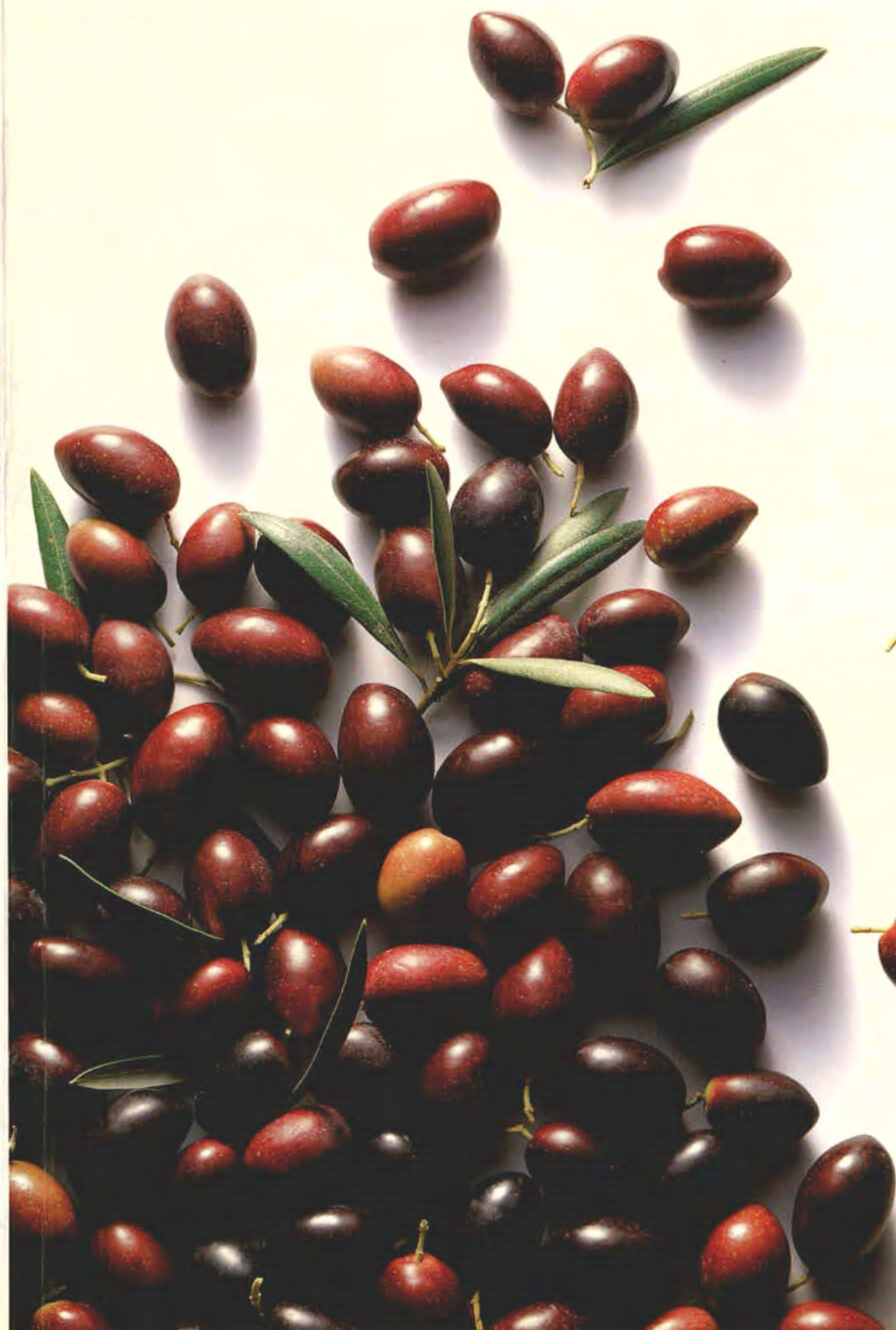


# SPAIN GOURMETOUR

Food, Wine & Travel Magazine



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Fresh: The New Spanish Chefs

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St. James Way: From Frómista to Santiago

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A Sherry Treasury

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Tomatoes from the Canary Islands

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Dear readers,

While advertisers encourage us in our quest for eternal youth and scientists tell us such a dream is almost attainable, others still believe that it is age and maturity that bring wisdom, beauty and grace. A quixotic fantasy? Perhaps, but read on to see why Jesús Garzón is such an adamant supporter of the age-old culture of transhumance. Or why certain wine treasures from Jerez that have been cherished for many decades have had such a resounding success in recent auctions at Christie's or Sotheby's. Something to dream of during the New Year celebrations! Even the bubbles in our cavas are mellowing!

Tomatoes have been with us now for five centuries. In the Canaries, they enjoy them sprinkled with coarse salt and drizzled with olive oil. Spanish olive oil, once much appreciated by the Romans, is present throughout Spain. Today we feature the Denominations of Origin and their latest projects.

Invigorated by her latest tour of St James' Way—a mystical and cultural itinerary for a thousand years—Sonia Ortega here describes her experiences of the second stretch. Furthermore, this issue marks the end of our series overviewing the opinions of importers in the main markets for Spanish wines, and of our features on rising stars in the Spanish world of gastronomy.

This English edition of our magazine, now turned fifteen, has "come of age" too, and the whole team joins me in wishing you a very happy New Year.

Cathy Boirac *Editor-in-chief*



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## *Matters of Import. Part 5*

# Nebbiolo, Cabernet Sauvignon and Tempranillo

*Peaceful*

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In interviews with some 50 wine importers from 12 countries in three continents, the Matters of Import series has revealed a great deal not only about the acceptance and strengths of Spanish wine abroad, but also about its weaknesses and future outlook. As different as market structures in the U.S.A., Japan, Scandinavia, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and Austria, France, Italy and Belgium may be, the majority of professionals seem to agree on many of the positive and negative aspects of Spanish wine. The last part of this series on wine go-betweens deals with two rather unusual markets: Italy, which is itself a major producer and, as such, has paid little attention to wines from neighboring Spain, and Belgium, where 40 wine importers have banded together under a “gentlemen’s agreement.”



