A little olive oil for sautéing

#### *Pil-pil soup:*

- Salt-cod gelatin
- About 200 ml (7 fl oz) fresh whipping or double cream
- About 200 ml (7 fl oz) whole-fat milk

#### *Sage oil: (optional)*

- Handful of fresh sage
- 250 ml (8 fl oz) sunflower oil

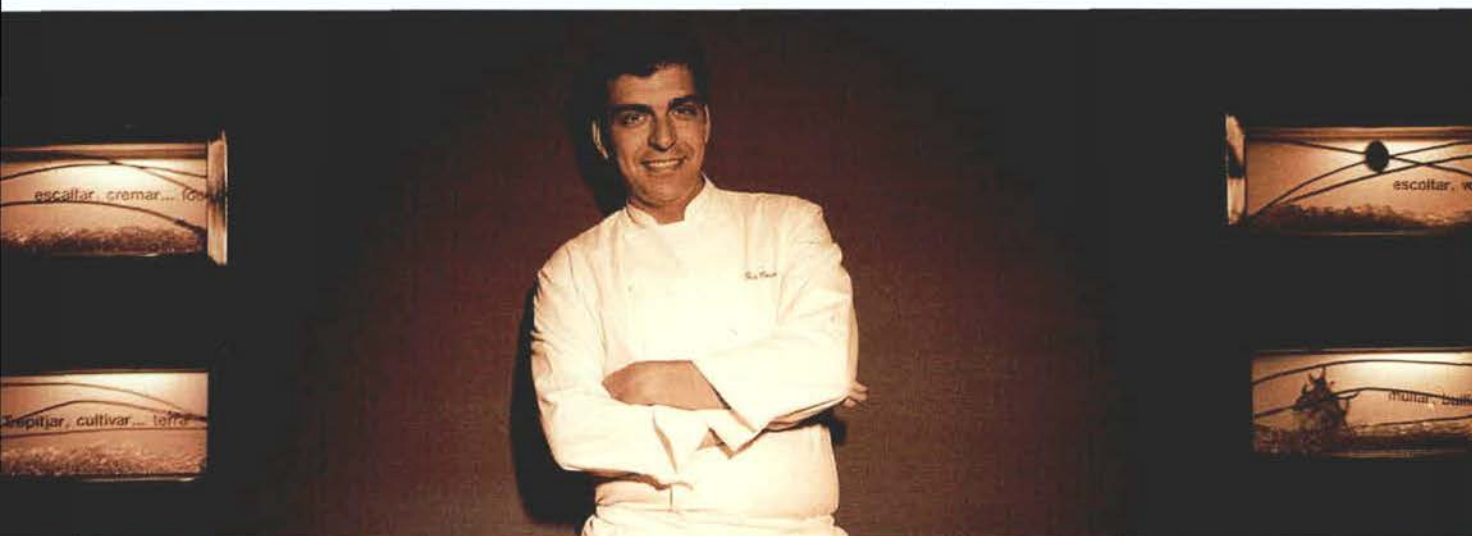
Dice the vegetables finely and sauté over high heat in the olive oil with the finely chopped garlic. Remove from heat. Keep covered and warm. Heat plenty of olive oil with half a head of garlic and *herbs de Provence*

in a deep, high-sided, heavy-bottomed pan. Insert a cooking thermometer and when the oil reaches 80°C (160°F), add the salt-cod and cook for 5-6 minutes. You will know when it is done because the layers of flesh separate. Remove the fish, drain and keep warm. Carefully decant the olive oil, leaving the gelatin from the salt-cod at the bottom of the pan. Put it into a blender on the lowest speed and slowly add the milk and cream until you have a very light, aromatic, bacalao cream. Finally, cook the spinach in a drop or two of olive oil. On warmed plates make a bed of spinach, then spoon samfaina over the top and the pil-pil cream around the edge. On top of the samfaina place the salt-cod, heated through with a grill. If you like, make sage oil by beating the sage and oil together in a mixer. Pour a ring around the spinach on the plate.

#### *Recommended wine:*

Sergi’s suggestion is one of two Godellos from Galicia: a well-structured, cask-fermented Godello varietal, or a coupage of Treixadura, Godello or Doña Blanca.

# Ramón Freixa



Since Ramón Freixa joined his father, Josep María, in the kitchens of the family restaurant, El Racó d'en Freixa, in 1993, a new conceptual approach and visual spin have slowly but surely been transforming the Mediterranean menu. "There's a part of cooking which is tradition and memory, another part which is product and technique, and another which is balance across the menu," explains Ramón, aged 29. Dishes include a first course of creamy, sweet, iced and liquid tomato with prawns, and a main course of local grain-fed chicken with lobster, citrus fruit and snow peas. "I don't really think of our cooking as Catalan," he explains,

"We might reinterpret a Canarian sauce, for example, or make a dish with abalone from the Pacific." But local influences—for example, mixing seafood with poultry, or meat with fruit—lend a clear regional imprint. So, too, does the visual mark of Miró, Cubism and Gaudí. Underlying all this is immaculate technique learned during three years spent in Belgian and French restaurants, including Michel Bras, and new inputs from reading, such as American chefs' books. He sets aside at least two blocks of time every week for experimenting in the kitchen, and says he owes a lot in this respect to his young kitchen



team, who are mostly in their early twenties. "We try to make sure that everybody understands it's not just about doing what you've been taught, but cooking with your heart, with enthusiasm as well as the technique you've learned. Maybe that's the most important thing about our generation, as well as the fact that we're friends."

**Favorite ingredients:**

"I love free-range farmhouse eggs, green or white asparagus and wild mushrooms, in which I'd include truffles. I also like the taste of the sea in products like pasta or salt flavored with seaweed."

## Stuffed Iberian Pork Fillets with Cereal Jardinière

**Serves 4:**

- 4 fillets of Iberian pork
- 200 g (7 oz) prunes, stoned and macerated with wine

**Glazed pork cutlets:**

- 4 pork cutlets
- 45 ml (3 tbsp) soy sauce
- 45 ml (3 tbsp) honey
- 2 tsp peanut butter

**Cereal jardinière:**

- 60 g (2 oz) precooked cous-cous
- 60 g (2 oz) precooked cracked wheat or bulgur
- 60 g (2 oz) oat flakes
- 60 g (2 oz) brown rice
- 60 g (2 oz) dried quinoa grain
- Curry cream, made from cream heated with curry powder
- 60 g (2 oz) chopped dried prunes and apricots
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) pine kernels
- Extra virgin olive oil, for frying
- 1 can unsweetened coconut milk
- 100 g (3 1/2 oz) piperrada or ratatouille
- 4 potato slices

Marinate the cutlets in soy sauce and honey for two hours.

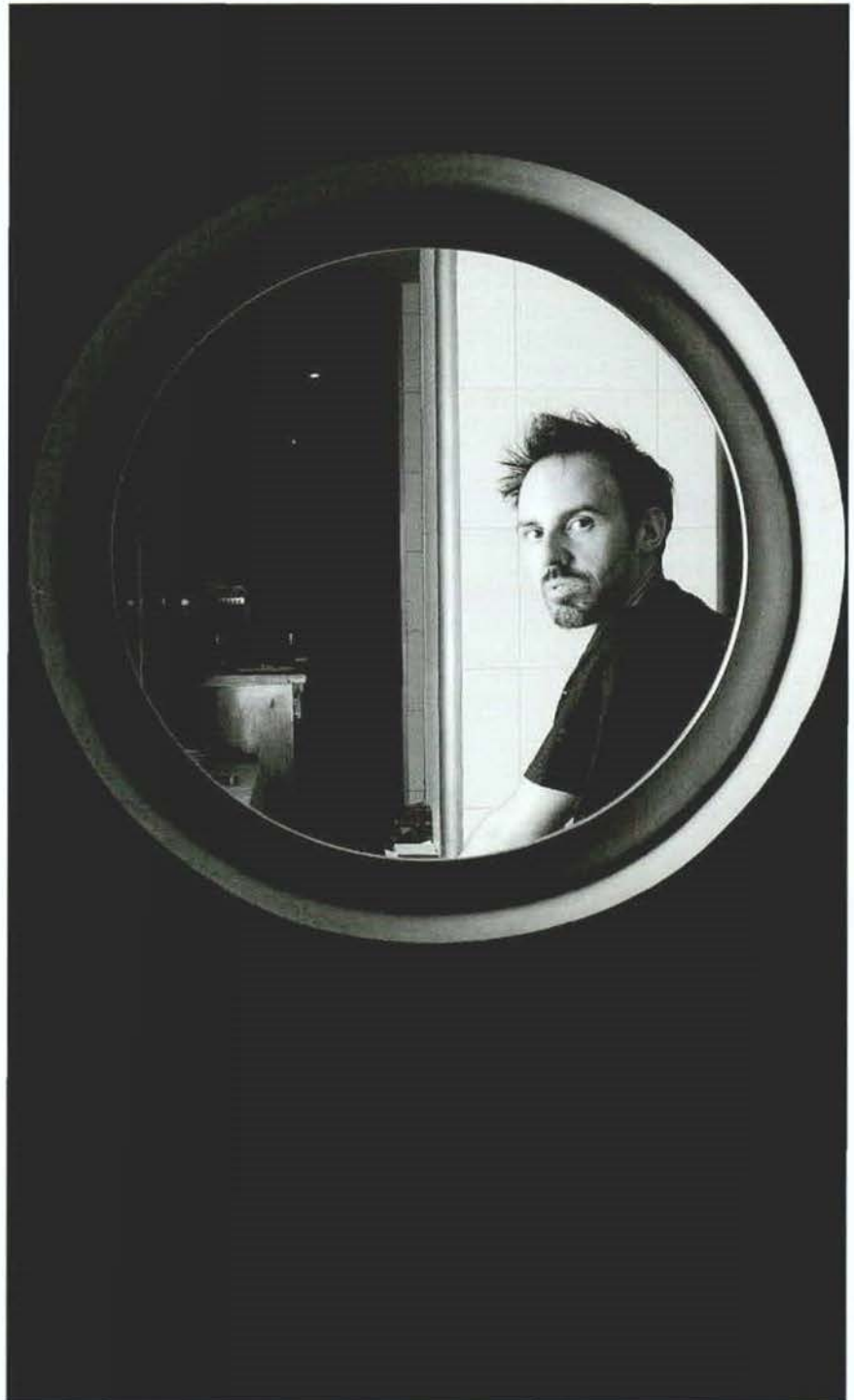
Stuff the pork fillets with the prunes, wrap them in cooking film or baking parchment and cook at the lowest oven setting available, for example 65°C (130°F) for an hour (adjust the cooking time if the temperature is higher). Keep warm. Turn up the oven and roast the cutlets, spreading them very thinly with peanut butter. Meanwhile, prepare the cereal jardinière. Boil all the cereals in separate pans of salted water and drain well. Mix the cous-cous with the curried cream. Sauté the cracked wheat, dried fruit and pine kernels in a little olive oil. Simmer the oats in coconut milk for 5-10 minutes. Mix the brown rice with the piperrada (ratatouille.) Fry the quinoa in olive oil. Keep each mixture warm. Just before serving, roast the pork fillet lightly and the potato slices until crunchy. On warm plates arrange the cereal jardinière, pork fillet and cutlet, with the potato slice topping the cutlet.

**Recommended wine:**

Ramón's suggestion is a white wine made with native varieties from the Conca de Barberà, in Tarragona.

# Jordi Parramón

A jazz freak and avid reader, Jordi Parramón began to learn to cook with Jean Louis Neichel in Barcelona at the age of 19. "I wanted the French discipline, the technique, the understanding of how produce works, but I did not know where it would lead me." After working in a Japanese restaurant, running the kitchen at Jean Luc Figueres' Barcelona restaurant, studying dietetics and soaking up a wider world of haute cuisine through books, courses or working visits to restaurants, he returned to his hometown, Vic, 65 km (40 miles) from Barcelona, in 1996. A Michelin star came quickly, in 1998, almost before the local clientele were won over by his straightforward but radical dishes like duck with pears and licorice, or sardine and seaweed salad. His cooking is rooted in what he calls "archived, assimilated flavors" lit up by the multicultural tastes of Barcelona's markets and shops, but also in an ethical philosophy. "We need to remain clear that the foods we eat have died in order for us to be able to prepare them, and are not convenience objects. That is a mistaken idea which is leading to today's problems in the food chain." What does that mean in the context of a



restaurant kitchen? "For example, I'd bone and marinate a sardine, but never purée it. I'd never really transform the texture of a tomato either." Now aged 33, he is working at his own pace, without a sense of hurry, drawing all his clients from around Spain. A future plan is to put all his recipes on the web for open access. "One of the things I like about our generation is that we don't usually try to keep secrets. In Catalonia there are about 25 of us creating on an everyday basis. It's the combination of that and the optimism which is magical."

***Favorite ingredients:***

"I like to work a lot with the truffles from around here—they're very dry and aromatic. I make a cold infusion from them which is a variation on a rosemary tea people drink as a digestive here after meals."

## Sea Bass with Fried Bananas and Comfit of Duck

I buy comfit of duck gizzards from the poultry rearers who make the comfit themselves with the duck fat. But it's easy to buy comfit today in different countries, and it is one of the best preserved products, so it is good to find new ways of using it.

***Serves 4:***

- 4 pieces of sea bass, skin on, each weighing 150 g (5 oz)
- Oil and unsalted butter, for frying
- 2 Canarian bananas
- Salt
- 8 duck gizzards in comfit, preferably with duck fat
- A little balsamic vinegar

***Sauce:***

- About 200 ml (7 fl oz) beef or chicken stock
- About 2 dsps (40 ml) sherry or good quality wine vinegar

Sauté the fish in a mixture of unsalted butter and olive oil in a heavy-

based frying pan and sauté the fish, skin-side first, turning when golden. In a separate pan, sauté the banana with a little butter until it is soft. Salt lightly.

Halve the duck gizzards. Warm them through very slowly in a mixture of the comfit's own fat and a little sweet vinegar. To make the sauce, reduce the sherry or wine vinegar in a heavy-based pan, add the chicken or meat stock and reduce again until the sauce has body. Adjust if necessary with more stock or vinegar.

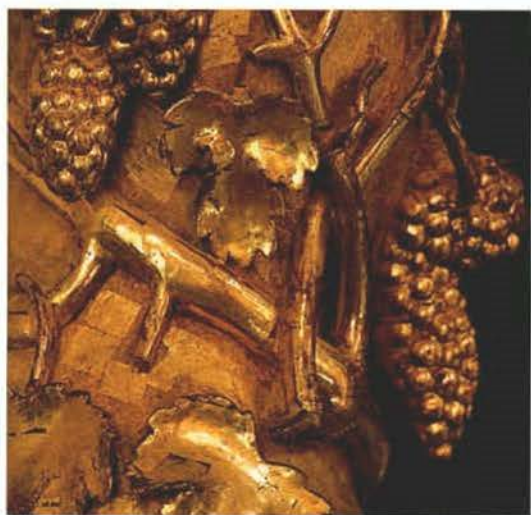
Whisk in the fat in which you warmed through the duck. Place the sea bass in the middle of the dish. Cut each banana in half and place a piece on top of the fish, with the gizzards around the sides. Nap everything with the vinegar and stock glaze.

***Recommended wine:***

Josep Puigcorbè, the sommelier at Jordi Parramón, recommends a Penedès D.O. white wine with enough body to match the duck: for example, a lightly oaked (6 months on wood) *crianza* Xarel·lo varietal.



# From Jaca to Frómista



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TEXT  
BETTINA KRÜCKEN

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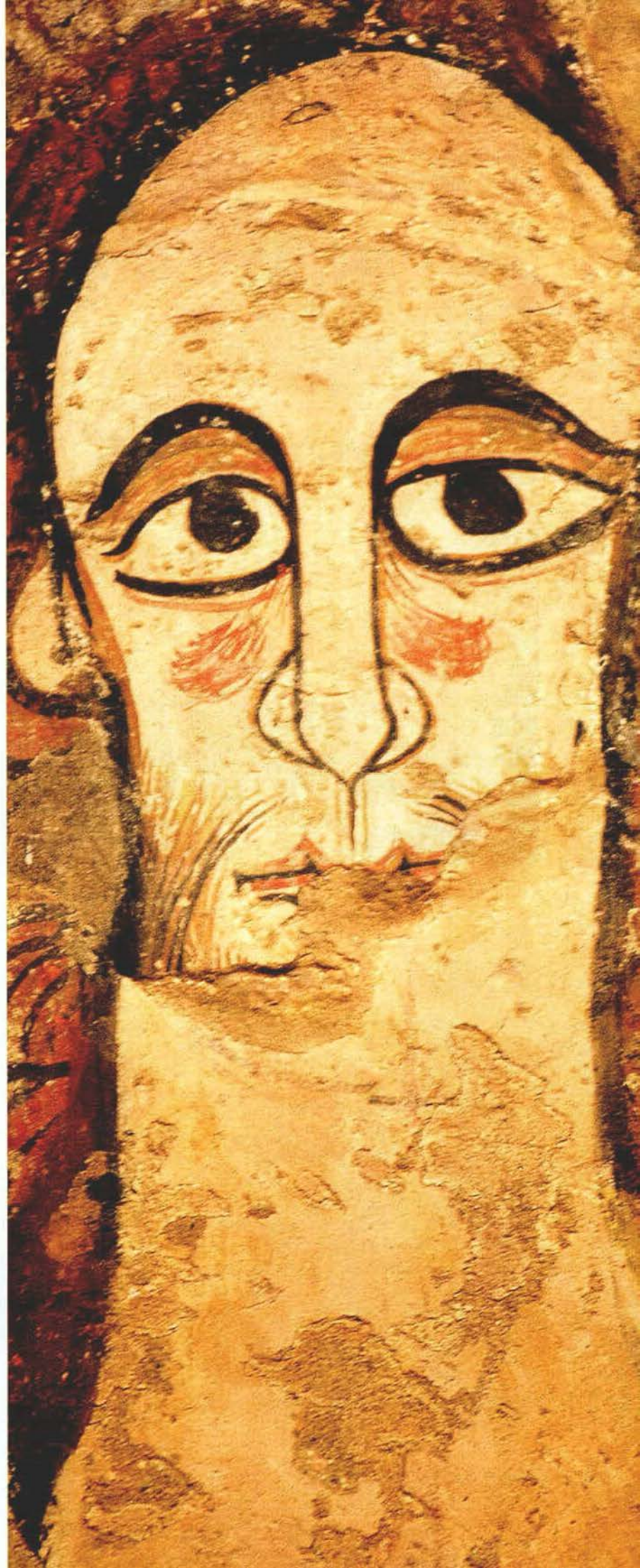
TRANSLATION  
SYNONYME

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The Pilgrim's Way that leads to the grave of the Apostle Saint James (Santiago) has provided a goal for the people of Europe and the Christian world in a single destination since the 9th century: Santiago de Compostela in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula. For both political and religious reasons, the lords and commons of every land and nation took it upon themselves to make the long pilgrimage, whether to reconquer the Peninsula for Christ after the Muslim invasion or for the forgiveness of sins. There are many reasons today to make the trip to Santiago: tourism, faith, or simply to marvel at the astonishing series of

historical monuments along the way and their powerful tale of the pilgrim route.

Just preparing this trip was enough to get both soul and senses keyed up for the days ahead. To drive or walk through the springtime of northern Spain in the footsteps of the medieval pilgrims is not only a spiritual, but also a historical, gastronomic and cultural experience of the first order. We planned to take in and chronicle both our culinary impressions and the spirit of the pilgrim route, since “eating and drinking keeps body and soul together” as the saying has it. This report therefore takes a twofold approach, embracing our spiritual and cultural experience and our gastronomic encounter with the Pilgrims’ Way.





## Aragon

Our journey begins in Jaca in the Pyrenean foothills. The Aragonese part of what is known as the "French route" begins at the pass of Somport and, passing by the ski resorts of Candanchú and Canfranc, continues down to Jaca, whence we traveled five days westward through the Aragonese province of Huesca, over Navarre and La Rioja to Burgos in the autonomous region of Castile-León, finally to arrive in Frómista in the province of Palencia.

We in no way regretted our decision not to take the more commonly used crossing from France at Roncesvalles because the Diocesan Museum at the cathedral in Jaca contains extraordinary treasures, providing just the right impression at the journey's be-

## Aragon

Having fed the soul on the rich fair of our impressions, it would not have been right to let the body fast. Board and lodging were, of course, essential for the medieval pilgrim, but no less so for any modern traveler who undertakes the journey on foot. We did not actually do a great deal of walking, but even so we had no intention of missing the gastronomic delights along the Pilgrims' Way. Of the three provinces of Aragon, the route leads only through Huesca (with the

exception of a tiny corner of Saragossa province). From time immemorial, the diet of this province has been based on locally grown fruit, vegetables and olives, as well as meat from livestock, particularly sheep. Ternasco de Aragón, or baby lamb, even has a D.O. quality seal. In the valleys of Ansó and Hecho, which lie a little way to the north of Puente la Reina de Jaca a strong, slightly piquant cheese, Ansó-Hecho cheese, has been made for centuries. The area around Tauste in the province of Saragossa, has traditional-

ly had an important sheep farming industry and is the home of queso de Tauste, a typical shepherds' cheese made of sheep's milk. Lovers of delicacies will find truffles

fit for the most discriminating palates in Graus. There is something for those with a sweet tooth also: frutas de Aragón—individually packed slices of chocolate-covered apple,



ginning of what lay before us: a veritable plethora of Romanesque art. Miguel Lafuente, the museum director explained, "Romanesque art leads the viewer right to the heart of European culture in the 12th and 13th centuries. It is not aesthetic beauty that speaks to the senses in this art, but rather its intellectual mode of expressing the human soul, which tries to make direct contact with the divine and the holy." We experienced what Don Miguel meant by "contact" in the contemplation of the wooden and stone sculptures to be found in the cathedral cloisters. On one of the capitals we discovered an Old Testament scene of King David surrounded by musicians and utterly caught up in playing a kind of lute. The rendering is so full of rhythm that we could almost see his foot tapping.

The faces of the numerous 11th- to 13th-century polychrome wood carvings are so simple and unaffected that even a child could see what is meant.

We stood spellbound before the museum's greatest treasure, a 12th-century pantocrator, looking into the large eyes that seemed somehow to see within us.

The collection of Romanesque frescos taken from throughout the diocese is one of the most important in Europe, with representations of scenes from both the Old and the New Testaments.