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TEXT

PATRICK FIÉVEZ

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TRANSLATIONSYNONYME

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## Price and Quality: Essential for Spanish Wines in Belgium

Historically a cultural fiefdom of France, Belgium is currently reacting. Wines from France, even though they continue to dominate wine sales in that country, have been losing market share for some years in a market that is increasingly open to global wine production. Last year (as compared to 1999), this neighbor of Belgium saw its sales drop four percent, but even so, it still provides 65 percent of Belgium's overall wine imports. This drop in French wines benefits wines from the New World (like almost everywhere in Europe) but also other European sources, especially at the "top of the range." And it also benefits that eternal "good price/quality ratio," a notion that Belgium shares with its neighbors, Holland and the United Kingdom. In Belgium there is also, at the initiative of the ICEX bureau in Brussels, an association of Spanish wine importers. A unique initiative!

Indeed, for several years now, the wine market in Belgium has been changing. Still timidly, but at least it is moving. Who would have imagined, just a dozen years ago, that this country (with just ten million inhabitants), not a wine producer, and very

French as far as gastronomy and wines are concerned, would import more than three million bottles of wine from Bulgaria? Who could also imagine that a retail chain would successfully introduce Chilean and South African wines—currently

selling more than two million bottles a year? Wines totally unknown by the Belgian consumer a dozen years ago. A market that is growing slowly but steadily, in which wine consumption has reached 25 liters *per capita* and per year. These

are the official figures. Because, given that France is so close, the number of wine bottles brought in, unofficially imported (and quite legally so) in car trunks, is very substantial.

### Wim Vanleuven

The strong points of Spanish wines are their diversity of vineyards and grape varieties.



### An Importers' Association

An original—and unique—initiative has also been under way in this country for the past three years. Some forty Belgian importers are members of the Association of Spanish Wine Importers in Belgium, including both large retailers and small companies, who offer an eclectic range of Spanish wines covering all Spanish Denominations of Origin. Created at the behest of the Spanish Economic and Commercial Office in Brussels, this association that has “a dynamism that can no longer be held back,” as current president Wim Vanleuven boasts, has been present in the last three editions of the Salon Mègavino (in Brussels), as well as at two presentations/tastings in Brussels and in Ghent, not to mention several participations in professional events. All its members have signed a Code of

Ethics. It specifically states that parallel purchases are forbidden. “It is a gentlemen’s club,” says Jan De Zwart, from Bleuzé, who was behind the latter initiative, in order to make Spanish wines better known in Belgium and improve their image.

I met with seven Belgian importers of Spanish wines, all of whom are members of the association, and with an eighth, Mr. Gigantelli, from Carrefour Belgium, who gave us their impressions regarding the strong points (and the weaknesses) of Spanish wines, how much Belgian consumers know about wines from that country, their image, their fame and their future. Founded in September 1994 by Wim Vanleuven, a lawyer who loves Spain and its wines, La Buena Vida sells nothing but Spanish wines. He has gathered around him a team of high-level professionals (especially several well-known sommeliers) who are able to inform customers and future customers in great detail. “For me,” he says, “the strong points of Spanish wines are their diversity of vineyards and grape varieties. Furthermore, it is still possible to find in that country top-level wines sold at reasonable prices. On the other hand,

### Stefaan Wauters

The image of Spanish wines has improved.



the weakness of Spanish wines lies in the fact that it is not possible to find really good wines that can be sold at less than five euros. “Our customers are mostly familiar with the Tempranillo variety, and also other varieties, such as Garnache and Cariñena, also planted in France (known there as Grenache and Carignan). As for Spanish Denominations of Origin, they are mainly familiar with wines from Rioja, Penedès, Ribera del Duero and Priorat. The Belgians are increasingly demanding on the subject of wines, even more so than in recent times. They want a good wine, at a good price. And to find that, they are currently looking in countries other than France,” concludes W. Vanleuven. “Belgium is a country with a very high wine culture level. But there are limits as to price. And Spaniards do not always understand that it is harder to sell Spanish wines outside Spain!”

The Chais du Nord—Wine Partners wine company specializes in distributing to cafes, hotels and restaurants and has a limited range of Spanish wines (four items), but they are all very well-known wines. “A very positive quality of Spanish wines is that they are sold when they are ready for drinking,” states Léon Cambier, general manager of Wine Partners. “The concepts of *crianza* and *reserva* are also very interesting. And furthermore, in general, they have a good price/quality ratio. On the other hand, these wines are not supported by Spanish restaurants, of which there are very few worldwide, compared to Italian restaurants. The Belgian consumer is familiar with Rioja and sherry. As for grape varieties, the only ones he is familiar with are the Spanish Tempranillo and the Italian Sangiovese.” In Spain, publicity is more often based on the notion of the bodega, the brand, rather than on the D.O. “In Belgium,” continued L. Cambier, “the consumer looks for wines that are subtle, well-rounded, balanced and warm. And also, necessarily, have a good price/quality ratio. I am optimistic regarding the future of Spanish wines, because the

knowledge of Belgians about wines 'other than French' is increasing. It is also a matter of improving institutional advertising..."

## Towards Younger Reds

Three years ago the De Wit wines company hired a great fan of Spanish wines who had previously founded Spaanse Hacienda, exclusively dedicated to the sale of Spanish wines. Prior to the arrival of Bart Verstraeten, head of the Spanish wines department, Maison De Wit barely sold any Spanish wines. Today, Spain is the second-ranking country in this company's wine sales. "The strength of Spanish wines is their excellent price/quality ratio. And also the human quality of that country's wine cellars. When you visit them, they are happy to see you. On the other hand, their great weakness is the absence of good wines at interesting prices, such as you can find in France. The Belgian consumer is familiar with Rioja, but is unaware of the differences between its three areas: just as if he were unaware of the differences between the appellations of Bordeaux! He also has some familiarity with the Ribera del Duero, Navarra and also the

### Michèle Van den Bossche

The future is positive as long as Spaniards pay attention to quality and prices.



Penedès," claims B. Verstraeten, who also believes that the fame of Spanish wines "has grown 1,000 percent in just a few years." "When I began in this business, 14 years ago, the image of Spanish wines was non-existent," insists B. Verstraeten. "Today, consumers are more familiar with these wines. Even though, in general, they are looking for good wines at less than five euros, which Spain has trouble supplying. That country must be careful about the sometimes totally unjustified price increases of some of their denominations of origin, such as those planned for the D.O. Ribera del Duero," adds B. Verstraeten. The leading wine retailer in Belgium, the Belgian company Delhaize Le Lion, also present in the U.S.A. (where most of its turnover is made) and in other countries, especially in Asia, has substantially diversified its range in the past ten years. Spanish wines currently account

for just five percent of its global wine sales.

"Difference, personality, increased concentration in reds, major progress in winemaking and grape growing are the current features of that country's wines, of which the average Belgian consumer is familiar only with the D.O. Rioja," comments Delhaize's buyer, Stefaan Wauters. "The image of Spanish wines has improved. The most expensive wines sell better. The problem is with Rioja, whose overall quality is sharply lower," concludes this buyer.

"The trend among Belgian consumers is towards younger reds, slightly woody, concentrated and with mature, non-aggressive tannins. If the Spaniards manage to control their prices, they have a wonderful future. Indeed," he adds, "the Belgian *bon vivant* likes to make good bargains. Dealing with wines, he appreciates the good and the very good, but at a fair price, which excludes all kinds of unrestrained luxury." This is a remark shared by traditional retailers.

Fourcroy, one of Belgium's leading wine and liquor companies, is above the national average as far as non-French wines are concerned. After France,

### Jean Renaud Bertrand

Spanish autochthonous varieties are unknown as are the D.O.s.



Spain is this importer's second supplier.

"Spain has a systematic wine-aging policy that ensures, in many cases, an interesting complexity, which is the basis for their success," believes Jean-Renaud Bertrand, who, nevertheless, tempers his enthusiasm. "Spanish autochthonous varieties are unknown in Belgium, as are the D.O.s. except for Rioja and, to a lesser extent, Valdepeñas and Penedès." As for the image of Spanish wines in Belgium, J.R. Bertrand mainly refers to the good price/quality ratio these wines provide consumers, "at each quality level. Even though," adds Fourcroy's general purchase manager for wines, "above a certain price, the Belgians always go back to their old habit of buying French." As for the future of Spanish wines in Belgium, J.R. Bertrand believes that "old-fashioned" wines, too woody, worn, weary, dried out—"like many Riojas"—have no future in

**Andre Gigantelli**

Belgians know mainly names of bodegas, sometimes believed to be the brand.

Belgium. Their future is behind them! He also finds a lack of leadership in the vineyards, though "Torres is an exception." "The quality of wines in that country is still increasing. But prices are also rising like in Bordeaux," complains Jan De Zwart, from Bleuzé. "For Belgian consumers, unlike Anglo-Saxons, the variety is not essential. Furthermore, they are not familiar with either Spanish varieties nor with the D.O.s, except Rioja and, for connoisseurs, Ribera del Duero." Are Spanish wines well known? They are not very common in Belgium "except for Vega Sicilia and Torres," believes J. De Zwart, who adds that Belgians are looking at Spanish wines above all for a good price and a warm wine, ready to drink and not necessarily put away in the cellar.

Founded in 1982, the Ghent-based company La Riojana sells only Spanish wines and invests heavily in tastings at its customers' restaurants, and is also present at the different professional fairs and exhibitions.

Michèle Van den Bossche, the managing director, also believes that Spanish wines have a remarkable price/quality ratio. On the other hand, "they too often have the problem that they



are excessively woody. Wines with which Belgian consumers are familiar are mainly from Rioja, Penedès, and now also Ribera del Duero. And if the image of Spanish wines has indeed improved in recent years, that country's wines are still not as well known in Belgium as French wines are." Belgian consumers buy mostly wines priced at between seven and eight euros although La Riojana also sells many more expensive wines. As for the future of Spanish wines, Michèle Van den Bossche believes it will be positive. "As long as they continue to pay attention to quality and do not exaggerate prices."

## One of the Leading Retailers in the Business

Belgium's leading retailer, Carrefour, also sells lots of wine: some 45 million bottles a year of which

1,600,000 come from Spain.

"As compared to French wines, those from Spain are a pleasure that is often linked to a good price/quality ratio. But compared to other wines, especially those from the New World, that advantage has been lost," explains André Gigantelli, wine purchase manager for Carrefour Belgium. He also believes that the weak point for these wines is that the D.O.s are not well known by Belgian consumers. Other than Rioja, "Belgians know mainly the names of bodegas, sometimes believed to be the brand. This happens in the case of Torres and also our star wine, which we sell exclusively, Marqués de Cáceres. The name is known, but many customers have no idea that it is a Rioja," adds A. Gigantelli who assures that whenever he organizes a promotion of Spanish wines, they have a roaring success! He regrets, nevertheless, like his colleagues, the lack of communications in Belgium regarding Spanish wines.

*Patrick Fiévez is a professional journalist who has been a specialist in wine and gastronomy for 25 years. He works for numerous magazines (Femmes d'Aujourd'hui, Délices, Gondola, Vino Magazine...), is editor-in-chief of the monthly Horeca News and is also in charge of the wine section of the financial newspaper L'Echo. He has been awarded the Champagne Literary Prize and the Vini d'Italia Prize.*

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TEXT  
GIUSEPPE LO RUSSO

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TRANSLATION  
SYNONYME

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## Italy Drinks a Toast to Spain

Italians have always felt closer to Spain and Spaniards than to France and the French. Climate, culture and a long common history have strengthened this feeling over the years and today young Italians associate Spain and the Spanish language with fun, fiestas and food, all spiced with Latin vitality and emotions. But in the agrifood market, the two countries have always shown a healthy rivalry over the quality of their products.