The construction of the cathedral began in 1076, and it was to be a prototype for many that were later built on the Pilgrims' Way and remains to this day one of the greatest examples of Romanesque architecture in

Left and right:  
Diocesan  
Museum in Jaca



Spain. El maestro de Jaca, whose influence we would see over and over again on our journey, was the creator of the majority of the sculptures that stand out in the museum's collection for their extraordinary quality. We left Jaca and drove along the banks of the Aragon River to the monastery of San Juan de la Peña. The monastery, which clings to the steep sides of Monte Pano under an enormous overhanging cliff that





shields it from the rain and snow, has stood since the year 902. Legend has it that two brothers, Felix and Voto founded the monastery here in a tiny chapel dedicated to John the Baptist while on the run from the Moorish occupiers of Jaca, later supporting the reconquest and re-chris-

tianization of Jaca from this spot. Today, the cloister, which contains wonderful, if rather too perfectly restored, Romanesque capitals is to be found right under the natural vault formed by the cliff. Unfortunately, the patina has been lost, and with it a great part of the magic that radiates

out of this place. The representations of Genesis and the life of Christ are now clearly to be seen, but they somehow look rather artificial, as though they were copies. In the Mozarabic (Spanish architectural style of Christian churches built under Muslim rule) chapel in the lower



cherries, apricots and peaches, which are simply delicious.

The wines of the Somontano region (see Spain Gourmetour No. 48), which lies a little further to the south, have attracted increasing attention in recent years, and rightly so. The region produces both white and red wines using traditional Spanish grapes like Macabeo, red and white Garnacha, Tempranillo, and Moristel or Parraleta, as well as major foreign varieties like Chardonnay and Gewürztraminer, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, and

Merlot. Some of the wineries, like Viñas del Vero, Bodegas Pirineos or Enate and Blecua are among the most modern in Spain, with first class enologists, state-of-the-art production methods and facilities, and intelligent marketing. Visits should be arranged in advance, however.

We were able to observe and enjoy the combination of these excellent ingredients in a variety of very different restaurants. In Jaca, we spent our first night after a long journey from Madrid in the family-run Hotel Conde Aznar,



Cloister in  
San Juan  
de la Peña

part of the monastery, built in the 10th and 11th centuries, the remains of wonderful, as yet unrestored, 12th-century murals are still discernible in the vaults. Down here the seclusion and spiritual power of the place can still be clearly felt.

Our next stop was Santa Cruz de la Serós, not far from San Juan de la Peña on our way west. Both churches in this tiny village are extraordinary examples of the Romanesque style. The first thing to strike the eye on the façade of the church dedicated to Santa María is the tympanum over the door, which is identical to that of the Cathedral at Jaca—a christogram formed by the Greek letters Chi and Rho flanked by two lions (symbolizing Christ). One of the lions is trampling a basilisk under his claw, while the other protects a human figure.

The symbolization is unmistakable and provided the medieval pilgrims, who were far better versed in the meaning of such representations, with the confidence and hope they would need on the long journey to Santiago.

In the nearby hermitage of San Caprasio we discovered Italian influences in the “Lombard arches” (haunched anchor blocks) that form a striking structural feature along the long walls of the building. Though this is a tiny church, the building, with its stern and compact structure, appears almost like a fortress. One feels, then, that the Pilgrims’ Way to Santiago with its churches and monasteries must also have provided security for the areas wrested back from Muslim control. The conflict with the Muslim peoples who invad-

ed first Andalusia from North Africa in the 8th century and swiftly pushed forward right into the north of Spain is present until today along the whole of the Santiago Pilgrims’ Way. Thus, we would see frequent representations of the Apostle Saint James as the slayer of Moors in many places along our route.

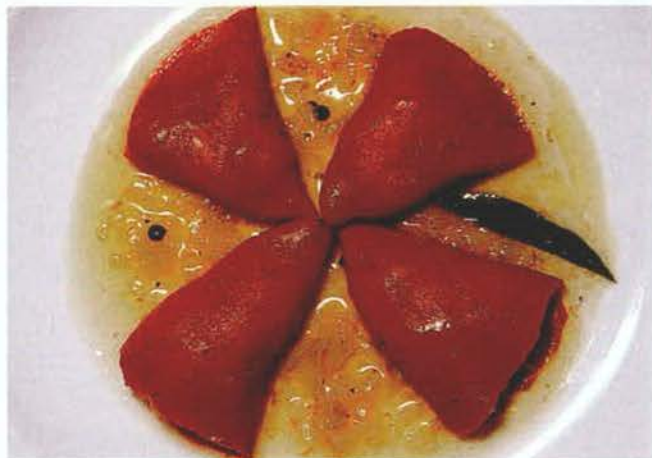
We continued along the banks of the Aragon River as far as the Yesa reservoir. In this area numerous villages were flooded in order to construct the dam in 1965, or they were abandoned as their fields and meadows sank beneath the rising waters and it became impossible to make a living. Many of the superb frescos we had admired in the Diocesan Museum in Jaca came from these lost churches.

where we enjoyed an exquisite menu (venison and Idiazábal cheese carpaccio, ravioli stuffed with pig’s trotters accompanied by tender, fresh young beans and green asparagus, puff pastries filled with potato, apple and foie gras and mousseline) in the hotel restaurant, La Cocina Aragonesa, together with the perfect wine (1996 Gran Vos by Viñas del Vero), not to mention the friendly service provided by Mertxe Andoñedo. The menu itself reflects a blend of traditional Aragonese and Basque-inspired dishes, since

Mertxe, the owner, and her chef are from San Sebastián. The food was perfectly prepared and the atmosphere in the traditionally decorated restaurant was pleasant, making a real culinary experience of the visit.

## Navarre

As a first note to the theme of eating and drinking in Navarre, we could quote Aymeric Picaud, the French monk who wrote the first “tourist guide” to the Santiago route at the request of Pope Calixtus XII in the 12th century. Pi-



Monastery  
of Leyre

## Navarre

In the eye of a strong wind blowing down from the mountains on our way to the monastery of Leyre we were able to observe a flock of vultures borne aloft and describing great circles in the upper air. We have reached the autonomous region of Navarre and stand fascinated be-

fore the Porta Speciosa, the richly decorated Romanesque church portal created by Maestro Esteban around the middle of the 12th century. The work is signed with a typical capital of the master's, two large birds of prey pecking at their feet. The monastery of San Salvador de Leyre, one of the oldest and most important in Spain was founded

during the rule of the Visigoths (5th to 8th century), though it did not reach the zenith of its power until the 10th and 11th century under the reign of Sancho the Older, King of Navarre. The oldest surviving part of the monastery is the 11th century crypt. Three rows of arches divide the space into four naves. Not all three rows of arches were built at the



caud reports that the people of Navarre made life difficult for the pilgrims, had no idea about eating, poisoned the rivers and otherwise punished travelers with their misdeeds. As modern culinary pilgrims, we must say that you can in fact eat like a king here, a saying more than a pinch of truth to it, since cooks from Navarre were responsible for the well-being of the pampered French court in the 14th century, as Navarre was belonging to France at that time.

Anyone who has not yet heard of pimientos de



Santa María  
La Real in  
Sangüesa

same time, however. Only when it became clear that the main body of the church above would be too heavy and the roof of the crypt, which in fact acts as the foundation for the church, needed strengthening, was the broad central nave divided by a third row of arches. The short columns topped by massive capitals, each bearing its own geo-

metrical or floral design, thus carry the full weight of the three apses and the monastery tower.

In the Monastery of Leyre they tell the legend of the 10th-century abbot Virila who could not imagine the mystery of eternity until he fell into a trance on hearing a songbird in the neighboring woods, only to awaken and return to the monastery 300 years later.

Sadly, we had less time, and so we journeyed on to Sangüesa to admire the monuments of this little town, which nonetheless achieved great importance in the late Middle Ages because of the Pilgrims' Way. The kings of the former Kingdom of Navarre frequently stayed here, and the palace of the Prince of Viana bears witness to these sojourns. The most

piquillo from Lodosa, Mendavia asparagus, Tudela artichokes, pochas beans from Sangüesa, Roncal and Idiazábal cheese, trout à la Navarre or chorizo from Pamplona would do well to set off (preferably on the old Pilgrims' Way) without delay to atone for such ignorance. Pimientos de piquillo, small, sweet yet slightly hot, bright red peppers, are prepared in the most varied of ways and have already cast their spell over many American and other international chefs and inspired new recipes (see Spain



Villamayor de Monjardín



impressive portal we had seen so far was in the church of Santa María La Real in Sangüesa. At the top there is a pantocrator, surrounded by the symbols of the Evangelists, two worshipping angels and four of the Apostles. The other eight Apostles are depicted in a second level below. The soffit above the tympanum shows bishops and pilgrims on the outer arch, the virtues and sins in the second and warriors, musicians, troubadours, artisans and other offices of medieval society in the third. In one of the side panels closing the soffit one can see a number of figures arranged with no particular order and on the other, clearly recognizable, there are... Vikings. The representation of the Nordic warrior Sigurd is a pointer to the influence of pilgrims coming from Europe and even the lands of

the far north to walk the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago, settling in Sangüesa and other towns along the way where the local lords had established special rights in order to encourage foreign traders and artisans to stay. This was also the story of the creator of this extraordinary portal, Leodegarius, who was French. This artist, too, left his mark upon the work, though more clearly than Maestro Esteban. The middle of the three Maria figures bears a small shield on her robes and points to an inscription: *Leodegarius me fecit*. Finally, the tympanum contains a detailed representation of the Last Judgement. The portal once again confirms something that Don Miguel had tried to explain back in Jaca: Romanesque art unites practically all facets of 12th- and 13th-century society, faith and culture.

Though we were driving most of the way for reasons of time, we had at least planned a few stretches where we would be able to walk like true pilgrims. With light packs on our backs we set out in the early morning mist from the little village of Izco. A track took us towards the west with not a soul in sight (except for my photographer, Blanca, who like me was reveling in the solitude and kept her distance behind me) and we were left only with nature in Spring. This is not just a stroll—we have our goal and the path stretches ahead of us. Step by step, we leave our daily cares behind us. Our thoughts turn inward with each breath. We are pilgrims with our eyes turned westwards to our goal. Or perhaps it is the Way itself that is the goal?



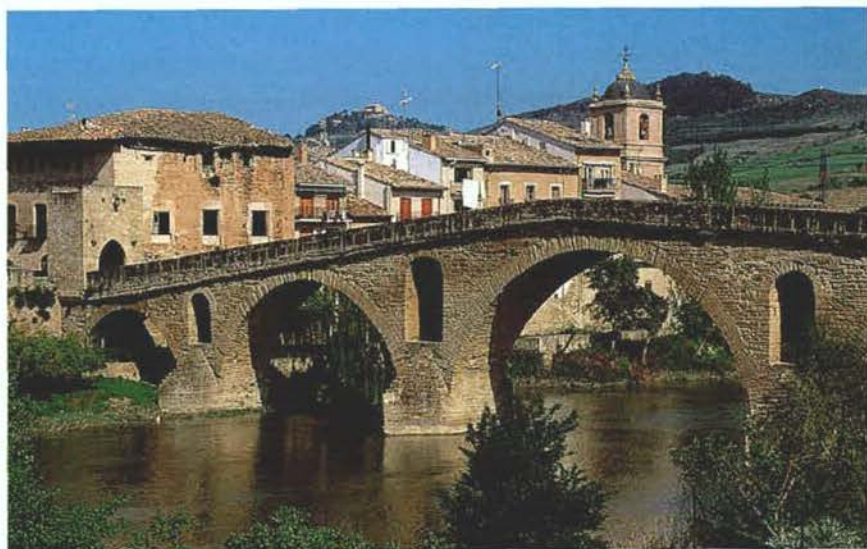
Gourmetour No. 45). In Navarre they are traditionally used in salads or served stuffed with cod, prawns, hake or quail. Pamplona, the capital, offers the gourmet pilgrim every possible delicacy from the gourmet's temple right down to the countless tapas bars in the old town, where extraordinary specialties are available in

bite-sized servings. Indeed, the tapas or pincho culture reaches its apogee in Pamplona, just as in San Sebastián in the north of the Spanish Basque Country.

The wines of Navarre are particularly well known for rosé, though this is far from being all there is on offer. Nowadays, excellent, modern reds are made not only from Garnacha, but also from the noble Tempranillo grape, together with exquisite wood fermented Chardonnays, and first class sweet wines from the tiny moscatel *de grano menudo* (Frontignón),

which will stand comparison with the world's finest. The 1999 Chivite Colección 125 Vendimia Tardía or Ochoa Moscatel are an extraordinary experience in combination with foie gras or a fruit tart. Our way took us past wineries such as Castillo de Monjardín in Villamayor de Monjardín. The town lies at the foot of a great cliff that rises straight out of the plain and is crowned by the ruins of the castle which gives the winery its name. From up here, there is a wonderful view of the whole pilgrim landscape in Navarre and all the way to





Puente La Reina

Some two hours later in Monreal, we are once again confronted by motorized modernity and the pressure of time, but we were inspired with the short excursion.

The next highpoint on our journey is Santa María de Eunate. This is one of the few Romanesque churches in Spain with a central construction like the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, which may have provided

the model for the church in Eunate. The ground plan is octagonal with a pentagonal apse and, once again, an unusual octagonal cloister that leads right around the church. The many arches and columns of the cloister, which have been preserved to this day, in fact give the place its name. Eunate means "place of a hundred doors" in Basque. Many details, such as the masons' signs on the columns,

Arab-style construction methods such as skylights in the vault of the roof and the ground plan, point to the influence of the Templars on the church, although this is not unanimously agreed. It is, however, clear that this church, which stands quite alone in the middle of the fields and vineyards, has a quite special magic or mystery of its own.

From here it is not far to Puente La Reina, the intersection at which the route from Roncesvalles and Pamplona meets our Way from Aragon. Here, the roads from France join, melding the separate bands of medieval pilgrims into one. The wonderful Romanesque bridge over the River Arga was built in the 11th century and has lost nothing of its beauty except for two of the three towers that used to protect it. To the east of

La Rioja. The vineyards of Finca Señorío de Arinzano lie near the town of Estella, along with the new winery built for Bodegas Julián Chivite by the architect Rafael Moneo. Bodegas Irache in Ayegui has even created a roadside *f fuente del vino* (wine fountain), from which tired wanderers can refresh themselves free of charge. The Bodegas Borgia winery last year opened a new headquarters building in Los Arcos. Here and in Torres del Río we passed right by the firm's spreading vineyards of Chardonnay, Tempranillo and Cabernet Sauvignon.



the town, originally outside the walls, is the Church of the Crucifix (Iglesia del Crucifijo), built in 1142 by the Templars together with a hospital for pilgrims. The cross itself is typical of the Templars, resembling the imprint of a duck's foot, and shows Christ with an expression of suffering that is enough to make the observer shudder.

In the Church of Santiago at Puente la Reina we meet the Norwegian singer Sondre Bratland, who is here trying his voice in the superb acoustics in order to record a Norwegian folksong. The song (*drømkvede*, Nor. dream poem) tells of a young man who falls asleep on Christmas Eve, leaving his body in his dream to experience what happens after death. He sees the tortures of Hell and the bliss of Paradise. He



San Pedro de la Rúa

sees how Saint Michael weighs the souls on his scales and how they are damned or saved until, after a fortnight, he awakens from his dream journey. It was the spiritual relationship between this song and a pilgrimage that brought Sondre Bratland to Spain in order to sing its more than 50 verses in numerous churches along the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago.

Estella, our next stop, is a typical example for the development of the

towns along the Pilgrims' Way. The original settlement of Lizarra (the Basque name for Estella) grew with the arrival of increasing numbers of pilgrims passing through or settling down, since the city had special rights for *francos*, foreign traders and artisans. At its height, the town had more than ten churches and monasteries for the faithful. One of the most beautiful religious monuments is the Romanesque cloister of the Church of San Pedro de la Rúa. Nearby in Ayegui lies the Monastery of Santa María del Real de Irache, where pilgrims could already find board, lodging and healing in the 10th century, before the foundation of Estella. The construction of the choir in the monastery church is unusual, particularly in the main apse. Over the round and blind arches is a



second row of round windows alternating with blind arches. Once again, we find here a typical stylistic feature of the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago—ajedrezado jaqués, a pattern that is reminiscent of a checker board. Still in Navarre, we drive on through Villamayor de Monjardín, Los Arcos, Torres del Río and Viana, all of which have their own sights and churches. But we are compelled to pass them by on our way to...

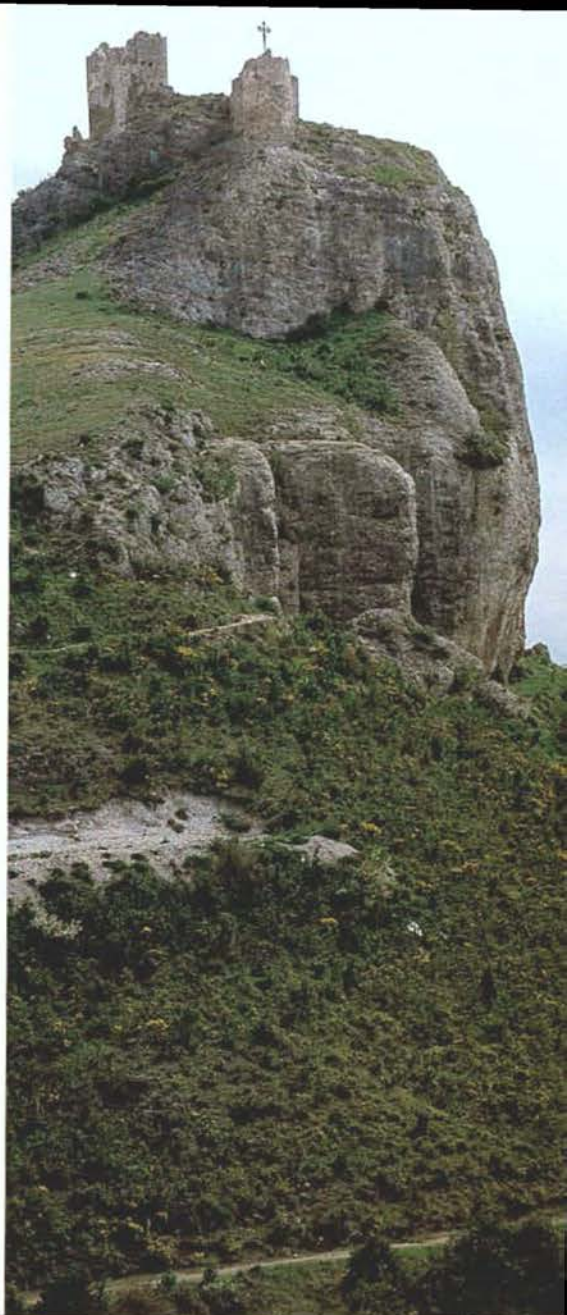
## La Rioja

South of Logroño we drive up to the castle ruins of Clavijo in order to visit the place where legend has it that St. James came to the help of the Christians against the Moors in the battle of Clavijo (834). He appeared to King Ramiro I, the leader of the

Christian army, in a dream and promised his help against Abderrahman II. On the next day, he fought in the battle on a white horse and turned the tide of battle for the Christians. This most unusual representation of a Christian Apostle, from a non-Spanish point of view, is frequently to be found along the way to Santiago, an indication of the enormous importance of Santiago and the Pilgrims' Way in the context of the reconquest of Spain from the Muslims.

Leaving Navarrete, Fuenmayor and Santa Coloma behind us, we stop briefly in Nájera in order to visit the wonderful late Gothic cloister and the pantheon of the kings in the church of Santa María la Real de Nájera, and particularly to see the Romanesque madonna and child. The

Clavijo  
Castle



## La Rioja

The culinary pilgrim reaches what might be called the "Elysian Fields" of wine in La Rioja. Our route took us through an endless, shimmering sea of vine leaves. In the capital, Logroño, just off the Rúa Vieja, which led the pilgrims through the city, is the Calle del Laurel, a side street in which virtually all of the establishments are small, informal bars and restaurants where every delicacy offered by La Rioja can be found and enjoyed together with the best wines of a region blessed

by Bacchus. Of course, it is not at all difficult for visitors to spoil themselves in the most elegant surroundings by entering Cachetero, long one of La Rioja's leading restaurants where a superb range of the region's quality vegetables, meat and fish dishes are prepared to the highest of standards. The delicious *menestra riojana* (mixed vegetables) is made from artichokes, green beans, chard, cauliflower, peas and carrots. The ingredients are cooked separately and finally sautéed in olive oil with a little cubed ham before serving. The Rincón

del Vino restaurant, located in a parallel street to the Rúa Vieja, has a well-stocked wine cellar and its typical Rioja grills are highly recommended. While in La Rioja, we make a short "detour to Santiago" (see Cees Nooteboom, booklist) to visit Haro at the heart of the region's wine culture. The wineries cluster thickly in the old railway quarter of Haro. The old wineries are to be found hard by the tracks, though new businesses are constantly springing up and the quarter has completely changed its original character in re-

statue simultaneously represents the mother and a queen. The polychrome wood carving was discovered in a cave by King García in 1044 and the monastery was hewn out of the rock of the cliff face around the grotto.

We go on to Santo Domingo de la Calzada. *De la calzada* refers to the activity of the hermit Domingo García, who gave the town its name. Because he could not become a monk, he decided to ease the way for pilgrims going to Santiago, building a bridge over the River Oja, repairing and improving the stretch of road between Nájera and Redecilla del Camino and founding hospitals and hostels, as well as a small chapel. The Cathedral of San Salvador stands on the foundations of this chapel today, and to this day from 1

to 12 May (the anniversary of the death of Saint Domingo, 12 May 1109) the tradition is to walk around the sarcophagus laid out in the crypt twelve times, because, according to legend, the saint would go out into the woods every evening beating a drum in search of lost pilgrims. Thus, any "lost sheep" who heard him would find a safe bed in the city. By the Cathedral of San Salvador, we met a young Brazilian doctor, Roberto, who had been on his way to Santiago for the last few weeks carrying an enormous rucksack. He told us he had lost his stick, which was very useful to alleviate his backache, some days ago. Another pilgrim had pointed out to him that he probably didn't need the stick any more, and that was why he had lost it. And in fact, Roberto explained with large,

shining eyes and the 15-kilo pack on his back, he had been spared any further pain since then.

In the Cathedral itself, the main apse is well worth seeing. It was only cleared to view in 1994 when the altarpiece, which blocked it, was removed for restoration work, revealing the Romanesque choir and the four 12th-century piers with their representations of the genealogical tree of Jesus Christ.