Both countries are great producers of wine and, this being a sector in which emotional connotations and questions of identity are essential components, the Italian prejudice in favor of their own products means they have very little knowledge of, or interest in, Spanish wines. Giuseppe Meregalli, who heads an old-established trading company which is today Italy's leading quality wine distribution business, considers that this prejudice is still very much alive. "Spanish wine in Italy is still associated with the downmarket Christmas hamper for which Spanish wines were preferred because they were a cheaper alternative to Italian ones." Such price-based decisions obviously imply lower quality. And on the matter of the Italians' knowledge of Spanish wines, varieties

and Denominations of Origin, Meregalli is outspoken, "Italian consumers know nothing about Spanish wine. They have no opinion, either good or bad." The Meregalli company, which has been active on the market for five generations, is proud to offer a variety of 80 references amongst Italian and foreign labels and has about 8,000 customers. But its efforts for Spain have focused on the Marqués de Cáceres label. Meregalli considers that awareness campaigns should be carried out among dealers and in the places where wines are actually drunk. He says, "Spanish wines rarely appear on the wine lists of Italian restaurants," and adds, "Promotion in trade fairs and the recent awards are not enough. This type of product should be promoted in the

places where consumption actually takes place." Giansaverio Bianchi, president of S.I.L.V.A., a Milan company with almost 20 references from the Rioja, Ribera del Duero, la Mancha and Jerez-Xérès-Sherry and Manzanilla D.O.s, maintains that Italian consumers know more about brands and labels than about varieties or D.O.s and suggests that promotion and communication need to be more focused. "In general, the image of Spanish wines is good but it needs to be cultivated. The success of cava, which have been better promoted, and liqueur wines, which are now seen as the right drink for a wider range of occasions, show that this is so." And this opinion is confirmed by the sales figures. Seventy percent of total wine imports into Italy have a D.O., and over 40

percent of these are cava, the sparkling wines mainly from Catalonia that are produced exclusively by the traditional method. The fact that cava are sold through special sales channels such as discotheques helps them to encourage the image that Spain enjoys among young Italians because of its marked personality and especially because of its great affordability. The same can be said of the liqueur wines from the Jerez-Xérès-Sherry D.O. which are the most typical of Spanish wine products and have an outstanding position amongst imports into Italy, with sales increasing in 2000 by 33 percent in quantity and 24 percent in value. Thanks to recent investments in image, communication and restyling, these wines are now consumed not only as aperitifs or slow

### Giovanni Boldrini

Native stocks, variety of aromas, flavors and sensations still an important point in favor.



### Giuseppe Meregalli

Wines should be promoted in the places where people drink them.



### Marco Rabellino

When a wine cannot sell prestige, history, allure, all it has left is value for money.



### Giansaverio Bianchi

The general image of Spanish wines is good but it needs to be cultivated.



drinks, but also to partner cured cheeses, foie gras and fine desserts. But the great still whites and reds remain largely unknown in Italy. Paradoxically, Italians seem to be more interested in the products coming from California, Australia or Chile than in those from Spain. In this sector, value for money—always one of the strong points of Spanish wines—seems to carry little weight.

## Cavas and Sherries

Marco Rabellino, who is in charge of imports for Gaja Distribuzione de Barbaresco (AT), sees it as follows: "Value for money marks the frontier for poor wines. When a wine is unable to sell prestige, history, allure, legend, poetry, all it has left is value for money." But then Gaja focuses on careful selection of just a few, top-notch wines, such as Vega Sicilia, for a small group of customers who buy only prestige products, whereas most importers, with

Meregalli in the lead, regret that no advantage has been taken of the splendid image of wines such as Vega Sicilia or the recent international success of Spanish chefs (Adrià, Arzak, Santamaria) to organize promotion for medium-to-high range wines.

Nevertheless, whether because of the increase in circulation of goods or because consumers are now better informed and more interested in obtaining quality wherever it is to be found, it is a fact that over the last two decades of the twentieth century, appreciation of Spanish wines in Italy has been on the increase. Bottled Spanish wine imports increased from 1999 to 2000 by 25 percent in quantity and 27 percent in value.

This is confirmed by Giovanni Boldrini, whose company imports and distributes about forty different wines from important Spanish wineries such as Castellblanch with its cava, Bodegas Berberana (D.O. Ca. Rioja) and Miguel Torres (D.O. Penedès).

The latter sells over 300,000 bottles a year in Italy.

"The good value for money," explains Boldrini, "and the marked presence of native stocks giving a greater variety of aromas, flavors and sensations, are still important points in favor of Spanish wines in comparison with their Chilean, Argentinian or Australian competitors. But if we exclude the most famous names, the presence of Spanish wines in Italy is still limited. Only a few especially keen wine drinkers know D.O.s such as Penedès, Rioja, Ribera del Duero or Rías Baixas." In Italy today, most of the great D.O. wines are distributed through the channel for hotels, restaurants and wine shops. The main distribution networks meanwhile focus on cava, sherries and some of the Penedès labels, as well as the best-known brandies. Specialists in the trade are convinced that consumer prejudices, active defense of Italian wines by Italian producers and competition from wines from the

New World can all be overcome by investing in institutional initiatives aiming to promote knowledge of Spanish wines amongst traders and end consumers.

Quality and price are no longer sufficient to attract purchasers. Attention must be paid to information and a good product image. Consumers like to be informed, but they also love to dream.