## Burgos (Castile-León)

Saint Domingo's work on the Pilgrims' Way reaches right into the province of Burgos to Redecilla del Camino. Here in the parish church of Our Lady of the Way, which was specially opened for us by a young



cent years. Thus, we find the architectural contrasts of the old firms such as Bodegas Muga, Bodegas Bilbaínas and López de Heredia and the hyper-modern buildings of, for example, bodegas Roda. When in Haro, a visit to Terete to try the lamb chops or roast kid is not to be missed. This is the specialty of the house and is especially well done here. A further hot tip is La Vieja Bodega in Casalarreina, although it is currently awaiting reopening in October after a fire. We set off westwards, though again

San Juan de Ortega



turning away briefly to the south in Santo Domingo de la Calzada to visit Ezcaray. A visit to the restaurant Echaurren makes this detour well worthwhile. Close by, in the Sierra de Cameros hills the traditional fresh Camerano goat cheese is made, delicious with piquillo peppers, a little garlic and parsley. Taken with a young Rioja red using the traditional carbonic maceration method, used in Rioja for centuries, this repast is enough to put the tired pilgrims back on their feet again.

## T O R E A D

**Center for Studies and Documentation about St. James' Way:**  
Centro de Estudios y Documentación del Camino de Santiago  
Real Monasterio de San Zoilo  
34120 Carrión de los Condes  
(Palencia)  
Tel: (34) 979 880 902

**Detour to Santiago**  
by Cees Nooteboom (orig. Dutch)

**Ultreia**  
by Luis Carandell  
El País Aguilar

**La flecha amarilla - El camino hacia Santiago**  
by Xurxo Lobato und Suso de Toro  
El País Aguilar

**La cocina del Camino de Santiago**  
by María del Carmen Zarzalejos  
Alianza Editorial



Monastery Las Huelgas Reales

## Burgos (Castile-León)

The contrast between the green wine-country of La Rioja and the wilderness of the Montes de Oca in Burgos Province could not be greater. Burgos has been a major sheep farming area for centuries and large flocks are still to be seen crossing the wide lands in the company of the shepherds and their dogs. The mild Burgos cheese comes from this part of the country, though it is now manufactured all over Spain. It was originally made of pure

sheep's milk, though nowadays the cheese is mainly cows' milk with a small admixture of sheep. Burgos cheese is typically served as a dessert, or between meals with quince jelly. Another eponymous specialty of the province is *morcilla de Burgos*, a black pudding containing rice and onion. It is usually served in thick slices, crisply fried, and makes a delightful tapa in the old town of Burgos behind the cathedral in establishments such as Casa Pancho, which also has an excellent wine cellar. The Casa Ojeda restaurant

is a must for all those seeking to enjoy traditional Castilian dishes, which are superbly prepared and served, although it also finds time for modern "imaginative" cuisine. Proof that good food was always associated with Burgos is found in the 15th-century document which establishes the right of all pilgrims staying at the Hospital del Rey to receive daily over one kilo (2 pounds) of bread, mutton, vegetable stew with pork belly, fish or eggs depending on the season and, three quarters of a liter of wine. In those days, of

course, the wine would not have borne the Ribero del Duero, D.O. seal, but today one should not miss a visit to at least one of this famous region's wineries, even though this may mean another "detour to Santiago." If not, one should at least try such excellent wines as Hacienda Monasterio produced by Bodegas Monasterio in Pesquera de Duero or a Viña Pedrosa by Bodegas Hermanos Pérez Pascuas, located in Pedrosa de Duero, together with a few grilled lamb chops. As we approach the end of our journey, we wish to



Redecilla  
del Camino

woman from the village, we were able to admire a stone font decorated with a representation of Jerusalem. Who knows how many pilgrims were baptized here?

From here our route took us on to the Montes de Oca range, with a long stretch up hill and down dale that was particularly feared by the medieval pilgrims since the terrain made things easy for robbers and the weather could be harsh. A follower and helper of Santo Domingo de la Calzada, San Juan de Ortega therefore founded a monastery, which bears his name, and a hospital for pilgrims in this wilderness. Like his master, he also improved the road and built bridges. Apart from the delightful legend, which tells how San Juan de Ortega (from Lat. *urtica* meaning thorn) drew a thorn from

the paw of a lion though nobody else would come near for fear of the wild beast, there is another wonder to be found here. At sundown on the equinox, the light falls directly onto one of the capitals in the church, which bears a representation of the Annunciation and the birth of Christ. The rays fall onto the body of Mary in such a way that it really seems as if the Holy Ghost were present. The miracle of light—or perhaps the wonder of architecture?

On the way into the capital, Burgos, we pass close by the archeological site of Atapuerca, where prehistoric remains were found in 1992 (see page 100).

The importance that the pilgrims must have had for the city of Burgos is made particularly plain by the huge number of churches and hospi-

tals founded and kept up here. The Hospital del Rey stands to this day, and scenes of pilgrimage are to be seen on its doors. The hospital was founded in the 12th century by King Alfonso VI, although the surviving buildings are all 16th century. Burgos Cathedral is one of the greatest of Gothic buildings to be found in Spain and is a World Heritage site. Here too, representations of Santiago *Matamoros*, the Moor slayer, and Santiago *Peregrino*, the pilgrim, are to be found in the chapel of Santiago. Leaving Burgos, we stop briefly at the convent of Las Huelgas Reales, founded in 1187 by King Alfonso VIII, which specialized in taking in Cistercian nuns of royal descent. The cloister, chapter house, church, chapels, decoration and the graves of kings are correspondingly magnifi-



cent. Kings were crowned here and nobles knighted. One curious item is the figure of Santiago Armacaballeros, a wood carving of the Apostle with a mechanical right arm, able to lift a sword and place it on the shoulder of a kneeling knight. On the last stage of this part of our pilgrimage, we came to the ruins of the monastery of San Antón, where the remaining Gothic arches now span the pilgrim track directly. In Castrojériz we wanted to visit the collegiate church of the Virgen del Manzano, which was unfortunately undergoing restoration and so not

even the most curious pilgrims could enter. Passing Boadilla del Camino we saw an unusual monument in the form of a pillar in the main square symbolizing the independent jurisdiction of the town. Finally, we reached Frómista, the last highpoint and also the end of our journey, the second part of which will take the reader to Santiago de Compostela. The church of San Martín, the last remaining trace of a Benedictine monastery founded in 1066, is an unparalleled example of the pure Romanesque style frequently connected with the Cathedral at

Jaca. The perfection of the decorations on the capitals and the gargoyles on the cornice are particularly worth seeing. A beautiful sculpture of Christ (13th century) in the main apse also caught our attention and occupied our thoughts on the journey back to Madrid.

*Bettina Krücken has been coordinator for Spain Gourmetour since 1994 and has sworn to take the Pilgrims' Way again—on foot.*

*Photo credits on page 140.*



Castrojériz



## B a y o f B i s c a y



sweeten our farewell to the Pilgrims' Way—nothing better, then, than a *tarta del peregrino*, the home-baked pilgrims' cake sold by the nuns of the Order of St. Claire at their convent in Castrojériz. The convent stands directly behind the ruins of the San Francisco Monastery. There are two recipes for the cake: one contains flour, sugar, eggs, almonds, butter, cinnamon and sweet sherry; the second recipe, known as the “cake of holiness” is as follows:

*In a cake tin with a good conscience pour  
The patience of heroes  
Out of full hands.  
The base is thickly to be made of  
The firm dough of modesty.  
Spread upon it the conserve of joy,  
Peace and meekness.  
Soak the whole in the rum of  
Obedience adding  
Anis as penance.  
Cook it the while in the fire of  
Gentleness,  
Lender of the spark of saintliness.  
The Cross shall be its adornment,  
And from vanity shall you save it.*

*(From La Cocina del Camino de Santiago by  
María del Carmen Zarzalejos)*



Sergio Soto at El Rincón del Vino

Santiago  
Pilgrim at  
Frómista

## HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS

## Aragón

**JACA**

La Cocina Aragonesa  
Cervantes, 5  
Tel: (34) 974 361 050

## Navarre

**YESA**

Hotel Hospedería de Leyre  
Monasterio de Leyre  
Tel: (34) 948 884 100

Hotel Señorío de Monjardín  
Ctra. de Leyre, s/n  
Tel: (34) 948 884 188

**SANGÜESA**

Asador Mediavilla  
Alfonso el Batallador, 17  
Tel: (34) 948 87 02 12

**PUENTE LA REINA**

Hotel and Restaurant Mesón del Peregrino  
Ctra. Pamplona-Logroño, km 23  
(34) 948 340 075

**PAMPLONA**

Rodero  
Emilio Arrieta, 3  
Tel: (34) 948 228 035

**Café Iruña**

Pza. Castillo, 44

**Europa**

Espoz y Mina, 11  
Tel: (34) 948 221 800

## La Rioja

**LOGROÑO**

Cachetero  
Laurel, 3  
Tel: (34) 941 228 463

El Rincón del Vino  
Marqués de San Nicolás, 136  
Tel: (34) 941 205 392

**Iruña**

Laurel, 8  
Tel: (34) 941 220 064

**EZCARAY**

Hotel and Restaurant Echaurren  
Héroes del Alcázar, 2  
Tel: (34) 941 354 047

**HARO**

La Vieja Bodega  
Av. La Rioja, 17  
Casalarreina  
Tel: (34) 941 324 254

**Terete**

Lucrecia Arana, 17  
Tel: (34) 941 310 023

**Hotel Los Agustinos**

San Agustín, 2  
Tel: (34) 941 311 308

**Hotel Hospedería Señorío de****Briñas**

Travesía de la Calle Real, 3  
Briñas  
Tel: (34) 941 304 224

**SANTO DOMINGO  
DE LA CALZADA**

Parador Sto. Domingo de la Calzada  
Pza. del Santo, 3  
Tel: (34) 941 340 300

## Burgos (Castile-León)

**BURGOS**

Casa Ojeda  
Vitoria, 5  
Tel: (34) 947 209 052

**CASTROJÉRIZ**

Mesón de Castrojériz  
Cordón, 1  
Tel: (34) 947 377 400

**Hotel La Posada**

Landelino Tradajos, 5  
Tel: (34) 947 378 610



San Martín  
at Frómista

## W E B S I T E S

### Wine

#### Aragon

C.R.D.O. Somontano  
[www.dosomontano.com](http://www.dosomontano.com)

#### Navarre

C.R.D.O. Navarra  
[www.cfnavarra.es/AGRICULTURA/OTROSOR/NAVARRA.HTM](http://www.cfnavarra.es/AGRICULTURA/OTROSOR/NAVARRA.HTM)

#### La Rioja

Language: Spanish  
[www.vinoybodegas.com/denorigen/rioja.htm](http://www.vinoybodegas.com/denorigen/rioja.htm)

Language: English, French, German, Spanish  
[www.riojawine.com](http://www.riojawine.com)

#### Burgos (Castile-Leon)

C.R.D.O. Ribera del Duero  
[www.do-ribera-duero.es/](http://www.do-ribera-duero.es/)

### Gastronomy, Culture and Tourism

#### ARAGON

##### Jaca

Language: Spanish  
[www.jaca.com/](http://www.jaca.com/)

##### San Juan de la Peña

Language: Dutch, English, French, German, Spanish  
[www.monasteriosanjuan.com/](http://www.monasteriosanjuan.com/)

#### NAVARRRE

Monastery of Leyre  
[www.vayaspain.com/enr/mon3101.htm](http://www.vayaspain.com/enr/mon3101.htm)

#### Sangüesa

Language: Spanish  
[www.geocities.com/Heartland/Plains/1521/](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Plains/1521/)

#### Pamplona

Language: English, Spanish  
[www.pamplona.net/](http://www.pamplona.net/)

#### Santa María de Eunate

Language: Spanish  
[www.ctv.es/USERS/sagastibelza/navarra/eunate/eunate.htm](http://www.ctv.es/USERS/sagastibelza/navarra/eunate/eunate.htm)

#### Estella

Language: Spanish  
[www.estella-lizarra.com/](http://www.estella-lizarra.com/)

#### St. James' Way in Navarre

Language: Spanish  
[www.navarra.com/camino/index.htm](http://www.navarra.com/camino/index.htm)

#### Navarre-Guide

Language: Spanish, English, German  
[www.iberica.com/navarra/](http://www.iberica.com/navarra/)

#### Tourism and Gastronomy in Navarre

Language: Spanish  
[www.navarra.net/turismo/index.htm](http://www.navarra.net/turismo/index.htm)

#### LA RIOJA

##### Logroño

Language: English, Spanish  
[www.logro-o.org/pub/lanzadera.htm](http://www.logro-o.org/pub/lanzadera.htm)

##### Haro

Language: English, Spanish  
[www.haro.org/](http://www.haro.org/)

##### Clavijo

Language: English, Spanish  
[www.larioja.org/clavijo/](http://www.larioja.org/clavijo/)

#### Santo Domingo de la Calzada

Language: English, German, Spanish  
[www.rioja.org/](http://www.rioja.org/)

#### La Rioja Online

Language: English, French, German, Spanish  
[www.riojainternet.com/turismo/index.html](http://www.riojainternet.com/turismo/index.html)

#### Culture in La Rioja

Language: Spanish  
[www.geocities.com/urunuela1/1/rioxa.htm](http://www.geocities.com/urunuela1/1/rioxa.htm)

#### La Rioja-Guide

Language: English, German, Spanish  
[www.iberica.com/larioja/logronoyalrededores/](http://www.iberica.com/larioja/logronoyalrededores/)

#### BURGOS (CASTILE-LEÓN)

Burgos-Guide  
Language: English, German, Spanish  
[www.iberica.com/burgos/index.php](http://www.iberica.com/burgos/index.php)

#### Burgos

Language: English, German, Spanish  
[www.red2000.com/spain/burgos](http://www.red2000.com/spain/burgos)

#### Belorado

Language: Spanish  
[www.arrakis.es/~fpresa/](http://www.arrakis.es/~fpresa/)

#### Boadilla del Camino

Language: Spanish  
[guapas.net/alf\\_esteban/menu.htm](http://guapas.net/alf_esteban/menu.htm)



# D.O. RIOJA



Towards the end of the 20th century, Rioja embarked on a period of major transformation. Not the first such experience for this region nor, so far, the most deep-reaching. And not the most radical either, in that certain segments of Riojan wine production have yet to feel its effects. But such has been the nature of this transformation that Rioja can now claim its place, once and for all, among the great names in world wine.

From  
Classic  
to  
Cutting  
Edge

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TEXT  
ANDRÉS PROENSA

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TRANSLATION  
HAWYS PRITCHARD

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The big Rioja revolution began a century and a half ago when wine making and aging methods imported from Bordeaux were introduced. What was known as the "Médoc method" represented modernity and a commercial future for the Rioja wines. It also provided the basis of the characteristic profile by which they are identified today. However, Rioja's small growers retained their ancestral wine-making methods and continued to make "*vino de cosechero*" (harvester's wine), a young red to which local consumers remained faithful and which was later to earn itself a niche in Rioja's wider marketplace. The second revolution began in the 1970s. In essence, this consisted of renovating the region in structural terms: plant was modernized and wines which had hitherto not been widely available became increasingly popular and took on commercial thrust. It was from this second revo-



lution that the more "typical" Rioja emerged, the product of heavy-handed application of barrel aging in which the *barrica* acquired unprecedented importance. Wood became an end in itself rather than just an instrument; consumer taste became steeped in wood aromas and the less individualistic wineries laid them on thick. This highly successful formula received a further boost a few years later when the introduction of stainless steel and modern wine-making

methods made it possible to produce stabler, more refined wines which interacted more moderately with the wood. Rioja's sales figures continued to rise, as did profits in those companies which opted for giving up their vineyards to concentrate solely on the winery itself. Or more specifically on its *crianza* (aging) bays, although they did not pay much attention to renewing their *barricas*. During this period, vineyards came to be thought of as little more than a necessary evil, a mere source of raw material. Growers and wineries were obliged to coexist, but the relationship their proximity generated was far from friendly, marked as it was by periodic bouts of conflict and a mutual mistrust which is still about today. Throughout history, the viticultural and vinicultural sectors have behaved like oil and water—in contact but not mixing, and producing sparks when heated.



## The 1970s

The rift became even deeper from the Sixties and Seventies on. Many wineries imitated the example of Marqués de Cáceres which, established in 1973, became the flagship bodega of that period. Marqués de Cáceres made no wine at its plant, which was given over entirely to crianza, but bought wine in from various suppliers, the Cenicero cooperative in particular. Believing this to be the way to go, many others sold off their vineyards and adopted the passive role of receivers of grapes and buyers-in of wine. What they failed to realize was that the Marqués de Cáceres technical team monitored fruit quality closely and also directed production of the wine made for them at the cooperative. This passive role produced results which were quite contrary to expectations. Companies believed they

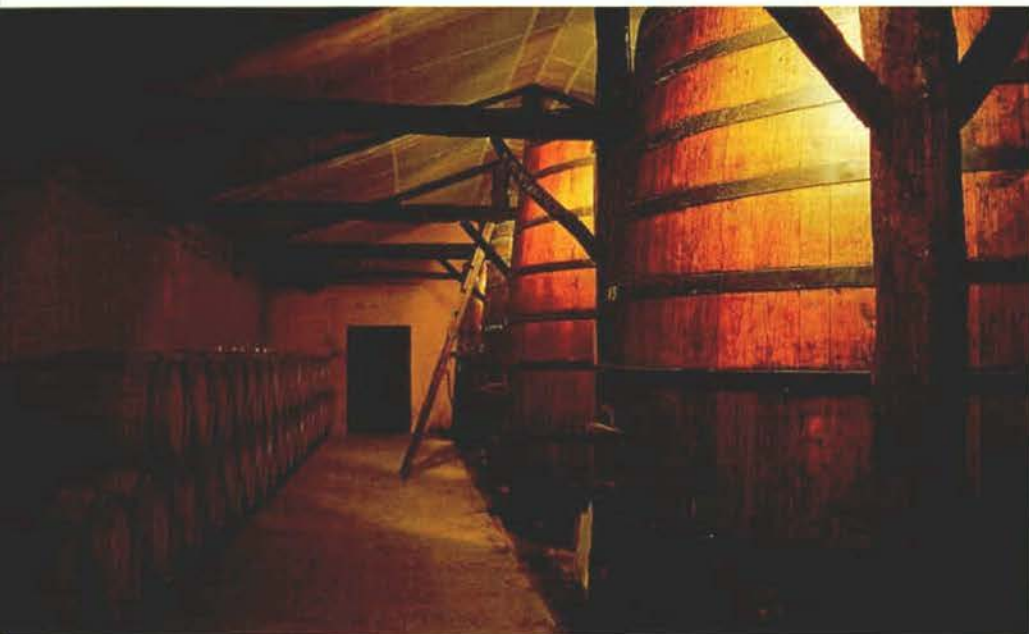


had a hold over growers by virtue of the latter having of necessity to sell their grapes or bulk wine to them. In fact, it was the growers who had a hold over the wineries, especially during cyclic periods of scarcity. At such times, a grower not only charged more for his grapes but also increased production, resulting in lower quality raw material which responded less well to the long cask aging to which the wines were submitted. In consequence, the big-sell-

ing Riojas became "smaller" wines—light-bodied, wood drenched and with little to gain from the crianza process.

Needless to say, the new tendencies were not all-embracingly negative in their effects. Just as many small growers' wineries continued to make the traditional vinos de cosechero (as they still do), the great wineries of Rioja—the long-established ones known as the bodegas *centenarias* and a few others—continued the quest for quality wines, retaining both their vineyards and noble traditions. Some of these traditional wineries would spearhead the renewal movement in the 1990s, while others would join in later, enthusiastically putting their weight behind the cutting edge.





## Recovering Ground

The third revolution was triggered by outside influences. Accustomed as they were to scooping up quality ratings, Riojan bodegas found to their horror from the Eighties on that the wines of D.O. Ribera del Duero were elbowing their way in. The Nineties saw the emergence of the new Prioratos and other new areas, but by then Rioja had started to respond, both on the quality front and less laudably on the figures front. The argument at the time was that producing limited amounts of elite wines was an unrealistic approach: the important thing was to make large quantities of quality wines. What this argument seemed to fail to recognize was that limited production and quality wines were precisely what had paved the way to commercial success for Rioja. The quality parameters that the new wave Rioja wines imposed were in fact already in existence in the region, both at some of its big name

bodegas, which were making wines with decades of life in them, and in its vineyards. The rapidity with which the region responded was proof of this: there was no need for wineries moving into "new wines" to wait for their vineyards to acquire particular characteristics. They were there already. And they already had the wine-making know-how, too. Capitalizing on the qualities of a specific vineyard was already a long-established practice in Rioja. Many historic labels are a product of that very practice, and bear the name of the property from which they derive: one example is the Zaco estate, shared by R. López Heredia and Bodegas Bilbainas and source of their Viña Zaconia and Viña Zaco, respectively. Other examples include Pomal, Tondonia, Albina, El Montecillo, Ygay... In nearly all cases these were bodega-owned vineyards and in theory the wines were made separately, a version of estate wine, obeying the criteria applied by great marques all over the world.

As to the wines themselves, well-structured, long-lived wines were also being made within classical parameters: vertical tastings of Marqués de Riscals, for example, reveal an amazing vitality in wines almost a century old. And there are other labels regarded as custodians of the classical approach: C.V.N.E.'s meaty Imperials, Marqués de Murrietas' familiar vigor and vitality; Viña Ardanzas' full bodied (more so formerly than now) classicism. These structured wines were sometimes at odds with the lighter "*vinos finos de Rioja*" profile—wines of a very clearly defined style, of which Viña Tondonias are an excellent example. These are relatively pale wines (mature ruby, almost tawny), with complex aromas in which impressions of long aging in tempered barricas predominate, and animal tones; they are vibrant, light-bodied and clean in the mouth, sustained by the lively acidity which keeps them stable for many years.

## Two Wine Styles

One lighter bodied and the other chewier, both styles sometimes coexisting in the range produced by the same bodega. Bodegas Riojanas' Viña Albina, for example, is a *vino fino* de Rioja while its Monte Real is a meatier wine, though their respective "weights" have become more similar in recent years. The same is true of La Rioja Alta's equivalent pair—Viña Ardanza and Viña Alberdi. Similar cases are to be found in other wineries such as Bodegas Bilbainas and



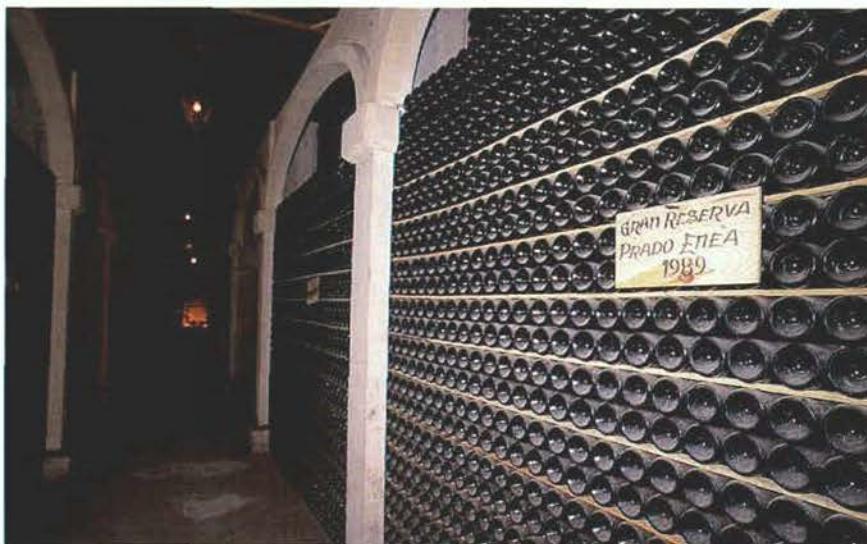
Many small growers' wineries continued to make the traditional *vino de cosechero*, and the great wineries of Rioja continued the quest for quality wines, retaining both their vineyards and noble traditions.

Bodegas Muga where, for a few years now, they have been reestablishing clearer differentiation between their full bodied Viña Pomal and Muga and their vino fino type Viña Zaco and Prado Enea. These two bodegas are also examples of "classic" companies that have introduced a variable cutting-edge wine into their repertoire in the form of La Vicalanda and Torre Muga, respectively.

Other similar differentiations within a brand reflected different sources of fruit, as in the case of C.V.N.E., whose Imperials are made with grapes from Villalba, the prestigious little village just outside Haro, while its Viña Reals are made with grapes from the Rioja Alavesa on the other side of the River Ebro. In this particular case, there is still further differentiation of styles in that its range of reservas (see Glossary on page 135) includes a third label, the more commercial Cune.

Wines created during the second revolution, located in the "1970 Generation" bodegas, could be seen as direct descendants of these big names. Some brands, such as Marqués de Cáceres, sought to moderate the wood element, preferring French oak over American for their barrels and producing approachable wines which were already very mature by the time they reached the marketplace, and described variously as "soft" or "elegant."

Wines from bodegas such as Faustino Martínez belong in this category, as do Bodegas Montecillo's great reservas: despite their long ancestry both these companies can be considered



part of the 1970 generation, as can early-phase Remelluri and the Labastida cooperative's unassuming early sortie into bottled wines. Apart from certain exceptions, the 1970 generation wineries could be said in general to have opted for the most commercial parameters. Many of the newly created bodegas rode the commercial wave, and quite a few of the historic bodegas also edged in that direction to a greater or lesser degree.

All told, the effect was to produce a sort of paralysis in Rioja, and even a decline in the quality of its wines and critical reputation, despite a simultaneous and apparently unstoppable growth in sales. The urge to recapture their former prominence, now with fledgling new great wines,

triggered action in the more enterprising wineries. Reaction against the monotony of commercially orientated wines (leavened though this was by the long-established big names, who did them exceptionally well) was to emerge first in one of Rioja's founding bodegas. In the late eighties, Marqués de Riscal recognized the need to revitalize a brand image which had become weighed down by wines which were commercially driven and even, at one time, problem ridden. Under the direction of Francisco Hurtado de Amézaga, it produced the red Barón de Chirel, made from grapes from old vineyards around the winery planted with Tempranillo and "others" (namely Cabernet Sauvignon, an outlaw variety in Rioja).



Left: Vicente Cebrián, Marqués de Murrieta.  
Middle: Francisco Hurtado de Amézaga, Barón de Chirel.  
Right: Juan Carlos López de la Calle, Artadi.

## Vital Vines

Barón de Chirel, launched in 1991, created a stir in the region with its new style and high price, unprecedentedly high at that time despite being well below the 5,000 peseta (less than 27 €) watershed. Barón de Chirel was also in tune with concerns already being tackled in Rioja by such figures as Telmo Rodríguez, under whose technical direction the essentially classic Remelluri began to take on a more modern character from the 1989 vintage on.

Also in 1989, one of Spanish wine's most salient figures of the 90s appeared on the Riojan wine scene. That year, Miguel Ángel de Gregorio became head of wine making at Bodegas Bretón, a young company established in 1985 but which had inhabited overtly commercial territory. For his first vintage, de Gregorio selected grapes from a vineyard in Briones to create the red *Dominio de Conté*, destined to become another important label in the early Nineties. Another late Eighties creation was the red *Cosme Palacio y Hermanos*, a product of Frenchman Jean Gervais' innovative approach at the head of Bodegas Palacio. This centenary winery with a rather checkered history was to become one of the champions of Rioja's new era. It was as if a starting pistol had been fired. Forerunners of this style of wine—Contino reds, for example, notably substantial from the Eighties on—consolidated their position. New

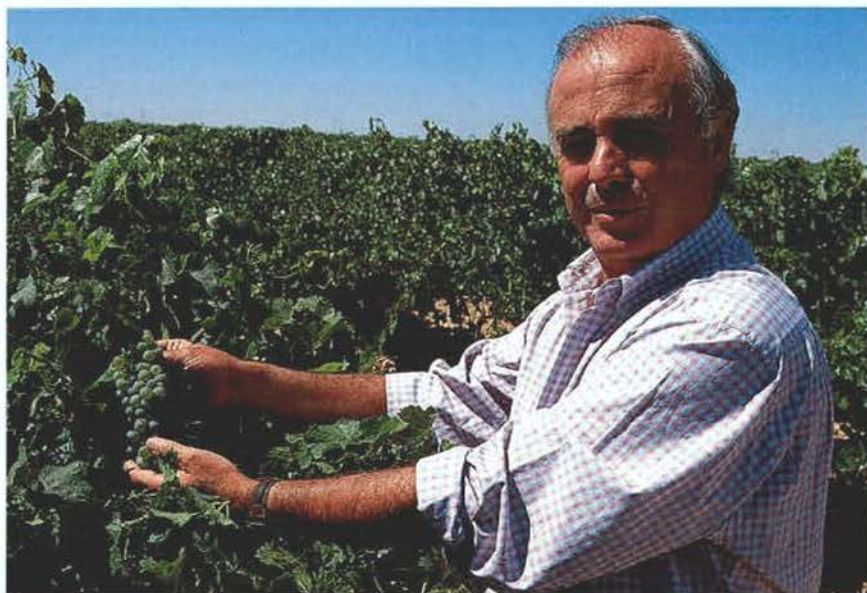
firms such as Torre de Oña, a sort of "offspring" of Remelluri, appeared, and bodegas that were to be some of the big names of the Nineties started to take shape: Artadi, which began in 1985 as a cooperative producing young wines; Roda; Señorío de San Vicente, a subsidiary of Sierra Cantabria, a *vinos de cosechero* winery, and Fernando Remírez de Ganuza stood out among the new ones.

These were joined by names such as Finca Allende, a personal venture of Miguel Ángel de Gregorio's, and Finca Valpiedra, an estate owned by the Martínez Bujanda family, who were among the farsighted few who had bought vineyards when everyone was selling. An increasing number of already established wineries made the conversion, among them Palacios Remondo with its *Dos Viñedos*, and the historic Marqués de Murrieta with its *Dalmau*. Added to this was the evolution of *cosechero* wineries (established by growers and dedicated primarily to young wines) such as Luis Cañas with its red *Amaren*, and Bodegas Puelles with its recently launched *Zenus* among many others.

Vineyards are the key element in this whole process. The bodegas' wine makers are paying attention to vineyards at last. Gradually the idea that a high quality wine is viable only if sourced in their own vineyards or plantations strictly controlled by the bodegas is gaining ground. Old, low production vines able to produce highly concentrated fruit are sought

after. Growing and harvesting criteria are being modified in a quest for more phenolic (i.e. relating to tannins and color producing compounds) ripeness and the importance of alcoholic ripeness reduced. Alcoholic strengths of 13.5 and over are no longer shied away from; the aims now are concentration, body, and potency with fruit to the fore on the one hand and, on the other, wines quite different in character both from the stone-hard cabernets that flattened the market in the Eighties and early Nineties and from the classic "vino fino de Rioja." The new Riojas are mature wines, nobly tannic and chewy, velvety with plenty of ripe fruit, having undergone finely judged *crianza* for moderate periods in French oak barrels. Meanwhile, enologists are starting to use *avant-garde* techniques such as lees contact and mechanical micro-oxygenation to complement the effects of the *barrica*.

These techniques tend to produce wines that are smooth in the mouth. The technical buzz-term is "anthocyan polymerization," manipulating the wines to make them civilized and pleasant, with no hard tannic astringency. Elegance has lately become the most important aspect of these cutting edge wines. We are witnessing the start of a sort of return to origins, with experts like Telmo Rodríguez arguing in favor of a return to less full-bodied reds with subtler aromas and wider sensory impact (*crianza* is regaining impor-



tance, though slightly nuanced) even though this may mean wines which are less direct and straightforward. The refining effects of bottle aging are also being rediscovered. Some see this as a return to European patterns in reaction against a period dominated by wines with characteristics more typical of the New World. If so, this could be the beginning of the end for what are known in Spanish wine circles as "Parker wines," after the influential U.S. critic and main promoter of the style of reds which so typified the end of the twentieth century.

*Journalist Andrés Proensa is editor of Vinos de España magazine and the author of the Guía de Oro de los Vinos de España wine guide.*

*Photo credits on page 140 and Exporters on page 120.*

## W E B S I T E S

### D.O.Rioja

#### Asociación de enólogos de Rioja

Language: Spanish  
The Asociación de Enólogos de Rioja (Enologists' Association of Rioja) Web site provides information about the area's leading wines (vintages, aroma...), practical tips on choosing wines, and so on.  
[www.enologosrioja.org](http://www.enologosrioja.org)

#### Centro de promoción de Rioja

Language: English, Spanish  
The Rioja Promotion Center's Web site offers access for Internet users to comprehensive information about arranging visits to the region, tasting courses and the like.  
[www.redrioja.com](http://www.redrioja.com)

#### Bodegas de Rioja

Language: Spanish  
This Web site provides an excellent index of La Rioja's principal, each entry having a link to a history of the specific bodega and its main wines.  
[www.2000.es/molajuca/bodegas.htm](http://www.2000.es/molajuca/bodegas.htm)

### C.R.D.O.Ca. Rioja

Language: English, French, German, Spanish  
The Regulatory Council of D.O.Ca. Rioja's Web site covers the Council's history as well as information about production area, viticulture and viniculture, sales, merchandising and more.  
[www.riojawine.com](http://www.riojawine.com)

#### Producción de Rioja

Language: Spanish  
This site gives excellent, precise information about Rioja's wines, soil types, subzones, grape varieties, information about harvests, wine types, vintages, wineries...  
[www.vino.valvanera.com](http://www.vino.valvanera.com)

#### La prensa del Rioja

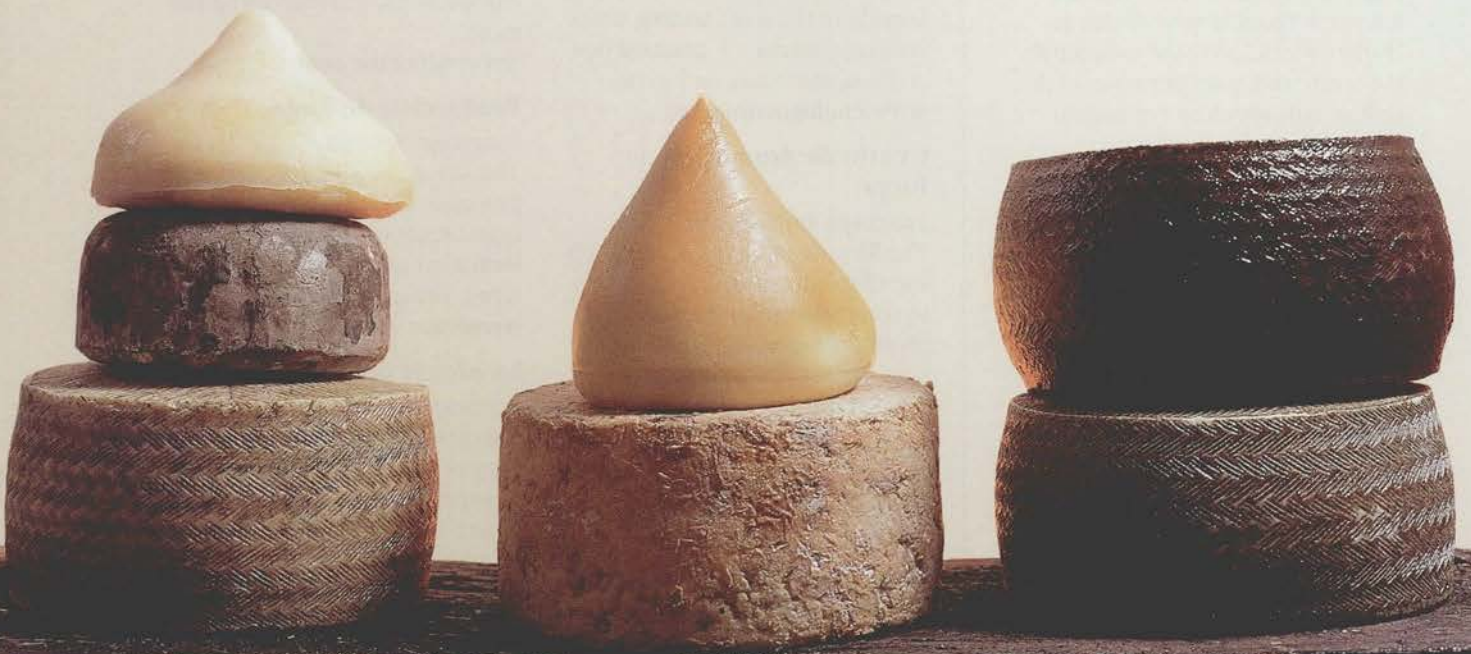
Language: English, Spanish  
This site takes the form of a virtual issue of the La Prensa del Rioja newspaper, with stories on various related subjects, including Regulatory Council matters.  
[www.laprensadelrioja.com](http://www.laprensadelrioja.com)

#### Guía de la Rioja

Language: Spanish  
This Guide to La Rioja site includes very wide-ranging information about the region, including winery, accommodation and restaurant guides, tourist information with suggested routes and information about Rioja wines.  
[www.larioja.com](http://www.larioja.com)

# CHEESE

and wine



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IDIAZÁBAL

TORTA DE LA SERENA  
RONCAL

MAHÓN  
MURCIA AL VINO  
MAJORERO

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TEXT  
ENRIC CANUT

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TRANSLATION  
HAWYS PRITCHARD

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PHOTOS  
TAYO ACUÑA/ICEX

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Essentially, we explore the interplay between the many and varied textures, stages of maturity, flavors and aromas of fifteen Spanish cheeses and an equivalent number of wines of various types and provenance. One thing the experiment reveals is how many of Spain's cheeses and wines have undergone major change and development in the last twenty years. The ancestral "sheep's cheese with red wine" combination—excellent, but limited—has been shelved; we have respected regional pairings that have been around long enough now to qualify as traditional, and have tried to strike up new relationships capitalizing on the many possible permutations created by improved variety and modernity of the products.

That same year, 1996, saw the first appearance at Barcelona's Alimentaria fair "España, el país de los 100 quesos" (Spain, Land of 100 Cheeses)—a major exhibition and tasting of the most important cheeses with spontaneous cross-tastings in combination with twenty Spanish wines of all types (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 50). The results were surprising then, and the developing awareness and interest of the tasting public in subsequent editions (1998 and 2000) have been still

more so. The whole event was very accessible and undirected. Emerging trends that we observed included increasing recognition of cava as an across the board match for cheese; sweet fortified wines being tasted with well-ripened blue cheeses—a new combination; the perfect pairing of dry, acidic white wines and mature goat's and sheep's cheeses; successful combining of certain rosés with semimature and lactic cheeses; young or slightly aged red wines being recognized as a match for the majority of Spanish cheeses (pressed and semi-hard) and exploitation of great wines' capacity to tolerate strong cheeses.

Since then, tasters and experts have spread their sights and have found that while it is not exactly a case of "anything goes," combinations of cheeses with wines, or vice versa, are far less limited and more complex than one might think.

What we have tried to do in the matches suggested here is to capitalize fully on the enormous possibilities of our cheeses and wines, taking an open-minded, exploratory approach which is, inevitably, somewhat subjective. And therefore debatable.

Preferences are the most subjective thing there is—there isn't a rule book. As the Spanish say: "*Sobre gustos no hay nada escrito.*" And there's no accounting for tastes.



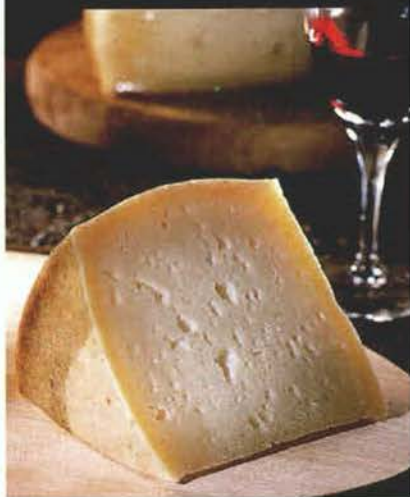
## Tetilla with Valdeorras Red

Tetilla is a Galician cheese with a very smooth flavor, somewhere between lactic and sweet, barely salted, very buttery and melting on the palate with sharp, buttery aromas.

Young Valdeorras red is an intense purple color, with very fruity, velvety sensory characteristics and plenty of body.

The mild butteriness of the Tetilla marries well with red wines of this type—young but full of body and extract (creating density in the mouth) and powerfully fruity. The fine characteristics of both these products make their presence felt on the palate in individual and recognizable form.

*It is traditional in the bars of Galicia to snack as you drink. Seafood caught along its coasts, pepper or tuna-filled empanadas (pasties), and soft, buttery Galician cheeses—such as Tetilla and Arzúa-Ulloa—are washed down with young local red or white wines such as Valdeorras and Ribeiro whose fresh, fruity characteristics highlight and enhance their flavors perfectly.*



## Roncal with Navarra Crianza Red

Roncal cheese from Navarre has a strong, ripe though not extreme flavor, and is buttery and direct on the palate, with aromas of sheep's milk, undergrowth and dry hay.

The Navarra red, briefly aged in new wood, is well structured and is rounded in the mouth with suggestions of ripe red fruit.

The potency, elegance and long, developed flavor of this mature sheep's cheese combines beautifully with the clearly defined, finely balanced sensory characteristics of this "modern" wine made in the lowlands of Navarre from native grape varieties and other well adapted noble incomers.

*Navarre is one of the regions of Spain with the highest standards of living, and it has a long-established food-loving tradition embracing both the range and quality of what it produces and the gastronomic knowledge and expectations of its inhabitants. These new "modern" Navarre reds have been a huge success, here in combination with a traditional cheese whose origins are lost in the mists of time.*

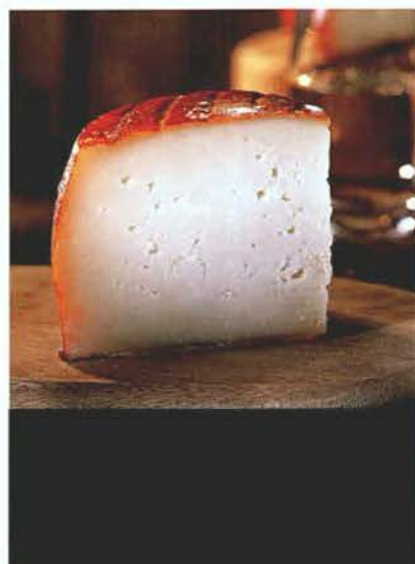
## Ibores with Montilla-Moriles Fino

Ibores cheese has a light, pleasant flavor with lactic, acidic and citrus base notes with slight hints of salt; it is very creamy in the mouth and has aromas of goat's milk, wild herbs and, in the case of surface-treated ones, olive oil and smoked pimentón (a type of paprika from Spain).

Montilla-Moriles fino is a white, sherry-style wine which is dry and moderately acidic, with lots of structure and alcohol; it is fragrant, with aromas of wild herbs and a golden color imparted by the *solera* and *crianza* aging systems (See Glossary on p. 139).

The strength, aromatic range and dryness of Montilla-Moriles fino make it a good general match for semimature goat's cheeses which are fatty and acidic, especially those whose rinds have been rubbed with oil and smoked red pimentón from La Vera.

*In Seville, birthplace of the tapa, finos are drunk well chilled with mature sheep's and goat's cheeses and with Ibérico ham—combinations fundamental to this typically Andalusian, and indeed Spanish, approach to fast food.*



## Garrotxa with Penedès White

The flavor of Garrotxa cheese is mild yet long and developed, with lactic and creamy goat's milk base notes and persistent aromas of fresh mushrooms and fungi, walnuts and hazelnuts.

White wine from the Penedès region is very light and quaffable, dry, slightly acid and very intensely aromatic with fruit, citrus and slightly floral notes.

A beautifully made, great yet "young, simple" wine which demonstrates all the characteristics of its native grape varieties (Xarel.lo and Parellada in particular) from a part of Spain with a long tradition of both wine making and technological know-how. It behaves beautifully in conjunction with this gem of a cheese which displays all the characteristics of goat's milk, its maturation with surface mold, and surprising end notes.

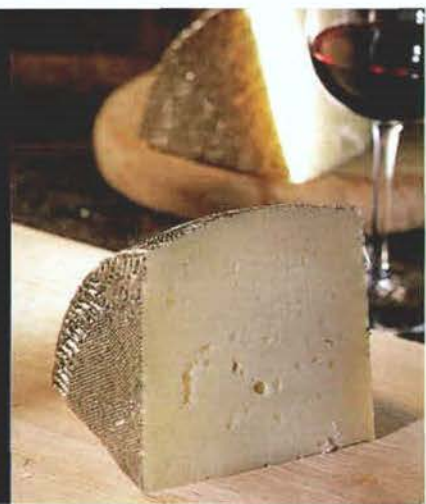
*Catalonia applies its typically innovative approach to improving and updating its traditional products, here creating a new combination which promises to be an enduring one.*

## Manchego with Valdepeñas Red

Manchego cheese has a very pleasant, forthright and individual flavor typical of sheep's cheese; it is oily on the palate, slightly piquant and salty with a very long finish, and a mild aftertaste of nuts.

Despite its youth, the Valdepeñas red is dense and full bodied, very fruity and aromatic with greenish notes albeit of red forest fruits, and suitable for brief wood aging.

Don Quixote of La Mancha and his henchman Sancho Panza would have eaten real, genuine Manchego cheese with a young red wine from Valdepeñas or La Mancha. Who are we to contradict a classic of world literature?