*Giuseppe Lo Russo, a journalist and food and wine writer, carries out research into the history of food and consumer habits. Well known as a food and wine specialist, his articles appear in the Spanish journal, Restauradores. His publications include an essay on food and wine reviews entitled L'Antigastromonomo, and the first Italian edition in 1999 of La cuisine florentine de Louis Monod from 1914.*

The  
**GOLD** and  
**GREEN**  
Mosaic



# *Spain's Olive Oil Terroirs*





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TEXT  
VICKY HAYWARD

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Twenty-six years after the first Spanish olive oil *terroir* won Denomination of Origin status—an accolade equivalent to a French vineyard area being given an Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée label—seven growing areas in Andalusia, Castile-La Mancha and Catalonia have revolutionized Spanish oil making. Why? On the one hand, these oils’ distinct characters have highlighted the range of subtly different flavors and aromas to be found in native olive varieties. As a result, Spanish growers and makers are now exploring the contrasts between sierra and valley groves, between early- and late-harvested fruit, and varietal oils as well as subtle *coupage* blends. Alongside that, the denominations’ regulatory councils have become key motors of change. By naming and identifying fine oils as well as shifting growers’ agendas to agricultural improvement and traceability, they have enabled producers to realize the full potential of their oils. Now, as the pioneering *terroirs* have become recognized names, so growers elsewhere are beginning to follow their example. Here we give a bird’s eye view of all the Spanish registered growing areas, starting with Europe’s first experimental olive oil D.O., set up in Les Garrigues in 1975, and ending with today’s research that marks new directions for the future.



D.O. Priego de Córdoba

"I want to answer a couple of questions," explains Marino Uceda, agronomist and researcher. Born among Jaén's mountain olive groves, he has been studying olive oil for over twenty years. "Firstly, what importance does variety have in the composition and flavor of different olive oils? And, secondly, how does that interact with the growing environment? My idea is simply to think about oil in the same way that we think about wine."

Uceda first posed his questions as a post-doctoral student twenty-five years ago. Today, he is still looking for the answers. Based at the Venta del Llano agricultural research station in Mengíbar, Jaén, in eastern Andalusia, he now works with a team of nine biologists, agronomists, chemists and engineers who use chemical analysis, photospectrometry, air injection (to test the speed of oxidization) and traditional tasting techniques to characterize the varietal oils from various growing areas and analyze the contrasts between them. "It is horribly slow work," he explains. "We need generations of research to find out how environment

fully shapes an oil's character. But certain things are clear. Geography and climate are key determinants. Drought can stress a tree and temperature contrasts can develop olives' flavor. Now we are just beginning to research the effect of different soils, dampness, surrounding crops and so on. That will open up new horizons."

## Defining a Sense of Place

Although the olive is proving slow to give up its secrets, Uceda's studies have been fundamental in helping to define the different growing terroirs within the 2.3 million-hectare- (5.7 million-acre-) mass of Spanish groves stretching from north-easterly Catalonia to southern Andalusia (see map on page 34). The country's oldest surviving trees were planted more than a thousand years ago in Tarragona, Catalonia, close to the sea and maritime trade, but commercial groves existed along the navigable stretches of the River Guadalquivir, which flows eastwards right through southern Andalusia. As groves

spread inland over the following centuries, often planted in fragmented small-holdings, a complex mosaic of over 250 different varieties was planted. Only in the last quarter of the 19th century did growers begin to rationalize the groves, focusing on one or two varieties that gave the best quality oils in that region.

But it was to be another century before Spanish olive oils picked up the same level of gastronomic interest as its wines. Two decades after Ancel Keys re-launched the reputation of olive oil through his theories about Mediterranean diet, Spain passed Europe's first law permitting an olive oil to be granted Denomination of Origin (D.O.) status. What exactly does that mean when applied to an extra-virgin olive oil? "A denomination is simply a geographic space," explains Marino Uceda. "One key element of that is the varieties of plant grown there. Another is the local ecosystem. The tradition of quality and food safety are also important. A D.O. label guarantees all those things."

Ari Weinzwieg, author of *Zingerman's Guide to Good Olive Oil* and importer

of half a dozen Spanish extra-virgin olive oils to the United States, explains that in gourmet terms. "Like all agricultural products, oils are connected to the place in which they are produced, so their D.O. labels are a shorthand guide to an oil's character. When I see the D.O. for Siurana on an olive oil, for example, I know it's likely to have a full but gentle flavor in contrast to earthier oils from, say, Baena."

## The Catalan Pioneers

In 1975, forty-five Catalan oil-making villages registered Europe's first extra-virgin olive oil denomination. The six thousand makers in Les Garrigues, a harsh, upland area of terraced hills in Lleida province, share an olive variety, the Arbequina, which was brought here from Palestine by the Knights Templar. Later, in the 18th century, it became the area's main commercial crop after the Duke of Medinaceli subsidized planting and encouraged new growing techniques. His innovative ideas: intensive planting, careful pruning, hand harvesting (known locally as "combing") and milling within a day of picking, all survive today. So, too, does the separate pressing of oils from contrasting local terroirs. The result is top quality, very low acidity (0.2°), Arbequina oil which, until thirty years ago, was largely exported

D.O. Siurana



D.O. Montes de Toledo



for blending and bottling elsewhere. It was only when the growers began to struggle to achieve the prices for their labor intensive, low-yield oils that the idea of a denomination of origin was born.

Les Garrigues was to set the pattern for terroirs elsewhere. Two years later Siurana, a neighboring area stretching between Tarragona's coastal plain and its rugged mountains, also registered as a D.O. The flavor and color palette now available from a single olive variety growing in neighboring areas totaling less than 50,000 hectares (123,550 acres) was a revelation: Les Garrigues' delicate, pale, almondy gold oils were now set aside superb smoky green mountain oils from Siurana and buttery yellow ones from the coastal plain.