*The Regulatory Councils for this cheese and this wine are located in Valdepeñas, both of them being La Mancha products through and through. It is hardly surprising that they should combine so well—as two traditional products which have coexisted for centuries they provide a good example of the terroir concept.*



## Smoked Idiazábal with Txakolí de Guetaria

Idiazábal cheese in its smoked form has a direct, pronounced and very characteristic flavor, slightly oily with acidic, piquant base notes (derived from natural rennet) and a mild aftertaste of fine wood smoke. Txacoli (also written Chacolí) de Guetaria possesses all the qualities—and limitations—of a young wine from a cool, rainy climate that sees little sun—mild alcoholic strength, acidity and very fresh citrus notes.

The slight piquancy imparted by rennet obtained from suckling lamb, the acidity of the cheese (imparted by milk from rainy pastures), the potency that ripening creates in a small cheese and the smoky base notes are very powerful, outspoken sensory characteristics and they demand a wine that is clean, dry, citric and unpretentious if they are not to be compromised.

*The annual presentation of that year's new cider and txacoli provides living proof of the Basque Country's great gastronomic tradition. A gathering of interested parties—members of the region's Gastronomic Societies among them—attends this baptismal rite, which is celebrated with a vast menu to which smoked Idiazábal always provides a finishing touch.*

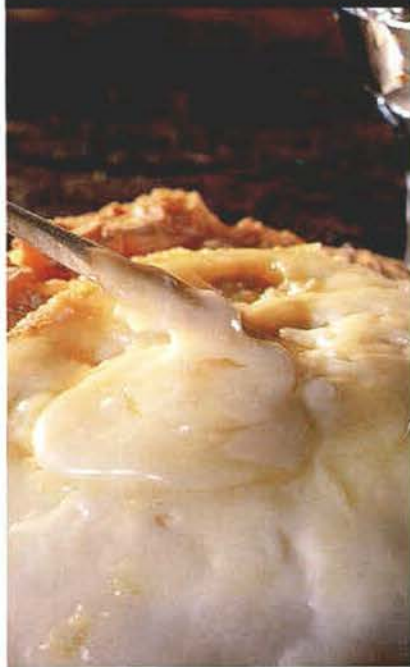


## Cabrales with Alicante Muscatel

Cabrales exemplifies the characteristics of a blue cheese matured for long periods in natural caves: its flavor is powerful, metallic and piquant yet very oily and melting in the mouth because of the mixture of milks from which it is made; it has very intense primary aromas and a long, persistent aftertaste.

Alicante muscatel is a limited production fortified wine which is powerfully alcoholic, very sweet and floral with a splendid golden color and all the attributes of the muscatel grape. It takes the sweetness, perfumed aroma and alcoholic kick of a genuine muscatel, served well chilled, to tame all the "attributes" of this cave dweller made and matured by the artisans of Cabrales in the traditional way.

*Asturias produces no wine but it does make lots of cheeses one of which is Cabrales, something of a trademark product. If Stilton can be macerated in port, and Roquefort served with Montrachet, why not exploit the strength of Cabrales by combining it with flowery, syrupy muscatel?*



## Torta de la Serena with Rueda White

Not all La Serena cheeses achieve the coveted *torta* stage of ripe liquefaction; they are considered at their best when they do. This historical, artisan cheese is most appreciated when its finest attributes are in evidence: dense, fatty, aromatic raw milk with bitter, sharp tastes produced by vegetable rennet and intense proteolysis (breaking down of proteins) within the curd.

Rueda white is young but powerful, dry and acidic, with plenty of body and alcohol, aromas of citrus and green fruits and a lovely and very distinctive greenish yellow color.

The creamy ooze and complexity of flavors of this oily, melt-in-the-mouth cheese with its long finish can only be "cut" by the strength and versatility of this young but great white wine which works with it in perfect symbiosis.

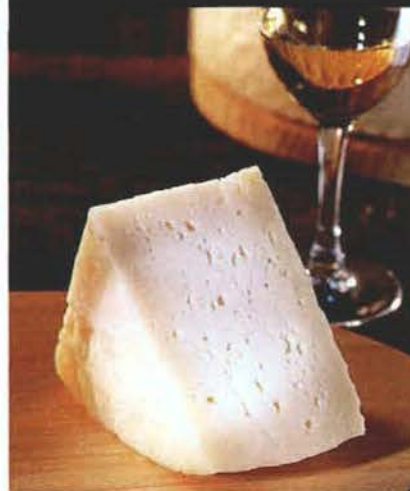
*This is one of the star matches, a new discovery made by dedicated, well-informed explorers.*

## Ibérico with Rioja Crianza Red

Ibérico cheese is the most widely produced and eaten of all the Spanish cheeses. It has a mild but definite acidic buttery flavor with lactic base notes, and a moderate aftertaste.

Crianza Rioja reds, along with the region's *Reservas* and *Gran Reservas*, are one of the identifying elements of Spanish wine, possessing all the graces bestowed by a quality grape variety (Tempranillo) and a method of vinification and aging in oak barrels which transmit all their characteristic features. This is a robust wine with just the right amount of alcohol. It is gently acidic, with lovely brick/ruby hues and refined aromas of red fruits with hints of toast and of the noble wood in which it was aged.

*While in most cases we have to look for the wine to match a cheese, here the opposite applies: the characteristics of a crianza Rioja require cheeses which have flavor yet are smooth and nonaggressive enough to allow for mutual negotiation on the palate.*



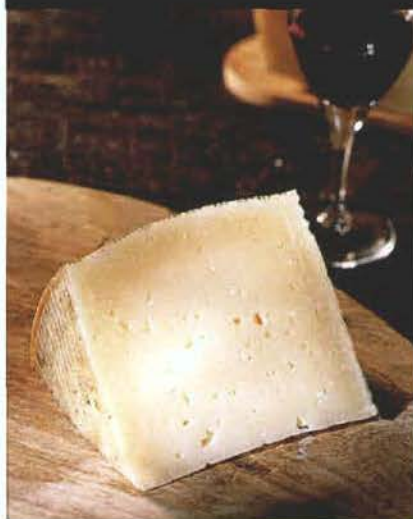
## Majorero with Barrel-fermented Somontano White

Majorero is probably one of Spain's best goat cheeses, for its mild yet developed flavor, butteriness on the palate, forthright aromas of goat's milk and nuts, with toasty background notes supplied by the *gofio* (toasted maize flour) with which the rind is treated.

Somontano white, barrel-fermented in new oak, revives the tradition of the great white wines using noble, quality grape varieties introduced into this growing area where great changes have been effected. This is an alcoholic, glyceric wine, dry though with hints of sweetness, highly fragrant and with toasty notes derived from the new wood.

Two great products, both powerful and each with a clearly defined personality, which are neither canceled out nor blunted in conjunction but rather bring out the best in each other as if in mutual respect.

*Another surprising match between two pedigrees which will find favor with innovative and enquiring palates.*



## Zamorano with Ribera del Duero Crianza Red

The flavor of a mature Zamorano cheese is characteristic, long and pronounced; it is very oily on the palate, with a slightly musty nutty aftertaste and with sheep's milk and curing cellar aromas.

Ribera del Duero produces superb reds, both young and bottle- and barrel-aged, and they enjoy an excellent reputation. In this case, the crianza red from Ribera del Duero demonstrates all the qualities of Tinta Fina, a variety which yields powerful, full-bodied wines which are dark crimson in color, high in tannins, with a touch of astringency, notes derived from well-judged crianza in oak barrels and bottle reduction, and background notes of vanilla, toast and leather.

These two neighbors get on well together: the potency of a mature sheep's cheese needs the counterbalance of a well-crafted wine.

*This combination is fashionable in the restaurants and bars of Valladolid (capital of Castile-León) where connoisseurs enjoy the attributes of both traditional products engaged in an amicable battle for predominance.*

## Mature Mahón-Menorca with Brut Cava

Of all the Mahón-Menorca cheeses, the mature version (1 year or older) is the most powerful and distinctive. It is strongly flavored with a very long and persistent finish produced by long, intense proteolysis, with acidic and salty background notes, and mild piquancy with rancid, very slightly oily touches in the aftertaste. Of all the cavas produced in Spain, we opted for one from El Penedès (birthplace of cava), brut in the dry but not bone-dry sense, citric and with primary aromas of green grass, and gently floral and fruity, with a very fine elegant bead, to be drunk well chilled.

This combination brings together two crianza products influenced by the temperate, maritime Mediterranean climate from which they both originate, and it works well. The potency and saltiness of mature Mahón needs the limpid quality of a well-chilled dry cava.

*Another surprise pairing from "Spain, Land of 100 Cheeses." Whereas in 1996 cheese was rarely matched with it, cava's versatility has now been recognized and it has become a regular companion.*



## Afuega'l Pitu with Cigales Rosé

A singular cheese, atypical yet characteristic, with an unmistakable name and a clearly defined, individual flavor: acidic, dry (rather floury) in the mouth, direct, incisive, yet oily on the palate with aromas of matured molds.

Cigales rosé, made by modern vinification methods using controlled cool fermentation, displays all its fruity, fresh, perfumed aromas in a well-structured body and lovely bright ruby color.



The finesse and fruitiness of Cigales rosé engage in friendly fashion with the extreme characteristics of this semisoft (almost soft) yet well defined cheese.

*It's not easy to match up a rosé with a cheese! Yet it works when they don't conflict but revel in their attributes.*

## Murcia al Vino with Jumilla Red

The flavor of Murcia al vino cheese is very direct and smooth yet long and persistent, between lactic and sweet, good and creamy in the mouth and with aromas of dense, fruity wine (the rind is rubbed with *doble pasta* wine full of dry extract and color). Red wine from Jumilla, generally young and non-aged, exhibits all the powerful components of wine derived from old vines grown on poor, arid soil, in a dry, extreme climate: lots of alcohol, vigor, chewiness, and

very dense, almost purple color but very fruity, long primary aromas. The aromas of this fruity wine, which should be served cold (14-16C/57-60°F) are similar to those of the wine used in surface treating the cheese, which they initially reinforce in the aftertaste but are then overtaken by the creaminess, sweetness and flavor of goat's milk.

*A new cheese which encapsulates Murcia's goat-rearing tradition, matched with an old wine whose vigor has been toned down by new vinification techniques.*



## San Simón with Rías Baixas White

Despite its short maturation, the flavor of San Simón cheese is developed, slightly piquant (in the old days, pig's stomach containing large amounts of pepsin enzymes was used as a coagulant) and with smoky aromas with background notes reminiscent of butter.

Rías Baixas white is a young, pale, very smooth wine with a complex bouquet of aromas and fragrances, especially fruity and rather flowery, with dry, salty background notes. There's nothing better than the aromatic gamut of Rías Baixas white, served well chilled, to tame this forthright rustic inland cheese.

*Another example of the successful use of "taster's license" in matching extreme flavors without their canceling each other out.*

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## INTRODUCING THE ASSOCIATION FOR PROMOTING THE CHEESES OF SPAIN

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The growing, and apparently unstoppable, phenomenon of the globalization and consequent internationalization of the marketplace has had its effects on Spain's cheese sector, where realignments have been taking place with the purpose of adapting to this new economic scenario and the increasing demands of open markets and end consumers.

In light of all this, the most important industrial cheese producers who are members of A.N.F.Q.U.E. (*Asociación Nacional de Fabricantes de Queso/National Association of Cheese Producers*); the *Consortio de Quesos de España con Denominación de Origen* (Consortium of Spanish Cheeses with Denomination of Origin), which includes most of the Regulatory Councils, and the most active group of exporters of Spanish cheeses, have decided to put past differences behind them and, based on agreed strategic criteria concerning the future development of our industries, to combine forces and form the Association for Promoting the Cheeses of Spain (*Asociación para la Promoción de los Quesos de España*, or A.P.Q.E.).

We recognize that Spain is one of the most industrialized countries in Europe; but we are also aware that we enjoy one of the richest and most diverse gastronomic cultures within the privileged Mediterranean enclave, source and melting pot of the great cultures of mankind.

Furthermore, we have learned to work closely and harmonically with our enormous variety of ecosystems, the vast wealth of our plant and animal biodiversity, and the accumulated cultural legacy deposited in strata over thousands of years by all the great cultures—from Phoenicians to Arabs—who have inhabited our territory. Yet since the 19th century, despite all these attributes, we Spanish have been inward looking, turning our backs on the wider world in almost everything, including cheese.

Today, however, we feel confident about our potential and, like other dynamic food sectors (wine, oil, ham, canned and bottled produce, fruit, etc.), Spain's cheese makers, both industrial and artisan, believe that now is the time to leave isolationism behind and throw open windows and doors to the wider world. We know just how much we have to offer markets where the distinctive qualities of our cheeses are appreciated. Qualities such as:

- new specialties
- shapes, colors and flavors which are genuine and out of the ordinary
- environment- and biodiversity-friendly production processes
- year-round supply provided by cow's, goat's, sheep's and mixed milk and blue cheeses
- a culture dating back thousands of years bequeathed by mountain, plain and transhumant herdsmen

All these treasures, jealously guarded under heavy secrecy for centuries until just a few years ago are now being openly displayed with the backing of the A.P.Q.E., our aim being to spread the word on Spanish cheeses to all parts of the world where there are distributors and consumers who love things natural and authentic and are eager to discover new genuine flavors.

Throughout 2001 we are staging generic promotional campaigns about the cheeses of Spain in the U.S. and German markets, both of which are already in the process of discovering and appreciating our cheese-making culture.

In future years, we shall be making our presence felt with promotional campaigns in other markets until we have succeeded in spreading our "good cheese news" to the most distant corners of the globe, secure in the knowledge that we offer the guarantee of eternal values: history, culture and tradition.

**Mariano Sanz**  
A.P.Q.E. President

**Association for Promoting  
the Cheeses of Spain**  
info@asocpromocionquesos.es



## Cheeses

### Tetilla

A D.O. semisoft cheese from Galicia, made with whole, pasteurized Rubia Gallega, Pardo Alpina and Frisona cow's milk, produced and collected in Galicia. Matured for between one week and about a month.

A low, flat-based conical shape—suggestive of a flattened teat, which is what its name means; weight about 1 kg (2 lb); yellow natural rind. The interior is eyeless, and the curd elastic and ivory to straw colored. Smooth flavor, between lactic and sweet and very buttery on the palate.

### Roncal

A D.O. hard cheese from the Roncal Valley in Navarre, made of whole raw milk obtained from Lacha and Rasa Aragonesa sheep. Matured for over four months. Cylindrical in shape with a smooth, darkened rind; weight between 1 and 4 kg (2 to 8 lb). The interior is eyeless and compact, inelastic, and varies in color from ivory to straw yellow. Strong, developed flavor but not too much so.

### Ibores

A D.O. semisoft to semi-hard cheese made in Extremadura with whole

milk, either raw or pasteurized, obtained from Verata and Retinta goats native to Extremadura. Matured for several weeks to three or four months.

Cylindrical in shape and small in size (from a half to 1 kg/1-2 lb) with the rind either natural or treated with oil or pimentón, which confer different colors and textures. The interior is eyeless with small cavities of mechanical origin, and the curd friable and a dense brilliant white. Very pleasant flavor; creamy in the mouth with goat's milk aromas.

### Garrotxa

Semisoft Catalan cheese made with whole pasteurized goat's milk. Matured for two weeks to two months.

Cylindrical shape with slightly rounded sides and blue-gray mold rind. Weight from a half to 2 kg (1 to 4 lbs). The interior is eyeless but soft and brilliant white in color. Mild flavor, with lactic base-notes and aromas of mold, mushrooms and nuts.

### Manchego

A D.O. semi-hard to very hard cheese from La Mancha made of whole milk either raw (the artisan ones) or pasteurized obtained from Manchega sheep. Matured for two months to over a year.



Cylindrical shape, the sides stamped with zigzags and the faces with a herringbone pattern, the rind natural or oiled. Weights vary from 1 to over 3 kg (2 to 6 lb). The interior is dense with tiny holes, the curd inelastic and the color straw yellow. Very characteristic flavor, typical of sheep's cheese and slightly piquant.

### Cabrales

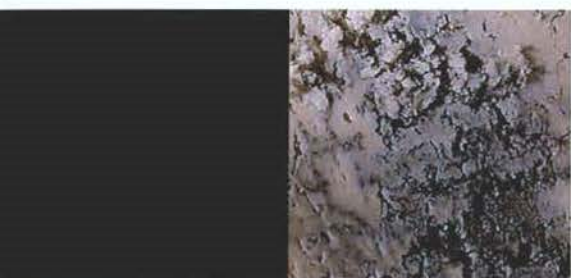
A D.O. hard blue cheese from Cabrales in Asturias, made of whole, raw milk obtained from livestock (an indiscriminate mixture of cows, goats and sheep). Matured for over three months in natural caves. Very varying weights.

Cylindrical in shape, with no definite rind and very sticky, it is wrapped in foil paper bearing the D.O. logo of approval. The interior is open textured, with cavities and galleries containing blue-green mold and the curd is yellow.

Strong, metallic, piquant flavor with rancid touches.

### Idiazábal

A D.O. hard cheese made in smoked and unsmoked versions in the Basque Country and northern Navarre with whole, raw milk obtained from Lacha and Carranzana shep. Matured for over three months.



### La Serena

A D.O. semisoft cheese from the La Serena area of Extremadura, made with whole, raw milk obtained from Merino sheep and coagulated with vegetable rennet. Matured for two to three months.

Cylindrical disc shape, with rounded sides bearing the marks of the esparto binder and faces are smooth though cracked and oiled. Weight about 1 kg (2 lb). The interior is compact but the texture soft and unctuous and straw yellow in color. Some of them become almost a cream when matured.

Very singular flavor, with hints of bitterness; very creamy and melting in the mouth.

### Ibérico

A D.E. (Specific Denomination, see Glossary p. 139) semisoft to semi-hard cheese made industrially all over Spain with whole pasteurized milk obtained from cows (minimum quantity 50 percent), goats (30 percent) and sheep (10 percent). Matured from one to three months. Cylindrical in shape rather like Manchego. Weight around 3 kg (6 lb). The interior is compact in texture with pinprick holes caused by fermentation, and bone to ivory white in color.

Flavor mild but definite, very buttery with a long aftertaste.

### Majorero

A D.O. semisoft to hard cheese from the Canary Island of Fuerteventura, made with whole milk, both raw (the artisan version) and pasteurized, obtained from Canaria goats and, occasionally, some Canaria sheep's milk. Matured for a week to several months.

Flattened cylinder shape, with sides marked by the palm-leaf binder and the faces crudely stamped with a herringbone pattern. The rind can be natural or treated with oil, pimentón, or *gofio* (toasted maize flour). Weights vary considerably.

Very direct, pleasant flavor; very buttery and slightly lactic.

### Zamorano

A D.O. semi-hard to very hard cheese from Zamora made of whole raw or pasteurized milk obtained from Castellana and Churra sheep. Matured for three months to over a year.

Cylindrical in shape much like Manchego, the rind darkened by cellar maturation after rubbing with olive oil. Weight from 1 to over 3 kg (2 to 6 lb). The interior is compact, with small mechanically derived cavities, and straw colored.

Long, pronounced flavor, and cellar aromas.



### Mahón-Menorca

A D.O. semisoft to hard cheese from the Balearic island of Menorca made with whole raw milk (in the artisan version) or pasteurized milk obtained from Menorquina, Frisona and Pardo Alpina cows.

Maturation periods range from a month to a year or longer.

Rectangular cushion-shaped with rounded sides; weight from 1 to 4 kg (2 to 8 lb); the rind natural, oiled or spread with butter and, optionally, pimentón. The interior is eyeless, and the curd friable and pale yellow, tending towards beige in the more mature cheeses.

Very individual flavor; only slightly oily, acidic and slightly salty.

### Afuega'l Pitu

This D.O. semisoft cheese is in the process of acquiring D.O. status. Made with whole pasteurized milk obtained from native Asturian breeds of Asturiana, Frisona and Pardo Alpina cows. Matured for a minimum of two weeks.

Spherical or cone-shaped with a yellowy white mold rind. Small cheeses weighing about half a kg (1 lb). The interior is eyeless, and the texture granular and spreadable.

Direct, lactic flavor with aromas of yogurt and fresh mushrooms.

### Murcia al Vino

A D.O. semisoft or semi-hard cheese from Murcia made of whole, pasteurized milk obtained from Murciano-Granadina goats. Matured for one to three months. Cylindrical in shape, the rind purple from having been washed in red wine. Weight 1-2 kg (2 to 4 lb). The interior is eyeless but slightly supple and a bright ivory white.

Very direct, mild flavor with aromas of dense, fruity wine.

### San Simón

D.O. status is currently being negotiated for this smoked, semisoft Galician cheese made from whole, pasteurized cow's milk obtained from native Galician breeds.

Matured for one to three months. Readily recognizable conical cannonball shape with a rind browned by smoking. Average weight around 1 kg (2 lb). The interior is eyeless, only slightly supple and a dark straw color.

Developed, slightly piquant flavor and aromas.

## Wines

### Valdeorras

A D.O. red wine (there are also whites and rosés), made from Mencía (the most characteristic variety), Garnacha Tintorera, Gran Negro, Maria Ardoña and Merenzao grapes among other red varieties. Produced in Orense, Galicia. The climate is continental with Atlantic influences and moderately rainy; grapes are grown in terraces on the river valley hillsides give young red wines (as well as very reputable whites) which are an intense purple color, very fruity, velvety and full bodied.

### Navarra

D.O. red wines (whites and very famous rosés, too), both young and aged, made from Garnacha (principally) and other noble varieties: Tempranillo, Graciano, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and more. Produced in the southern half of Navarre. The continental climate in-

fluenced by the Atlantic (in the north) and the Mediterranean (in the south), the light, fertile soils and the mixture of varieties give red wines with body which are rounded in the mouth with suggestions of ripe red fruit.

### Montilla-Moriles

D.O. white wines made from Pedro Ximénez (principally), Airén and Baladí grapes. Produced in the areas of Montilla and, mainly, Moriles south of Córdoba. The extreme Mediterranean climate with very low rainfall and high temperatures and sunshine levels, and pale, very permeable soils give wines with lots of body and alcohol made in very distinctive styles using the *criadera* and *solera* systems, making them relations of the wines of Jerez.

### Penedès

D.O. white wines (though also, and principally, cavas, and some reds and rosés), young or slightly aged in wood, made from three outstanding varieties (Xarel.lo, Parellada and Macabeo) and others such as Chardonnay and Riesling. Produced in central southern Catalonia. The very temperate Mediterranean climate and light calcareous and clayey-calcareous soils give very light, pleasant wines which are gently acidic and are very intensely aromatic.

### Valdepeñas

A D.O. red wine, unaged or aged, made from black Cencibel grapes (known as Tempranillo in La Rioja). Produced in a wide area around Valdepeñas, in southern Castile-La Mancha, source of both white wines (mostly) and reds. The extreme continental climate (cold in winter,

hot in summer, and dry throughout the year) and its high clayey soils give full-bodied wines which are very fruity and aromatic and responsive to aging in wood.