The imaginative independence of the small olive oil presses and other independents, who pioneered single-estate, organic and fine coupage oils here, was also to set a model later followed by many other producers elsewhere. Les Garrigues makers were also permitted by D.O. rules to bottle first-harvest *afrutados* (fruity oils), made from olives picked six weeks before the rest of the crop to reveal stronger, greener, fresher flavors. Today, earlier harvesting is spreading right around the growing areas as olive oil tastes change. Since the 1970s, agricultural methods have moved on. Mechanized picking into umbrella-shaped nets

and drip-irrigation have raised quality and yields in Les Garrigues, while replanting with younger trees has tripled production in Siurana over the last five years. "This year, we're hoping for a record harvest of over 6.5 million kilos of olives," says the D.O.'s president Josep Baigés i Nogués. "Ten years ago, that would have been unthinkable." So, too, would the idea that Les Garrigues and Siurana export over 50 percent and four-fifths of the total yield respectively—but these days no longer as anonymous oils. Now they carry a clear name and identity with pride.

## Jaén: A Sea of Olives

In Jaén, where the northeastern Andalusian plains run up to sierras bordering on central and eastern Mediterranean Spain, olive trees cling to the contours of the hills as if they were sewn to an elastic second skin. Over 85 percent of the province's farming land is covered with groves, among which three D.O.s have marked themselves out in sierra terrains that give their oils clear character: the Sierra de Segura, Andalusia's oldest denomination, which was set up in 1979; the neighboring Sierra de Cazorla, its newest one, which will be registered late this year; and the Sierra Mágina, Europe's largest olive oil D.O., a giant ring of groves grouped

around a rocky massif overlooking the plains that run westwards to Jaén city. Its 72,000 hectares (177,912 acres) form one of the world's largest areas of protected olive trees. The three growing areas share many features. Set in spectacularly abrupt sierras cut across by rivers and streams rushing down into the rivers Guadalquivir and Guadalimar, many of the groves now fall within natural parks. Most are small-scale family holdings planted at the end of the last century, which have spread so broadly over the sierra's lower slopes that today they shape not only the physical landscape, but also the way of life here. Above all, though, the three growing areas share Spain's classic olive variety, the bushy Picual, which occupies 90-97 percent of each D.O. At these altitudes—nearly all the groves are above 800 meters (2,624 feet) with a similarly short growing cycle—it gives lush, intense green and gold olive oils. Tasting notes would emphasize bay leaf, celery and grass slipping into Picual's trademark peppery finish. "Once you know the oils well, they have their own character," says Antonio Guzmán Vico, who runs the Sierra Mágina D.O. "But there can be just as much difference between valley and sierra oils as between D.O.s." The Jaen denominations have all woken up to the blessings of their abrupt mountain geography. It gives them lower yields and difficulties in



D.O. Sierra Mágina





mechanizing field work, but also the potential for moving the quality up a notch or two by applying natural growing methods. The Sierra de Segura has pioneered large-scale organic production thanks to the 120-strong growers' cooperative who began producing Oro de Génave here in 1989. Integrated methods, subsidized by the regional government, are now spreading quickly through the Sierra Mágina and Sierra Cazorla.

Only one in every ten lines of trees is sprayed from the air with pesticide and a sugary syrup to attract the bugs from the entire grove. Sierra de Cazorla producers are planning to see the growing philosophy through to the finished product by turning the entire denomination's production into a brand. The groves' unique scale has also encouraged research aimed at harvest prediction by monitoring trees at

geographically diverse points. In this way, growers can be advised on optimum ripeness and the olives can be moved quickly through the mills to avoid any fermentation caused by delay. The Sierra Mágina, for example, now monitors them at 400 different points and is hoping to fine tune the method through aerial techniques with the help of researchers from the University of Jaén.



D.O. Priego de Córdoba

## Córdoba: A River of Oil

Córdoba province, in central Andalusia, is a case apart. Known for the quality of its oils since Phoenician times, its centuries-old tradition of blending has given the oils from its two D.O.s, Baena and Priego de Córdoba, an added finesse. Picudo, a native variety, is the most characteristic within the different coupages.

At the same time, both D.O.s here—Baena, which was originally registered in 1981 but grew substantially in 1994 after Castro del Rio joined the growing area, and Priego de Córdoba, registered in 1998—have visibly benefited from the olive oil research projects clustered here in

the province at universities and agricultural research stations. They include practical studies of deficit irrigation and water management, non-tillage, fertilizer levels and soil conservation as well as theoretical work on the processes in the fruit's growth. The result is a happy balance of tradition and innovation allowing the oils' qualities to shine through.

In Priego de Córdoba, for example, the area's largest cooperative, the Virgen del Castillo, has built a 4.2 million euros, (3.8 million dollars) mill just outside the old white-washed town of Carcabuey. The freshly harvested olives, tipped by truck into hoppers at the top of a hill, drop down various levels by natural force of gravity as they are

washed, dried, crushed and pressed in continuous extractors before being decanted and siphoned into stainless steel vats topped up with inert nitrogen to avoid oxidization. The cooperative's growers will soon be carrying a smart-card for punching in the details of their harvest and oils.

But—and this is just as important—the cooperative has kept in place an old-fashioned eye for detail. As growers deliver the olives they must separate them by both variety and quality—fallen, handpicked or tree-beaten fruit, for example—and send them down different, parallel production lines finishing in decanting tanks. Each of them is tasted by the cooperative's panel before the oil is piped into vats of varying quality.

Here, it is precisely the combination of technology and old-fashioned tasting skills that have upped quality to win a string of prizes. In nearby Baena, premier single-estate brand Núñez de Prado represents the way traditionalist mills are also moving with the times. Famed for its *flor* oil—literally flower, or the first oil that runs off during cold pressing of olive pulp stacked between mats—it installed a second, contemporary, low-temperature production line in the mid-1990s to extract extra-virgin oil. Alongside this, three-quarters of the groves now have backup irrigation to avoid drought-induced stress and five percent of the estate has been planted with Arbequina trees. Traceability has long been in place here too, but in the old-fashioned way: each wax-sealed flask can be linked to its storage tank and growing plot via a handwritten log book. By 2002, however, Núñez de Prado along with

all the D.O.'s registered growers will use a smart-card to give the entire D.O. area a precise profile of its groves. "We're obsessed with excellence," comments Francisco Núñez de Prado ruefully. "But then excellence is essential for us to survive."