### Alicante

A D.O. highly alcoholic fortified wine made from Muscatel grapes. Of the two areas which constitute the prescribed territory of D.O. Alicante (which produces several types of wine), the Muscatel variety is primarily grown in La Marina. The extreme, dry climate, high sun-



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- *Guía Peñín de los Vinos de España-2001*, José Peñín, Pi & Erre Comunicación Integral, 2001, 905 pp.
- *Guía de Vinos Gourmets-2001*, MM Editorial Paladar, 2001, 782 pp.

shine levels and poor, chalk and gypsum-containing soils yield small quantities of very alcoholic wines which are very sweet and floral with a splendid golden color and displaying all the attributes of the Muscatel grape.

#### **Txacolí (Chacolí) de Guetaria**

A D.O. white wine made from Hondarrabi Zuri (white) and Hondarrabi Beltza (black) grape varieties. Produced in a very small coastal area, west of San Sebastián in the Basque Country. The Atlantic climate is cool and rainy with not

much sunshine; the soils are loamy and sandy and cultivated in terraces, giving wines which are young, usually white, mildly alcoholic and acidic with very fresh, fruity and citrus notes.

#### **Rueda**

A D.O. white wine made basically from Verdejo grapes. Produced in the heart of Castile-León, south of the River Duero. The extreme continental climate and low rainfall and heavy, barely fertile soils, give small quantities of white wines of excellent quality, dry and acidic of an almost

transparent golden yellow with greenish hues, plenty of body and a complex aromatic structure.

#### **Rioja**

D.O. wines, principally reds (though whites and some rosés, too), ranging from young to aged, made from Tempranillo (most characteristically), Mazuelo, Garnacha and Graciano. Produced in La Rioja, distributed over three sub-zones (Rioja Alavesa, Rioja Alta and Rioja Baja). The fundamentally continental climate with Atlantic or Mediterranean influences and very different soils, depending on the sub-zone, give Spain's most famous red wines, mainly those matured for long periods.

#### **Somontano**

D.O. white wines (reds, too, which are better known), both young and aged or fermented in wood, made from native varieties (Macabeo, Garnacha Blanca and Alcañón) and other, thoroughly acclimatized, incomer varieties. Produced in northern Aragon. The extreme Mediterranean climate, influenced by the climate of the Pyrenees, and the relatively infertile yet permeable soils give very warm white wines with lots of extract and alcohol and great aromatic complexity.

#### **Ribera del Duero**

D.O. red wines, both young and aged, made from varieties of Tinta Fina (a type of Tempranillo adapted to the area and its most widely planted variety) and other noble incomers. Produced in the upper basin of the River Duero. The extreme continental climate and sandy, well drained soils

give excellent and highly regarded red wines, both young and long matured in wood and bottle.

#### **Cava**

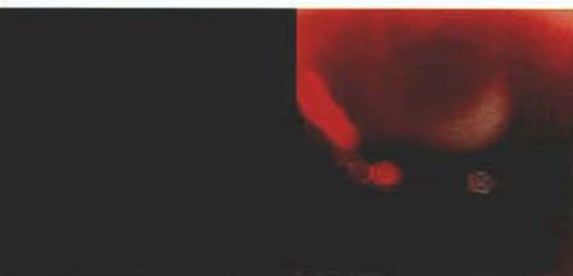
A white sparkling wine whose process involves a second fermentation in bottle; its precise official denomination depends on the vinification, fermentation and aging method used. Produced chiefly in Catalonia and, to a lesser extent, in other areas of Spain. Climate and soil conditions vary according to the different production areas, and give white sparkling wines, young or bottle-aged in cellars for crianza of varying duration, which are very fresh, dry, acidic and fruity in character with a fine, elegant bead.

#### **Cigales**

D.O. young rosé wine made from Tinta del País, Garnacha Tinta, Verdejo and Viura grapes, among others. Produced in a small zone in the north of Castile-León. The extreme continental climate (defined by the contrast between winter and summer temperatures and low rainfall) and soils variously sandy, chalky and gypseous clay with clay and marl beneath give wines which are very fresh, light, smooth in the mouth and fruity.

#### **Jumilla**

A D.O. red wine made from Monastrell (predominantly), Garnacha Tintorera and Cencibel grapes, among others. Produced in an area straddling Murcia and Albacete Provinces. The dry, extreme, continental climate, lots of sunshine and high, clayey soils al-



most at the upper limit for vine growing, give wines which are dense, chewy and fiery with a great deal of alcohol and deep color, very fruity and syrupy when young.

### Rias Baixas

A D.O. white wine made from Albariño (the principal and most characteristic variety), Loureira Blanca, Treixadura and Torrontés grapes. Produced in three very clearly defined small areas on the Atlantic coast of Pontevedra in Galicia. The mild, rainy climate and fertile soils with granite beneath give young wines which are moderately alcoholic, dry, acidic with hints of salt, very complex in their fruit and aromas and with floral nuances.

*Enric Canut is an agronomist whose specialties are livestock farming and cheese and dairy products. He has headed the gastronomic selection team for Vinoselección, Club de Vinos y Gastronomía since 1986. Author of several books about cheese, he is also a frequent contributor to food and wine magazines.*

## W E B S I T E S

### Wines

#### D.O. Valdeorras Regulatory Council

[www.cesga.es/EVEGA/esp/valdeorr.htm](http://www.cesga.es/EVEGA/esp/valdeorr.htm)

#### D.O. Navarra R.C.

[www.cfnavarra.es/AGRICULTURA/OTROSOR/NAVARRA.HTM](http://www.cfnavarra.es/AGRICULTURA/OTROSOR/NAVARRA.HTM)

#### D.O. Vinos de Alicante R.C.

[www.encis.es/vinoalicante/](http://www.encis.es/vinoalicante/)

#### D.O. Somontano R.C.

[www.dosomontano.com](http://www.dosomontano.com)

#### D.O. Montilla-Moriles R.C.

[www.montilla-moriles.org/](http://www.montilla-moriles.org/)

#### Cava R.C.

[www.crcava.es/](http://www.crcava.es/)

#### D.O. Valdepeñas R.C.

[dovaldepenas.es/conreg.htm](http://dovaldepenas.es/conreg.htm)

#### D.O. Ribera del Duero R.C.

[www.do-ribera-duero.es/](http://www.do-ribera-duero.es/)

#### D.O. Ca. Rioja R.C.

[www.riojawine.com/](http://www.riojawine.com/)

#### D.O. Penedès

[www.intercom.es/intercellet/DO-PENEDES/](http://www.intercom.es/intercellet/DO-PENEDES/)

#### D.O. Jumilla R.C.

[www.jumillawine.com/](http://www.jumillawine.com/)

#### D.O. Rías Baixas R.C.

[www.doriasbaixas.com](http://www.doriasbaixas.com)

#### D.O. Cigales R.C.

[www.do-cigales.es/](http://www.do-cigales.es/)

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[www.jcyl.es/jcyl/cag/dgiadr/svca/denominaciones/rueda/home.html](http://www.jcyl.es/jcyl/cag/dgiadr/svca/denominaciones/rueda/home.html)

### Cheeses

#### Afuega'l Pitu

[www.asturnet.es/coasa/afuega.htm](http://www.asturnet.es/coasa/afuega.htm)

#### D.O. Idiazábal Regulatory Council

[www.quesoidiazabal.com/](http://www.quesoidiazabal.com/)

#### D.O. Mahón-Menorca R.C.

[www.quesomahonmenorca.com/](http://www.quesomahonmenorca.com/)

#### D.O. Manchego R.C.

[www.jccm.es/agricul/consejo/manchego/home.htm](http://www.jccm.es/agricul/consejo/manchego/home.htm)

#### Ibérico

[www.quesos.com](http://www.quesos.com)

#### D.O. Tetilla

[ige.xunta.es/conselle/ag/orixe/tetilla.htm](http://ige.xunta.es/conselle/ag/orixe/tetilla.htm)

#### D.O. Roncal R.C.

[www.cfnavarra.es/agricultura/OTROSOR/RONCAL.HTM](http://www.cfnavarra.es/agricultura/OTROSOR/RONCAL.HTM)

#### D.O.P. Cabrales R.C.

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#### D.O. Ibores R.C.

[www.cabraibores.com/](http://www.cabraibores.com/)

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[www.juntaex.es/consejerias/eic/consejos/crqueso/home.html](http://www.juntaex.es/consejerias/eic/consejos/crqueso/home.html)

#### Majorero

[www.productos-canarios.com/es/queso\\_fv.htm](http://www.productos-canarios.com/es/queso_fv.htm)

#### Zamorano

[www.jcyl.es/jcyl/cag/dgiadr/svca/denominaciones/queso/home.html](http://www.jcyl.es/jcyl/cag/dgiadr/svca/denominaciones/queso/home.html)

#### San Simón

[www.euroalimentaria.com/quesos/2/index.htm](http://www.euroalimentaria.com/quesos/2/index.htm)

#### Garrotxa

[www.cheese.com](http://www.cheese.com)

# KAKI

## The Prince of the Persimmon



The kaki, or *Diospyros kaki*, the cultivated fruit which is the pride of the persimmon family, has thrived for centuries in Valencia, whose mild climate and rich, sun-drenched soil has given birth to a superior variety, called the *Rojo Brillante*. The Valencian kaki is now being welcomed abroad with open arms since local growers and agricultural researchers have discovered the best way to speed its natural ripening process while keeping this exotic fruit firm enough to travel.



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TEXT  
JOAN TARZIAN

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Until recently, the kaki has always stayed close to home. With attributes worthy of international acclaim when fully ripe, the kaki had the inconvenient necessity of being super ripe in order to be enjoyed. Its usually seedless, orange pulp needed to ripen to a near-marmalade state in order to lose the astringency which is capable of turning any fruit lover's mouth awry. This made it a troublesome traveler with difficulties to arrive at faraway markets. In this state, however, the kaki is truly the marmalade of fresh fruits: its sweet, mango/peach-flavored pulp has a sugar content that can only be compared to that of the date and it must be eaten with a spoon, or pureed into ice cream or a shake. Without patiently waiting until this crucial point for the traditional fruit, the risk of discouraging a kaki initiate from future tastings is assured since the fruit's astringency will not allow its flavor to be enjoyed. Valued as an excellent fresh baby food, kakis are high in fiber and both vitamin A and vitamin C. They are also rich in potassium, sugar and glucose and make an excellent antioxidant.

## Asian Prize

A native of China, today the kaki is a highly prized fruit in Asia where it is often sun-dried to be consumed after the September through November harvest months. It made its jump to the mild climates of the western coast and southern United States around the mid-1800's where it is called persimmon due to its general



similarity to that country's native persimmon. It appeared in Spain first as an ornamental tree two or three decades later, valued for its glossy leaves and bright-colored fruit, though the quality of its wood meant it was sought after by cabinetmakers as well. The fruit itself varies in size and shape. At its largest it can weigh over 400 grams (nearly one pound) and measure eight cm (3 inches) in diameter. The color of the fruit varies from yellow orange to vivid red while the tree's leaves are often pale, slightly yellowish green in youth, turning a dark, glossy green as they age. Under mild autumn conditions the leaves can turn dramatic shades of yellow, orange and red.

Once on the Iberian Peninsula, the decorative kaki tree found a home for itself in the mild, Mediterranean climate and rich soil of Valencia, the region which occupies about one third of the center of Spain's eastern coast. There, it has thrived alongside the citrus trees for which the region is so well known, olive and figs trees. Over the years of cultivation, the different traditional varieties crossed and an excellent local variety, known as the Rojo Brillante, or "bright red," was born. The name itself indicates why

the eye-catching ripe fruit and its tree are prized for esthetic reasons. More than just lovely foliage, Valencians have long enjoyed the tree's exotic fruit which was most often harvested from family gardens and reserved for personal consumption.

## Travel Ready

The fact remained, however, that the kaki could only be eaten when super-ripe and so, could only be enjoyed by the people lucky enough to live close to, or in this mild Mediterranean climate. That is, until a few years ago, when Valencian growers noticed that fruit eaters in northern Europe were beginning to acquire a taste for a different variety of kaki based on the North American variety called Triumph and rebaptized Sharon Fruit. After harvest, the fruit is treated to remove astringency so it no longer needs to be super-ripe to be enjoyed and can be shipped and eaten firm. It was then that the Valencians knew the moment had arrived for their beloved Rojo Brillante to make a name for itself abroad. All they needed was the appropriate method to speed their fruit's ripening process while keeping its flesh firm and



maintaining the pulp's flavor so that it could stand up to the hazards of shipping that so often traumatize exotic fruits. They sought help from researchers at the Valencian Agrarian Research Institute who tested the different known methods to reduce astringency until discovering just what the Rojo Brillante needed (see below).

## Fruit with a Pedigree

The fields and orchards of the Ribera del Xúquer river valley are some of Valencia's most fertile. The soil in the valley has greater depth, few stones and excellent drainage. Growing

## GOOD - BYE ASTRINGENCY!

What do Valencian agriculturists do when they need to fast forward their knowledge of crops and how to treat them? They call the Valencian Agrarian Research Institute (IVIA) where agricultural research scientists study agricultural problems and develop solutions or improvements. The Institute, funded by the regional government, carries out research on all aspects of cultivating and processing the agricultural products that are the lifeblood of the local economy and collaborates with other researchers both in Spain and abroad.

IVIA scientists Miguel Ángel del Río and Gerardo Llácer were put on the kaki case about four years ago to help growers learn more about cultivating kakis, and how best to remove their astringency. According to Dr. Llácer, the homegrown kakis that have been cultivated in Valencia for years were often allowed to fully ripen in a drawer with apples. This home ripening method made scientific sense, "The apples release ethylene as they age and this helps the kakis lose their astringency," he explains. It is the tannins that are responsible for the astringency in kakis. Dr. del Río frames the problem in scientific terms: "When the soluble tannins in an unripe kaki come in contact with the protein in saliva, the sensation of astringency is perceived. If the tannins become insoluble by being kept for a period in a controlled environment, there is no reaction and no astringency."

Starting from what was already known about methods to reduce astringency, their experiments found that when exposed to the gas that puts the bubbles in your favorite soft drink, carbon dioxide, their kakis would be brought successfully beyond their phase of astringency while maintaining firm, sweet pulp and a pleasant orange color. The same type of controlled atmosphere allows producers to conserve apples and pears for months. The result is a kaki which can be enjoyed without waiting for further ripening and whose lighter skin can be peeled with a knife and eaten, once the skin is removed, like an apple or pear. Or, the fruit can be allowed to continue ripening to its near-marmalade state and eaten with a spoon.

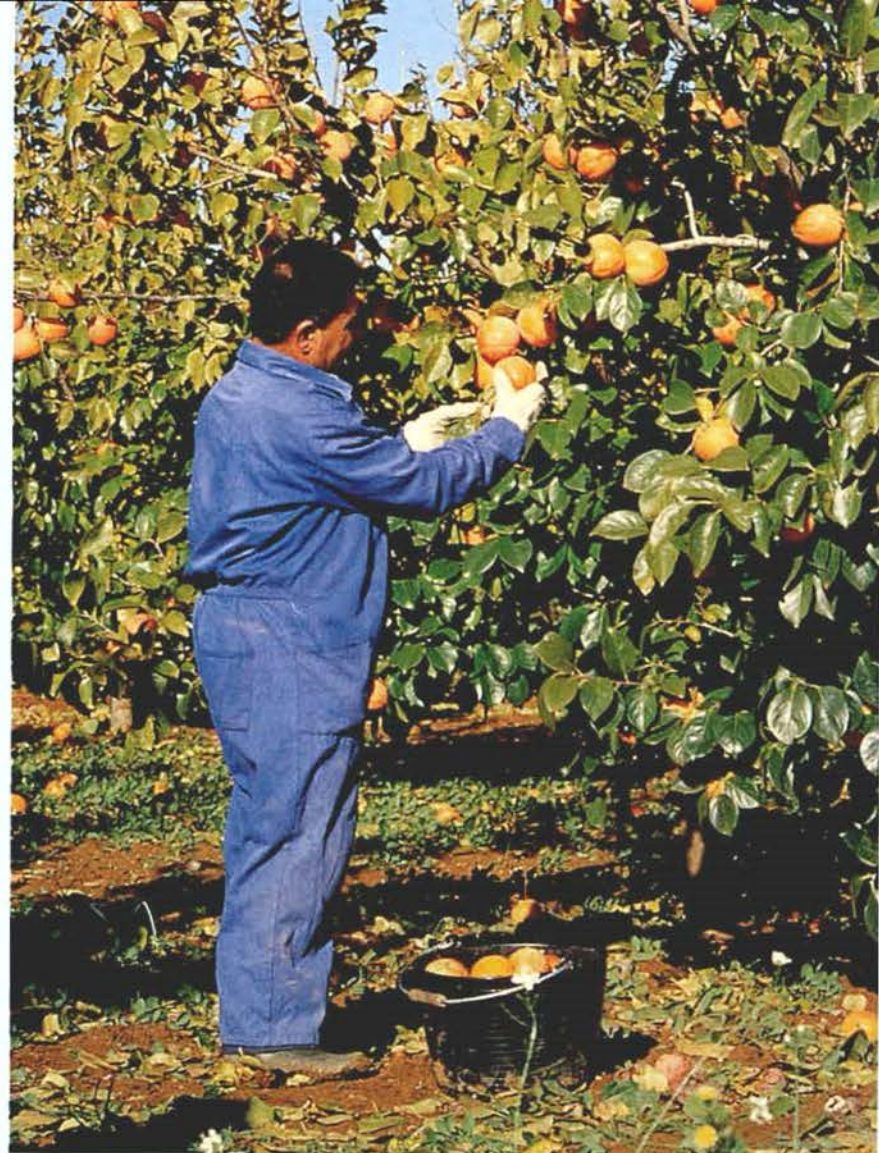
While it still must be handled with care to avoid bruising when picked and prepared for shipping, this treated kaki can emerge unscathed from the longest of trips.

At IVIA's kaki laboratory, researchers control, via computer, the results of experiments in airtight chambers where the mix of oxygen and carbon dioxide are manipulated to get the best possible result. Tests were also performed using ethanol and hot water, but the Rojo Brillante variety fares best with carbon dioxide. Their ongoing testing provides guidelines on specific methods for local agricultural cooperatives that prepare the fruit for market.

conditions are optimal for the kaki, which, in turn is valued by growers for its freedom from nearly all diseases, as well as the rising popularity of its fruit. Knowing their well-endowed lands were producing a quality product, growers formed the regulatory council for the Ribera del Xúquer Kaki Denomination of Origin (D.O.) in 1997 and gave the council responsibility to supervise kaki cultivation and handling to ensure quality, size, flavor and appearance of the Ribera del Xúquer kakis. The D.O. recently succeeded in its goal of obtaining a Certificate of Origin for its kakis from European Union authorities, thus achieving recognition that the kakis grown in the Ribera del Xúquer valley are a unique, superior product. In order to display the D.O. stamp, a kaki must be of the Rojo Brillante variety, grown in the Ribera del Xúquer valley by a member-grower and, of course, have passed inspection. The cultivation of these fruits is not left to chance. Each farm is supervised by a technician who, in turn, is guided by the D.O.'s agricultural engineer. Every aspect of the life of the kaki is controlled to ensure maximum quality, size and appearance.

## It's Crystal

How does such a delicate fruit make it to market, unbruised? About half of the D.O. Ribera del Xúquer kakis are processed at one of the member-cooperatives in the town of L'Acudia that has been adapted to specifically handle the fruit. At the loading docks where the fruit is received, the kakis are kept at 90 percent humidity to preserve their freshness until the process can start. Then, they



move on to the sorters stations where they are sorted by hand. At many of the smaller cooperatives that handle kakis, most of the process is done exclusively by hand, since the slightest rough handling can render the fruit unfit for market. One process supervisor gets the point across by telling his handlers: "this is crystal." If handling equipment is used, it must be custom-made or modified so that soft rubber replaces metal wherever fruit meets machine, as is the case at the L'Acudia facility. After the kakis are sorted and cleaned, the astringency removal process must begin for the kakis destined for travel. The fruit is boxed and stacked in airtight chambers ten meters tall (30 feet) and about as wide which are magnified versions of IVIA research facilities. Each cham-

ber can handle about 70 tons of kakis. There, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the air is raised while the temperature, humidity and pressure are controlled by sensors located throughout the chambers. After about 15 hours during which time periodic checks are made via sampling from the control window, the fruit is ready for shipping and eating.

## Let Them Eat Kaki

The boom in kaki sales is, indeed impressive. A modest amount of traditional, or untreated kakis had been exported for years to a handful of European countries, or about 1,500 tons. Exports of the astringency-free *Rojo Brillante* kakis have increased seven-fold since 1997, the year they were introduced. This year's crop



will continue to set records with exports expected at well over 10,000 tons. The five main kaki importers are Germany, Holland, France, Finland and Brazil, where kakis, which are harvested and consumed in Brazilian autumn and winter, are imported for summer consumption. Ninety percent of the kakis with Denomination of Origin Ribera del Xúquer are sold by ANECOOP (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 42) which markets kakis with the astringency removed under the name "Persimmon Bouquet" and the traditional kakis as "Classic Bouquet."

Rojo Brillante growers, sellers and researchers agree: they have not begun to tap the kaki's possibilities for inclusion in fruit juices, or as a canned product, nor has the demand for dried kakis peaked. As more consumers are introduced to the fruit's exotic flavor, mostly via taste samples at markets or trade shows during the months it is in season, September through November, its popularity is expected to continue to grow. Perhaps we will soon be dashing out for a kaki ice cream, or perhaps it will show up, dried, the next time we order a floral arrangement.

*Joan Tarzian is a freelance writer based in Madrid, specialized in business and economics.*

*Exporters page 120 and photo credits page 140.*



## W E B S I T E S

### D.O. Kaki Ribera del Xúquer

Language: Spanish  
The Regulatory Council for this Denomination of Origin has designed this site with original graphics to present comprehensive information on the cultivation and production of the kaki. It also includes numerous recipes.

[www.kakifruit.com/](http://www.kakifruit.com/)

### ANECOOP

Language: English, French, German and Spanish  
Anecoop, the umbrella organization that groups many agricultural cooperatives, is the principal Spanish marketer of the kaki.