## Central Spain: Oils with Varietal Personality

The newest group of Spanish denominations to break out of anonymity have highlighted Spain's capacity to keep turning up delicious varietal oils from virtually unknown growing areas. In central Spain's terroirs, the harsher continental climate gives oils with wonderful, distinct personalities. The Aragonese Empeltre olive gives smooth golden oils, once shipped in bulk to Marseilles and Genoa via the nearby Catalan ports but now bottled on

home ground as Bajo Aragón D.O. oils. Extremadura, until now little known for its oils, has two denominations in the process of registering. One is called Gata-Hurdes, linking the two sierras of the same name that run towards Portugal from the mountains of Madrid, is based on the Manzanilla Cacereña, a variety that gives fine golden oils. The other, Monterrubio, gives strong green and gold oils made from a handpicked blend of Picual and Cornezuelo. But the largest of these denominations is Montes de Toledo, some 105,000 hectares (260,000 acres) of groves scattered as small pockets through the hill country rolling south from Toledo towards Ciudad Real. Here, where sunbaked summers alternate with icy winters, a native variety called Cornicabra reaches its prime organoleptic quality. For centuries, its oil has been exported wholesale for blending. Finally, however, three years ago, growers

## TO READ

### **Con Pan, Aceite y Vino ...La Triada Mediterranea a Través de la Historia**

Concha San Martín Montilla and Manuel Ramoz Lizana (eds). Scholarly but fascinating exhibition catalogue on the history of bread, olive oil and wine in Spain—and, especially, Andalusia. (Fundación Caja de Granada, Granada, 1997)

### **Enciclopedia del Aceite de Oliva. Historia y leyendas del aceite y la aceituna**

Jesus Ávila Granados. An invaluable compendium of information on every aspect of Spanish oil—the varieties, growing areas, history and traditions—which ends with a Spanish address list of institutions and organizations (Planeta, Barcelona, 2000)

### **El Libro del Aceite y el Olivo**

Lourdes March y Alicia Ríos. A highly readable paperback about the fruit and the oil, with especially interesting sections on magic, medicine, the arts and literature, and 250 recipes that work. (Alianza Editorial S.A., Madrid, 1989)

### **El Gran Libro del Aceite de Oliva**

José Carlos Capel. A general essay incorporating the latest research on health aspects of live oil is followed by recipes from 58 Spanish chefs which give a great overview of native cooking ideas today. (SPAM Servicios, S.A., San Sebastián, 2000)

### **Las Raíces del Aceite de Olivo, Aceites de Oliva Vírgenes**

A classic book, no longer up-to-date on the rapidly developing world of the D.O.s, but with some excellent background essays on nutritional and scientific aspects. (Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, 1983)

### **Las Rutas del Olivo**

Juan Eslava Galan. A beguilingly witty travelogue about a Japanese visitor's travels around Jaén's "ocean of olives," as he describes them, acts as the thread for hundreds of amusing and revealing details about the workings of the olive oil world. (Soproarga SA, Jaén, 2000)

**● OLIVE OILS WITH DENOMINATION OF ORIGIN**

1. LES GARRIGUES (33,000/81,543\*)
2. SIURANA (13,176/32,558\*)
3. MONTES DE TOLEDO (28,571/70,599\*)
4. SIERRA DEL SEGURO (46,000/113,666\*)
5. SIERRA DE CAZORLA (32,000/79,072\*)
6. SIERRA MÁGICA (67,000/165,557\*)
7. BAENA (45,000/111,195\*)
8. PRIEGO DE CÓRDOBA (28,628/70,740\*)

**● OLIVE OILS WITHOUT DENOMINATION OF ORIGIN**

13. ARRONIZ
14. L'EMPORDÀ
15. ACEITE DE TERRA ALTA
16. BAJO EBRO-MONTSIA
17. MAESTRAZGO
18. MADRID
19. MANACOR
20. MANCHA
21. ALTIPLANO ALBACETEÑO-MURCIANO
22. CANAL DE NAVARRÉS
23. SIERRA DE MARIOLA O MONTAÑA
24. SEVILLA
25. SIERRA DE CÁDIZ
26. RONDA
27. ANTEQUERA
28. LA AXARQUÍA

(\* Hectares/acres)

**● OLIVE OILS WITH DENOMINATION OF ORIGIN IN PROGRESS**

9. ACEITE DEL BAJO ARAGÓN (15,000/37,065\*)
10. GATA-HURDES (15,100/37,312\*)
11. ACEITE DE MONTE RRUBIO
12. MONTES DE GRANADA (20,783/51,355\*)



## THE WORLD'S LARGEST OLIVE COLLECTION

On the outskirts of Córdoba, very close to the university, stands a large field of olives. At first sight it may look like any other olive grove swallowed up by a city, but if you look at the trees closely, it turns out that some are small and stocky, others have spindly or bulbous trunks, and yet others are generously bushy with full, leafy boughs curving down to the ground. This is the world's largest collection of olive varieties, known as the Banco Mundial de Germoplasma de Olivo, containing 408 varieties at the latest count. Of these, 262 are Spanish varieties still being grown today. Although the native inventory finished fifteen years ago, thirty or forty more varieties are added every year as they're sent in from around the world. "The idea of the collection is to safeguard the olive family's diversity in case it is threatened through disease or natural disaster, and to provide a research resource

for genetic improvement and other work," explains Professor Juan Caballero, who coordinates the project for INIA (Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Tecnología Agraria y Alimentaria). Four specimens of each variety, two irrigated and two grown in dryland conditions, are held by the collection. Once a new arrival reaches fruit-bearing age, a sample harvest is sent to the Venta del Llano, a research station in Mengibar that has been working on olive oil since 1905. There, the oil is extracted in a miniature mill, characterized and rigorously tasted. Each is warmed to 28°C (82°F) in a small blue glass cup to disguise the oil's color and given to ten tasters working in individual cubicles to ensure their independence of opinion. No more than five oils are tasted a day. Some twenty-four flavor notes—ranging from the basics like bitter and sweet to tastes like mint,

tomato, nettle and black currant that the team have added to the list—are marked on sheets and the results are collated. The results of these chemical analysis and flavor profiles, which are used to identify denomination oils, have also given growers the possibility of a la carte oil blending for oils, just as for wines.