[www.anecoop.com/espanyol/asp/frutas.asp](http://www.anecoop.com/espanyol/asp/frutas.asp)

### INFOAGRO

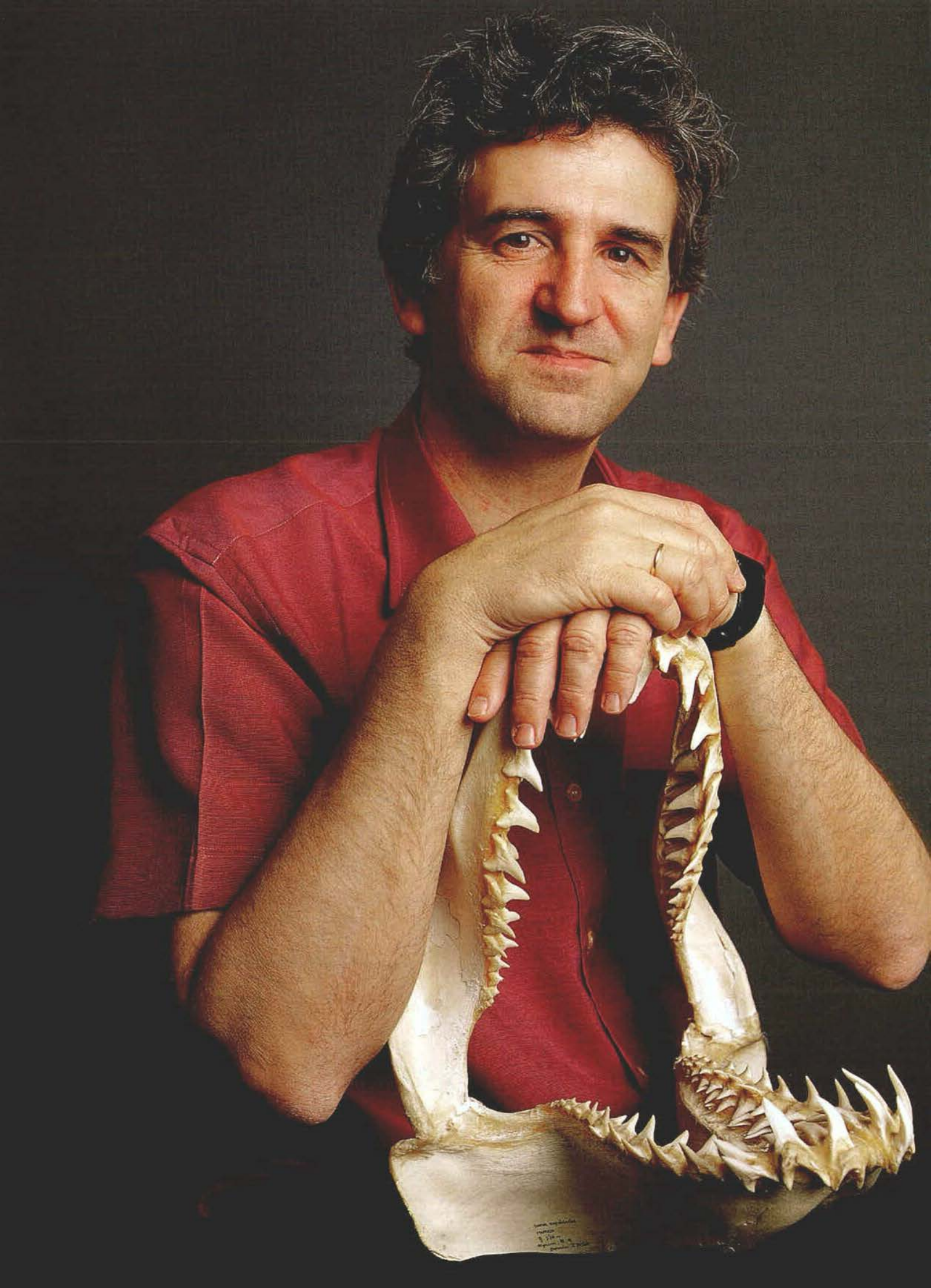
Language: Spanish  
Infoagro is a portal dedicated to disseminating information on the Spanish agricultural sector. This page includes a complete study on the kaki, its cultivation and its harvesting.

[www.infoagro.com/frutas/frutas\\_tropicales/caquis.asp](http://www.infoagro.com/frutas/frutas_tropicales/caquis.asp)

### The Kaki in Ribera del Xúquer

Language: Spanish  
This page covers information on the cultivation and production of the kaki in Ribera del Xúquer.

[www.uv.es/~cutillas/xuquer.html](http://www.uv.es/~cutillas/xuquer.html)



## 21st Century Quixotes. Part 1

We all have dreams, but few people have the passion and the drive to devote their lives to making them come true. Our new feature, "21st-Century Quixotes" profiles outstanding men and women from Spain whose accomplishments transcend national borders and who, like Cervantes' hero, refuse to let mere reality prevent them from following their hearts.

JUAN LUIS ARSUAGA:  
*A Paleontologist with a*

# BONE TO PICK

In this issue we speak with Juan Luis Arsuaga, acclaimed paleontologist and the head of the team whose excavations at the Atapuerca site near the Castillian city of Burgos have changed science's view of the history of man.




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TEXT  
LAURA KUMIN

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Professor of Paleontology at Madrid's Complutense University and visiting professor of anthropology at London's University College, Arsuaga has been fascinated by nature since childhood. The author of numerous scientific articles, his books, *The Chosen Species* (written with Ignacio Martínez) and the more recent *The Neanderthal's Necklace* have introduced paleontology to the public at large. In 1997 Arsuaga and his team of researchers received Spain's prestigious Principe de Asturias (Prince of Asturias) award for their contribu-

tion to science. Arsuaga maintains an ongoing "battle" with the country's rigid academic bureaucracy. For the past twenty years Arsuaga has spent the month of July excavating at Atapuerca and the rest of the year handling a full-time teaching load while analyzing the team's extraordinary findings.

"I'm wiped out," Arsuaga warns me as we enter his office at the School of Geological and Biological Sciences at the Complutense University. It's Friday afternoon. "You can interview what's left of me after a week of work," he sighs. Arsuaga excuses himself for a moment and sits down at the computer. "More e-mails," he says resignedly. "I can't possibly answer them all." The telephone rings continuously throughout our interview, messages accumulating on his voicemail.

Tall and youthful looking with a shock of grey hair, the 47-year-old father of three communicates his passion for his work as soon as we begin to talk. His cubicle is cramped ("the regulation two-window office allocated to professors of my rank," he comments wryly) and packed with shelves, books, a computer and a few fossils.

"I have 240 class hours, the maximum workload allowed by law, plus preparation, exams, tutorials. In addition I administrate all of our projects, write and conduct research," he explains. "The Príncipe de Asturias award, which is the national equivalent of the Nobel prize, is an honor and has helped Atapuerca in many ways," he explains. "But my responsibilities at the university haven't changed at all. Receiving the Nobel prize wouldn't make any difference within the department either.

I need a smaller class load, a larger office, someone to assist me..." his voice trails.

"Historical research is relatively inexpensive and very cost effective for the government. The problem is structural, not financial. It's the system," Arsuaga elaborates. "It's having the flexibility to allow time for research. I'm realistic about what can be changed and what cannot. My proposal is to leave the university as it is and to create specialized research centers."

## The Humanistic Approach

"Do you consider yourself more of a professor or a researcher?" I ask. "I think that both professions are closely related. Research is necessary in order to transmit enthusiasm for your subject to students. It gives you direct information to be able to communicate firsthand to them," he answers.

"Good science or bad science depends on the system and how it functions," Arsuaga continues, leaning forward in his chair. "There's a worldwide crisis happening right now in the world of scientific research. It's not just a question of funding. The most productive professionals working in the field of experimental research are the most ignorant, in the broadest sense of the word. The new generations of researchers can only transmit technical knowledge to their students. I know Nobel prizewinners who are culturally illiterate," he states. "They never leave their laboratories. They never read a book. I believe in the committed scientist. We're here as professors

not merely to teach science, but to teach culture. I think that this idea of science as part of a broader culture is being lost."

The Atapuerca mountain range fifteen kilometers (9 miles) from Burgos, is honeycombed with a series of caves. The first human fossils were found there in 1976. Since then excavation has begun at six different sites and has yielded remains from a wide range of human evolutionary cycles including the oldest human fossils found in Europe. The presence of the remains of thirty-three pre-Neanderthal suggests that one of these sites, the *Sima de los Huesos* or Chasm of Bones, was a burial ground.

"I'm going there next week," says Arsuaga. "There will be almost one hundred people from universities all over Spain working there this summer. We'll be excavating simultaneously at six different sites, a site that is one million years old, another that is 800,000 years old, two that are 300,000-400,000 years old, as well as two sites dating from the Bronze Age. This is what makes Atapuerca unique. There is enough material to keep several generations of paleontologists working."

Arsuaga speaks with conviction and his enthusiasm is contagious. My list of questions lies forgotten on my lap. "One of the most outstanding features of the excavations at Atapuerca is the way they connect periods of human evolution," I venture. His face brightens. "That's the beauty of the contemporary concept of paleontology. We're dealing with living things here. Who likes bones? I don't like bones. But they have meaning, they're not just fossils. We're speaking about human nature here," he

exclaims. "People don't realize that paleontologists answer the kind of questions that we ask ourselves. Why does menopause exist? Why is childbirth painful? Are we by nature monogamous, aggressive, vegetarians or carnivores? Why do we get cavities in our teeth? What is the meaning of human presence on earth? These are the kinds of questions I'm paid to answer."

## How to Talk to a Fossil

"Fossils interest us because they speak to us about our own history. We use them to solve certain problems," continues Arsuaga. "One of the things we study is the sociology of biological evolution. People describe the social biology of rabbits with no problem but when it comes to describing our own we're at a loss. I follow a method originated by Thomas Huxley, a disciple of Darwin. By observing the human species today and comparing characteristics with our closest related species, primates, we can find out what makes us original. It's a question of knowing ourselves and then trying to find out how we've become what we are now."

"You have said that you talk to fossils and must know the right questions to pose. What exactly do you ask a fossil?" I query.

He smiles. "For example, what can I ask a cranium? Well, I can ask 'where is your larynx?' to find out what kind of sounds it could make and what language it used. But not only that. I look at chimpanzees. I know that their larynx is placed low and ours is high. So now I'm search-



ing for something specific in this fossil. That's why you have to know what questions you're going to ask first."

"It's rumored that you're preparing a groundbreaking study of the development of speech."

"Yes, we're the only ones who have the wide-ranging data necessary to undertake such a study. We still have some surprising finds that we'll eventually make public."

"What do you consider your main contribution to paleontological research?"

Arsuaga pauses to consider the answer. "Science is always advancing. Over the years there will be paleontologists who will make more impressive discoveries than mine. I think that my contribution is of another nature. I believe that I have built a bridge between science and society. I don't mean adopting a patronizing attitude and simplifying terminology. I mean that we're coming out of the scientific ghetto and

participating in society. People on the street often thank us for opening the door to a new area of knowledge for them."

Part of Atapuerca is now open to the public and guided tours are provided. There is an activity center there now and a museum is in the planning stages. "But there is nothing better than a good guide," says Arsuaga. "If I say 'Look at this rose, isn't it beautiful?' it means nothing. But if I say, 'See this rose? Christ walked on it,' that's another thing entirely. I'm showing you how to read that rose. We're teaching people how to read what they see at Atapuerca."

"Do you consider yourself a Quixote?"

"Do you mean struggling against an immovable system? Look, I've been invited to go to Harvard, to many other prestigious universities. I want to accomplish something meaningful, and hope that we will be able to transform society here in some way. For a start, we've managed to have

Atapuerca designated as a cultural heritage site. It's difficult, but I'm optimistic."

It's late as I say goodbye. Arsuaga returns to his office muttering "I'll just finish a few more things here." The phone begins to ring.

*Laura Kumin is a performing arts producer and writer based in Madrid.*

*Photo credits on page 140*

# EASTING IMPRESSIONS

Text  
Vicky Hayward



When early 19th century Aragonese confectioner Joaquín Gacén wrote his **Manual de repostería** (Confectionery Manual), he may not have been intending to publish it. Perhaps that is part of its charm: the relaxed, chatty language; the everyday practical advice; the regional recipes using handfuls of rose petals and ladles of goats' milk, gluts of local fruit, sweet dry almonds and clarified honey and sugar. All these things make it a pleasure to read. Quite apart from that this previously unpublished manuscript, unearthed in Zaragoza by Santiago Gómez Laguna, who has added notes for modern readers, has considerable historic interest since Gacén was an exact contemporary of Antoine Carême. Above all, one notices the strong Muslim inheritance in Gacén's sherbets and iced drinks, fruit jellies and preserves, many of which can be traced back to medicinal recipes from the great Arab schools of medicine in Zaragoza, Toledo and other cities (*Instituto Fernando el Católico, Excma. Diputación de Zaragoza; ifc@dpz.es*). Juan José Alonso's guide to vernacular country architecture entitled **Arquitecturas tradicionales con encanto** (Traditional Architecture with Charm) focuses on sixty vernacular building forms from around Spain. Many grew up as functional farm buildings: here are windmills and pigeon coops, salt-pans, stone granaries, raisin-drying sheds and half a dozen different forms of farmstead. Alonso describes a prototype for each and lists other examples to visit as well as places to eat



and stay. Although this does not pretend to be a comprehensive guide, it is a really original approach to traveling and allows a new reading of the old ways of life that shaped the landscape (*El País Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es*). **La fuerza de la diferencia** (The Power of Difference), by Miguel Lorente, provides food for thought for anybody working professionally with Spanish products. The book's subtitle, *La Denominación de Origen, un instrumento para el desarrollo* (The Denomination of Origin, a Tool for Development), more or less sums up the subject, although not the approach, which is a very readable defense of the D.O.s' potential as working tools for stimulating rural development. Lorente, who has worked with the denominations, argues for stronger controls to prevent them becoming marketing ploys redirected to benefit those outside the rural producing areas. This is a deeply felt critical analysis with interesting historical background, sharp-eyed commentary on the wine business today, and clear ethical pointers as well as a useful glossary for anyone who needs to understand the legal labyrinth of the D.O.s. One only wishes, as with so many good Spanish books, that there was an index (*Ediciones La Val de Onsera; lavaldeonsera@arrakis.es*).

## In Brief

### HOME COOKING

**Cocina Extremeña** (Cooking from Extremadura) by Juan Antonio Pérez Pozo, **Cocina**



**Madridena** (Cooking from Madrid) by Cristino Álvarez and Isabel Corbacho, and **Cocina Riojana** (Riojan Cooking) by respected chef Lorenzo Cañas are new additions—and final titles—to Everest's regional collection, which scores higher on content than design. The books on Extremadura and the Rioja include surprising, carefully chosen dishes that are absolutely authentic, appetizing and also down-to-earth enough to make at home (*Editorial Everest; comunicacion@everest.es*).

### CHEFS & RESTAURANT COOKING

**Girona, Cuina a Cuina** (Girona, Kitchen by Kitchen) Catalonia's northern province, Gerona, is shaped by abrupt geographical contrasts, which give the cooking its daring flavors: for example, braised duck with pears, or the Costa Brava's "sea and mountain" combinations of shellfish and meat. This is a great overview through the eyes of twenty chefs, including young star Joan Roca; their dishes share a distinctively earthy but adventurous character. It's written in Catalan (*Edicions Lisard, S.L.; isard@isard.net*).

### WINE

**Nuestra Bodega** (Our Cellar) The fourth guide to La Mancha D.O. wines is a useful bilingual (Spanish and English) buyers' or wine-lovers' reference book; a brief background on grape varieties, growing methods and the denomination's history is followed by a description of each bodega, its wines and

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E-mail: anfora@intercom.es



details on visits (*Proedi Promociones Editoriales, S.L.; consejo@lamanchado.es*).

**Bodegas con Sabor III** (Bodegas with Character III) This final volume in José Penín's self-published trilogy takes a leisurely look at the wine making behind 26 of the country's most individual premier bodegas. Of special interest are the younger, less published winemakers whose work is not yet well known abroad (*Pi & Erre Ediciones; pi-erre@pi-erre.com*).

### TRAVEL

**Dónde comer bien en Asturias** (Where to Eat Well in Asturias) A pocket guide designed for those who want to eat their way around the mountainous coastal region; here is proof that it offers a lot more today than its famous fish, beans, cider and rice pudding. Each of the 120 restaurants comes with a map (many of them are buried in the countryside) and brief background on what else you can do in the locality (*Editorial Everest; turismo@everest.es*).

**Guía de espacios naturales. Cataluña** (Guide to Natural Spaces: Catalonia) This handy new-format guide by Humberto Da Cruz gives a brief overview of protected natural areas in one of the Spanish regions with the best records for conservation. The options range from Aigüestortes National Park to smaller but no less interesting pockets of forest, mountain or marshland. An outline of each area's geography, animal species, plant varieties, access and routes is rounded out by contacts, accommodation and eating places, attractive photos and maps (*El País Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es*).

**Guía oficial de casas rurales de España** (Official Guide to Spanish Rural Accommodation) Two key points of this guide are the small black and white photos accompanying every one of the 4,000 places to stay and the work put into the text's factual details by ASETUR, the national rural tourism association. The photos help evoke the atmosphere and setting of each house; the de-

scriptions are in condensed note form (*Anaya Touring Club; lroque@anaya.es*).

**Guía Viva. Madrid** (Live Guides Madrid) The big plus of this new, brightly colored pocket guide is its equal-handed coverage of the city and its surrounding region, encouraging you to get out into the wonderful country around the capital. It also includes good overall maps to each city quarter by day and night (*Anaya Touring Club; lroque@anaya.es*).

**La Cañada Soriana Occidental** (The West Soria Drivers' Road) Spain's medieval drovers' roads are being rediscovered since their legal protection in 1995. This is a wonderful walker's or cyclist's guide to the 800-km (497-mile) drovers' road still used by Sorian shepherds to take their flocks to winter pastures in Extremadura. It passes through three great historic cities: Cáceres, Ávila and Segovia. Excellent practical information includes bicycle repair addresses (*El País Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es*).

**Pueblos Pescadores con Encanto** (Fishing Villages with Charm) Precisely when the future of fishing ports is increasingly threatened, their architecture and way of life is valued as never before. In this guidebook Juan José Alonso has picked 52 small Spanish ports that are home to traditional fleets fishing the coastal waters, and included interesting background on fishing and salting methods, the fish auctions and boats (*El País Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es*).

**Rutas de fin de semana a pie** (Weekend Walking Routes) Paco Nadal y Begoña López Limia have mapped out 34 accurately timed, beautiful walking routes, 2-6 hours in length. The texts, maps and photos highlight features such as castles, volcanoes, panoramic views and old railway lines, and each walk is rounded off by brief practical information. A heavy book to carry, but perfect for planning (*El País Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es*).

**Rutas desde Madrid en coche** (Driving Routes

Around Madrid) Madrid's dead-central position makes it a perfect base from which to explore central Spain. Taking that as a starting point this glossy spiral-bound book gives readers 34 ready-made, well-chosen routes designed to fill a weekend, each well sketched out visually by dozens of photos. There is plenty of contrast in the walks to suit all kinds of tastes; the format is ideal to carry in the car; and there is a short supplement of pithy information with eating and hotel options for each route (*El Pais Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es*).

**Sierra de Gredos y Norte de Extremadura. Turismo Rural y Aventura** (The Sierra de Gredos and Northern Extremadura: Tourism and Adventure) The 21st book in the Camino Verde (Green Path) guides to country holidays seems overdue given the longstanding popularity of walking, cycling and climbing in the Gredos mountains, to the east of Madrid. But this is a useful down-to-earth book combining detailed route maps with other information to plan an independent trip off the beaten track (*Libros Cúpula; www.ceacedit.com*).

**Time for Food Madrid** Nick Inman's mini-guide to Madrid's food splits the city into eight areas. For each of them there is a section on shops, markets and picnic sites as well as a personal choice of restaurants and bars. The latter tends towards the traditional, but there is a good choice of Spanish styles and useful texts on specialties ranging from cakes to tapas and taverns (*Thomas Cook Publishing; www.timeforfood.com*).

## Also Received

**Alistair Sawday's Special Places to Stay—Spain**, edited by Guy Hunter-Watts. Over 300 handpicked addresses for a pleasurable stay on the mainland and in the islands. This fourth edition for 2001 is considerably expanded.

(ASP Co. Ltd; [www.specialplacestostay.com](http://www.specialplacestostay.com))

**Guía de alojamiento en Casas Rurales de España** (Guide to Rural Accommodation in Spain) Very comprehensive listing of over 4,700 cottages and rural houses to rent. The entries give a clear indication of the architecture, setting, location prices and facilities—but there are no photos. (*El Pais Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es*)

**Guía Mundial Assistance de Hoteles y Restaurantes de España** (Guide to Spanish Hotels and Restaurants) The fifth edition of a bible-size book with clean, easily read layout, this includes over 5,000 hotels and restaurants and 75 town maps; the entries are brief, with little detail, but everything you need to know is there. (*El Pais Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es*)

**Guía del viajero España Portugal 2001** (Traveler's Guide Spain and Portugal 2001) Now in its 15th year, this alphabetical guide to established restaurants and hotels gives useful sublists of restaurants open on Sundays and in August (*Plaza & Janes Editores, S.A; fax (34) 933 660 449*).

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[bajamar@bajamar.es](mailto:bajamar@bajamar.es)  
50080 ZARAGOZA - Spain

FÁBRICA: Ctra. Sangüesa, s/n.  
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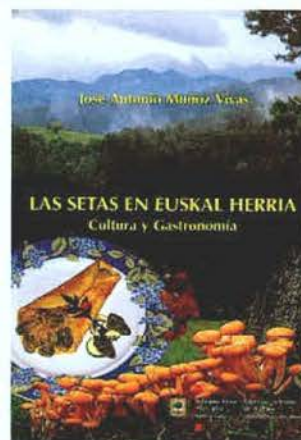
BODEGAS JULIAN CHIVITE  
DE PADRES A HIJOS DESDE 1647



## The Mushroom Lovers

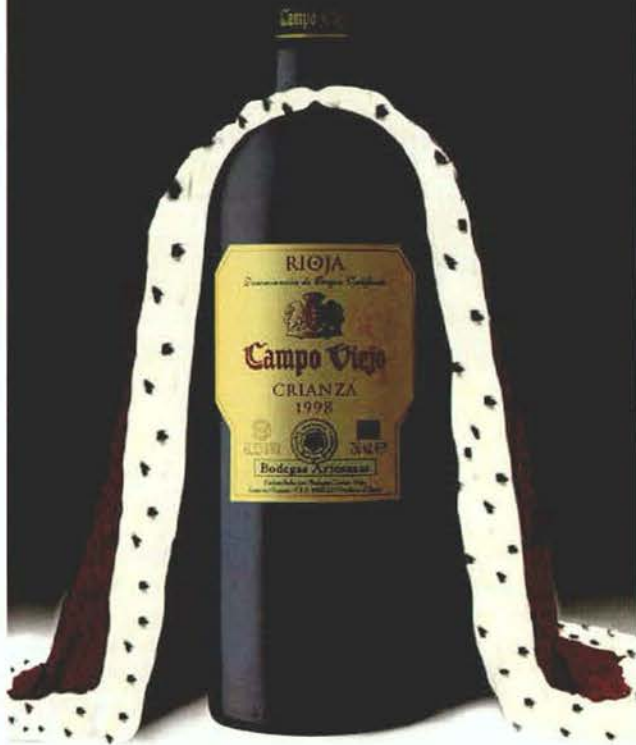
It is not often that one comes across cookbooks that have grown out of a lifetime's work and passion, but two recently published books on wild mushrooms, one Basque and one Catalan, qualify as labors of love. Jovial mycologist Llorenç Petràs caught the fungi-hunting bug as a child and now supplies chefs all over the country from his famous stall in Barcelona's La Boqueria market. Along the way he has also become a very good cook; the 200 modern recipes in his slickly designed paperback *Cooking with Wild Mushrooms: Recipes and Advice* show the kind of imagination and skill you would usually associate with a Mediterranean chef, while his identifying text on 18 different types of edible fungi is a great gourmet rundown. José Antonio Muñoz Vivas' book *Wild Mushrooms in the Basque Country: Culture and Gastronomy* is equally good in a quite different way. This is a real mushroom hunters' handbook, less designed but packed with information, identifying 45 edible varieties and explaining in detail where you might find them and how to clean and preserve them. The book ends with a section of nearly 200 recipes, strongly Basque in feel and ranging from traditional dishes to modern creative cooking. At the end of the day, for all the differences of the authors' approach, both men clearly love wild mushrooms not just for their flavor but also for the skill and pleasure of hunting for them. As Petràs puts it, "This is what I like about wild mushrooms: that they are mysterious and unpredictable."

*Cocina con Setas. Recetas y Consejos*, Llorenç Petràs, Península ([www.peninsula.com](http://www.peninsula.com))  
*Las Setas en Euskal Herria. Cultura y Gastronomía*, Departamento de Cultura, Diputación Foral de Bizkaia ([argitalpenak@bizkaia.net](mailto:argitalpenak@bizkaia.net))





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**BAINES, THE PACHARAN**

# FOODIE'S CORNER



Conferences, fairs, new restaurants, awards, star chefs... the food world is buzzing just about everywhere, Spain included. This new section aims to reflect what's going on within Spain itself and events relevant to Spain elsewhere in the world.

## Fairs

Eight hundred representatives of the top food sectors assembled in Madrid in April for the 15th edition of the Club de Gourmets' International Salon. This major showcase of **high quality food products** attracts thousands of food-involved people to the Spanish capital year after year, from producers to buyers, manufacturers, distributors, retailers and cooks.

The Salon, by now a permanent fixture in the international calendar, features displays and tastings of prime delicatessen products across the board—wines, *Ibérico* ham, top-of-the-range preserves, vegetable products, cheeses,

meats and olive oils. Complementary activities timed to coincide with the Salon included a "Sensations Workshop," aimed at familiarizing children with the different tastes and smells of world gastronomy.



An event dedicated exclusively to **olive oil**, the 10th edition of Expoliva (the international olive oil and related industries fair), was held in Jaén from 24 to 27 May. This biennial fair attracted over 150,000 visitors and 300 exhibitors this year—an increase of 13.6 percent and 22 percent respectively for the 9th edition. There were 26,000 sq m (31,096 sq yd) of exhibition space this year, taken up by representatives not only of the traditional Mediterranean producing countries such as Spain, Greece, Italy and Portugal, but also of Persian Gulf countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabia, and even commercial

**Text**  
Cristino Álvarez  
**Translation**  
Hawys Pritchard

delegations from countries well outside the area, such as Australia, New Zealand, Japan and China.



Over 300 wineries were represented at the first edition of FENAVIN, Castile-La Mancha's international wine fair, held from 10 to 14 May in Ciudad Real, capital of a leading wine-producing province. It was attended by some 150 European buyers, the international dimension being one of the Fair's principal objectives with a view to "increasing exports and spreading a quality wine image," as Spain's Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Foods, Miguel Arias Cañete, explained at the opening ceremony. Castile-La Mancha is the biggest wine-producing region in Spain: it has 417 wineries and 81 bottling plants, which account for 40 percent of all Spain's wine industry. Denominations of Origin Mancha, Valdepeñas, Almansa, Méntrida, Mondéjar, Manchuela and part of Jumilla, as well as the wine-growing area of Sierra de Alcaraz, all fall within its territory.



A controversial subject much in the news now: beef. The last edition of the Castile-León Food Fair held in Valladolid on Spring was a great success both with the (mainly professional) public and with participating companies. A **beef tasting** was staged, in which cooks and food writers tried samples of a dozen cuts from the equivalent number of different breeds at different ages. During the discussion that followed, the view emerged that the recent crisis suffered by the beef sector may well have had its positive side if, as seems to be the case, it means that from now on consumers will have access to beef fully guaranteed for health and safety... and for quality, as is discernible in the Spanish market already, especially as regards beef covered by a Denomination of Origin or Quality. In the light of this, those present agreed that the sector's future looks promising.

## Awards

A year of prizes for the **Arzak family**, owners of the three Michelin-star restaurant of the same name. Juan Mari Arzak received the Basque Museum of Gastronomy's *Cuchara de Oro* (Golden Spoon) award in Llodio (Alava) and, subsequently, the prize awarded annually by the Spanish Institute for Egg Studies to the cook who has used eggs most inventively. Meanwhile, Juan Mari's daughter, Elena Arzak, was this year's recipient of the

A large vertical advertisement for Valdepeñas Wines. The background is a deep blue with the words "VALDEPEÑAS WINES" repeated in a lighter blue, semi-transparent font. In the center, a hand is shown holding a large bunch of dark grapes. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the grapes and the hand against the dark background.

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### RED SWEET PEPPERS "DEL PIQUILLO"

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*The traditional serving way:*

#### **RED SWEET PEPPERS DEL PIQUILLO WITH GARLIC**

**INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PERSONS**

\*1 can Piquillo Peppers \*1 whole garlic  
\* 200ml. olive oil \* salt

*Heat the oil in an earthenware dish. Cut the garlic cloves in two and fry gently in the oil. Before they begin to change colour, add the peppers with the liquid from the can. Season. Gently shake the dish until the sauce binds. Serve hot.*

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*Chef de l'Avenir* (Chef of the Future) prize given by the International Academy of Gastronomy to the most promising young chef. This prize has been won by two young Spanish chefs-in-the-making in the past—Martin Berasategui from the Basque Country, and Sergi Arola, a Catalan now based in Madrid.



Institutional prizes include the Alimentos de España 2000 prizes awarded by a specialist panel selected by the Spanish Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. **The best restaurant category** was won by Akelare, Pedro Subijana's restaurant in San Sebastian. Other prizes included one for Diego's Restaurant in Florida, U.S.A., for best Spanish restaurant abroad; Casa Solla restaurant in San Salvador de Poio (Pontevedra, Galicia) for best restaurant in a rural setting, and the Andalusian company Pescaviar, for best food company. La Finca at the Hotel La Bobadilla de Loja in Granada took the prize for the best wine restaurant.

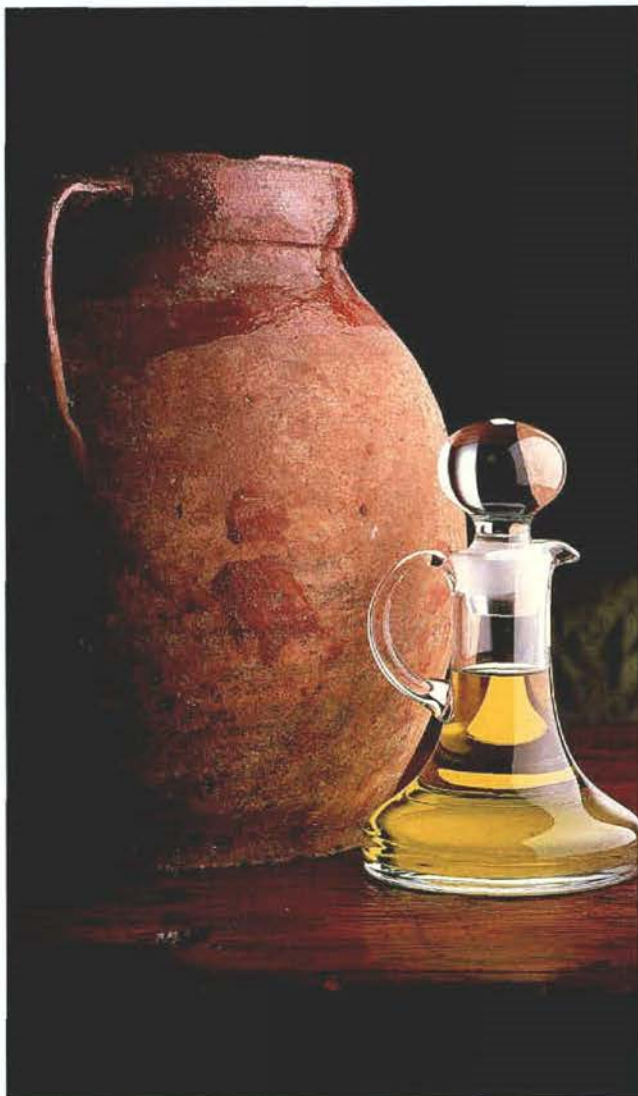


## And now to wine

A large measure of serendipity, backed up by over ten years work by CI-DA, the Riojan provincial government's Center for Agricultural Research and Development, has led to the discovery of a **white Tempranillo grape**. Evidence suggests that it is the product of natural mutation within Tempranillo, considered one of the best red varieties in the world and the key variety of Spain's Rioja and Ribera del Duero wines, among others. Vinification of these white grapes from the 2000 harvest reveal it to be an extremely aromatic variety which gives wines of about 14° alcoholic strength, with good acidity at around 6 grams of tartaric acid per liter; furthermore, this is the type of grape which can be used to make both young wines and wines for barrel aging.



A success story: for the first time since the setting up of the regulatory council for the distinctive VECPRD (Quality Sparkling Wine Produced in a Specific Region) known as Cava, a specific vintage (2000) has been officially designated "excellent." This has occurred before, in 1978 and 1983, but that was before the Denomination was recognized by the European Union. VECPRD Cava, which covers wines produced in Catalonia, Rioja, Navarre, the Basque Country, Aragon, Valencia and Extremadura, generated 297.5 million kg of grapes in 2000, yielding 182.2 million liters of controlled appellation wine.



## Miscellany

Spain's Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA) launched the Olive Oil Agency's new Web page as part of the inauguration in Madrid of the agency's Study Days devoted to the olive oil of Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece. The agency's olive oil page is accessible as a link from MAPA's own Web site: [www.mapya.es](http://www.mapya.es) (click on AAO)

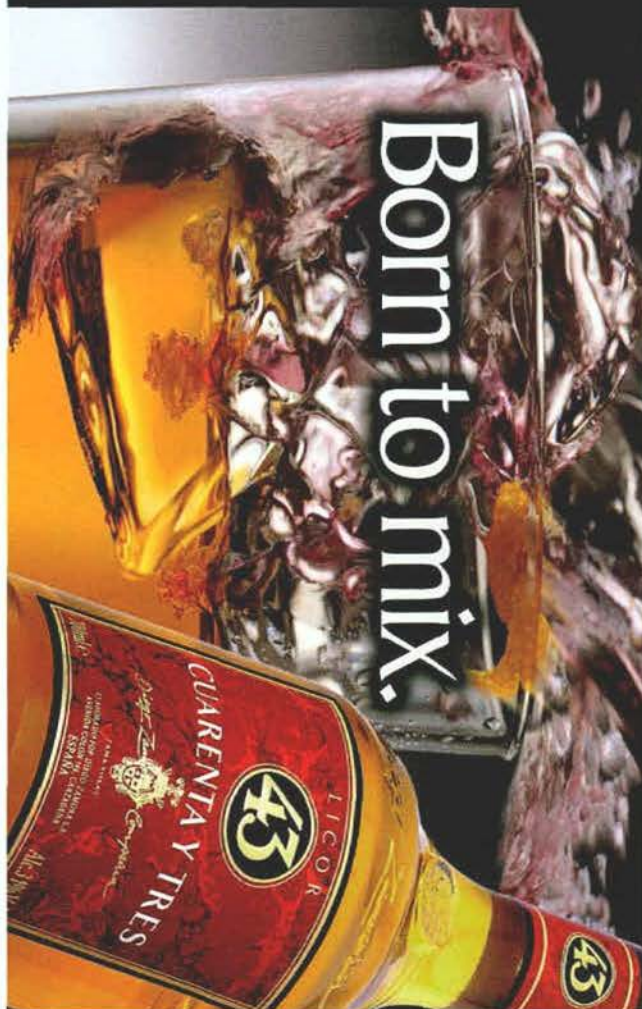
Oil is one of the main subjects of an exhibition at Barcelona's History Museum this summer. The show demonstrates the role of olive oil, bread and wine in Mediterranean culture. The Museum's director, Antoni Nicolau, explains: "The history of these three emblematic foodstuffs is a history of hunger, colonization and crossbreeding in the Mediterranean region, from its agricultural beginnings in the Near East to its constitution as a cultural unit. The exhibition, which incorporates pieces from many foreign museums, begins with a Neolithic grain mill and ends with a Roman one, showing the minimal differences between them."

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## Abroad

For the second year running, Spanish chef Julián Serrano has achieved five star status in the latest edition of the Mobil Travel Guide, which evaluates North America's best restaurants and hotels each year. Only sixteen restaurants in the U.S. and Canada boast this qualification, which is one of the most prestigious in the gastronomic world. **Serrano is head chef at Picasso**, the restaurant located in Las Vegas' Bellagio Casino. Picasso is famous not just for the quality of its food, but also for the fact that its walls are hung with nine works by the Spanish artist from whom it takes its name.

Again in the U.S., six Basque cooks have met with considerable success at "gastronomic days" held at the UN headquarters in New York, organized by the Basque Government's Council for Agriculture and Fisheries, and the food and wine magazine Viandar to promote the best of the new Basque cuisine. The chefs who traveled to New York were Aitor Elizegi of Gaminiz restaurant in Zamunio (Vizcaya); Gorka Txapartegi of the Alameda in Fuenterrabia (Guipúzcoa); Andoni Luis Aduriz of the Mugaritz in Rentería (Guipúzcoa); José Miguel Olabazalaga of the Andra Mari in Galácano (Vizcaya); Alvaro Martínez of the Kubita Kaia in Getxo (Vizcaya) and Aitor Basabe, of the Gozkoetxe in Loiu (Vizcaya).



*Cristino Álvarez is the food writer for EFE News Agency (writing as 'Caius Apicius'), author of several books on food and wine, and contributor to many gastronomic publications. He has just won the Alimentos de España 2000 prize for the best ongoing informative food journalism, awarded by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.*



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# EXPORTERS

The following list includes a selection of exporters. It is not intended as a comprehensive guide and, for space reasons, we cannot list all the companies devoted to export of the featured products. The information included is supplied by the individual sources.

## Food Products

### Kakis

**Agralco, Coop. V.**

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Fax: (34) 962 401 531

**Agrícola Alginet, S. Coop. V.**

Tel: (34) 961 750 066  
Fax: (34) 961 750 327

**Agrícola de Catadau, S. Coop. V.**

Tel: (34) 962 550 503  
Fax: (34) 962 990 323

**Agrícola del Marquesat, Coop. V.**

Tel: (34) 962 550 434  
Fax: (34) 962 990 156

**Agrícola S. Felipe Benicio, Coop. V.**

Tel: (34) 962 530 512  
Fax: (34) 962 530 566

**Agrícola S.C.J., Coop.**

Tel: (34) 962 480 500  
Fax: (34) 962 484 421

**Agrícola San Salvador, Coop. V.**

Tel: (34) 962 550 887  
Fax: (34) 962 990 164

**Agrícola y Ganadera de Almussafes, Coop. V.**

Tel: (34) 961 782 057  
Fax: (34) 961 780 404

**Anecoop, S. Coop.**

Tel: (34) 963 938 501  
Fax: (34) 963 938 510

**Canso, Coop. V.**

Tel: (34) 962 540 566  
Fax: (34) 962 541 612

**Coop. A. San Bernardo, Coop. V.**

Tel: (34) 962 539 000  
Fax: (34) 962 531 200

**Coop. V. Hortofrutícola de Benifaió**

Tel: (34) 961 780 550  
Fax: (34) 961 780 290

**Exporti, S.L.**

Tel: (34) 962 460 680  
Fax: (34) 962 460 663

**Frutas del Júcar, S.L.**

Tel: (34) 962 580 254  
Fax: (34) 962 976 524

**Frutas Teresi Alegre, S.L.**

Tel/Fax: (34) 962 404 503

**Hnos. Gimenez, S.C.**

Tel/Fax: (34) 962 411 039

**La Agrícola Coop. V.**

Tel: (34) 962 404 136  
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**La Heretat, S.A.**

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**Llisogar, S.L.**

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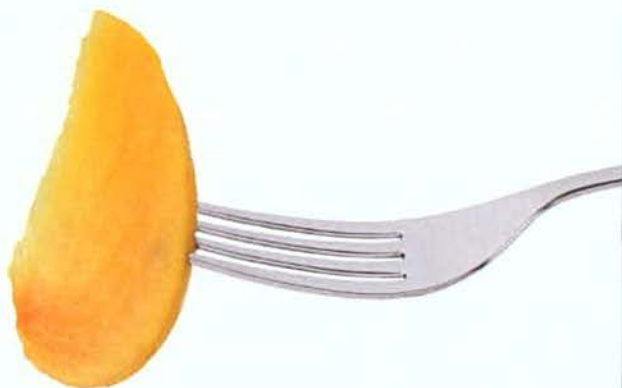
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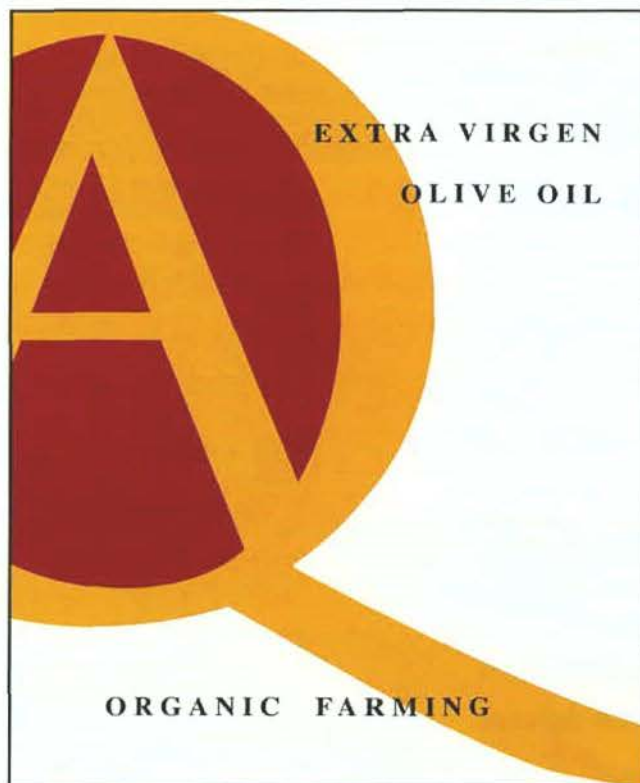
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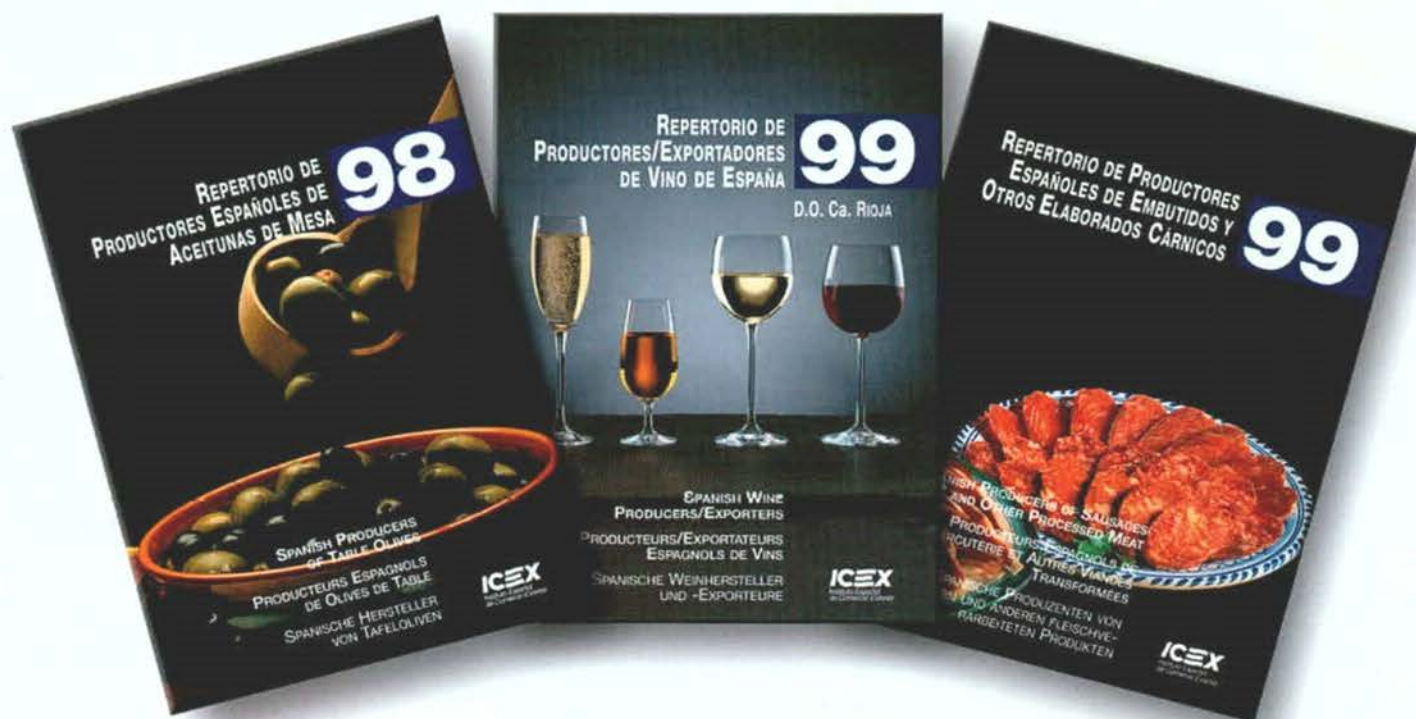
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# GLOSSARY

## Wine Aging Terms

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

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

For rosé and white wines, the minimum period is 24 months, 6 of them in oak casks.

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

### Notes:

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