launched their denomination and began bottling varietal oils. Very low fruit yields and a small total terroir are compensated for by the oils' quality, which, thanks to high oleic acid content—80 percent of total fatty acids—combines a satisfying richness of flavor with exceptional keeping power. As in many newer denominations, objective quality criteria are considered as important as traditional tasting: all oils are spot-sampled after bottling for chemical analysis. This is an area which is only just beginning to show its potential. Characterful oils from small, independent ventures—such as Arzuaga, who also make wine in the Ribera del Duero D.O.—are beginning to emerge from virtually organic groves. Only two younger growers have registered for organic production, but many others look set to follow suit. "The switch would be very easy in over three-quarters of the growers here," comments Enrique García Tenorio, who runs the D.O. Alongside this, the cooperatives that do most of the milling are investing in new pressing equipment, stainless

steel deposits and electric trunk shakers for gentler harvesting. The area is also home to an experimental warehousing complex owned by the Patrimonio Comunal Olivarero, a not-for-profit growers' foundation that provides storage facilities in five centers around Spain. Here, in Mora de Toledo, they are experimenting to see how inert gas and other factors—temperature, the scale and material of storage tanks—can extend an oil's keeping power.

## Mapping the Future

New initiatives are now coming so thick and fast that it is hard to predict how Spain's oil-making map will look in another decade. What is sure is that many more fine oils will be discovered as new denominations emerge among the groves' complex mosaic of trees.

Some will reflect old growing areas where sierra climates give low yields, but the best quality oils. The Montes de Granada, for example, draws together five scattered rural growing pockets in the mountains north of

the city; here half a dozen local varieties are blended with Picual to soften its powerful flavors. The oils are split between *frutados intensos*, pressed from fruit picked in late autumn, and *frutados suaves*, made from winter fruit. The Sierra de Cádiz is also in the early stages of registering its oils made from the native Lechín de Sevilla variety while the Axarquía, a picturesque area of sierra in Málaga, holds clear D.O. potential. Its oils are made from Verdial, a local variety planted in Muslim times. Newer growing areas offering larger scale production include Antequera and Archidona, in inland Málaga, where excellent Hojiblanca oils are made from new irrigated groves, and Martos, a small town on the plains east of Jaén city, is the nucleus of the world's single biggest municipal growing area of olive trees. Both are currently in the earliest research stages for establishing D.O. status. Further north, in Catalonia, Terra Alta, close to the River Ebro, is also registering its oils, made from very old varieties such as the Farga, planted here since Roman times.



Photo page 35 and above: D.O. Montes de Toledo

## FLAVORED OLIVE OILS: THE SECOND GENERATION

When leading Spanish olive oil exporter Borges-Pont approached Catalan star-chef Ferran Adrià for his help developing a new series of aromatic olive oils, they were surprised by his response. "He was so enthusiastic, but only on one condition," comments Alfonso Macias, of the marketing department. "The oils had to be entirely natural, with no essences." Adrià saw the project as a good way of taking contemporary restaurant haute cuisine into people's homes at an accessible cost. "I had been making aromatic oils in El Bulli since 1985. First they were traditional Mediterranean oils, like rosemary or garlic, and then we tried more exotic ideas."

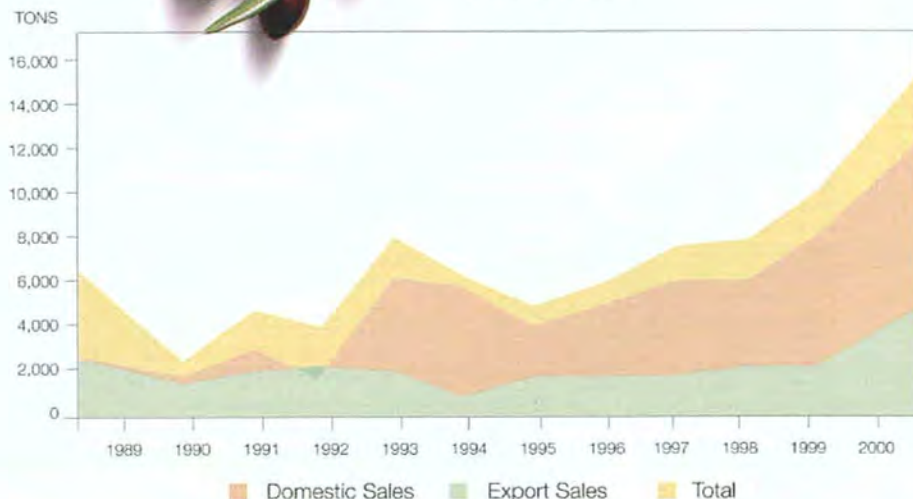
But clearly, what he could make and serve freshly in the restaurant—for example, coffee, melon or mint-flavored oils—was very different from what Borges-Pont could manufacture and sell in a bottle with a one-year shelf-life. It took the research team eighteen months to work that out. "Incredibly," says Adrià, "the key processes and ideas for making the oils adapted really well." They relied on using a very mild 0.4° blend of extra-virgin and refined

oil, flavored through accelerated maceration—that is, gentle heating with the ingredients beaten in rather like a milk-shake—and then decanting and filtering to remove all traces of dampness. The results, ranging from fresh rosemary or lemon rind oils to more avant-garde flavors such as vanilla or combinations like cardamom with chili, are spectacular and are already selling well to chefs abroad. Meanwhile, other prestigious Spanish oil companies, such as Pons, makers of Mas Portell, and La Española or Rafael Salgado, still make their flavored oils the traditional, natural way: truffled, garlicked, chilled or mushroomed, they are left to mature for a month or more in cool, dark surroundings before bottling.





Sales Evolution



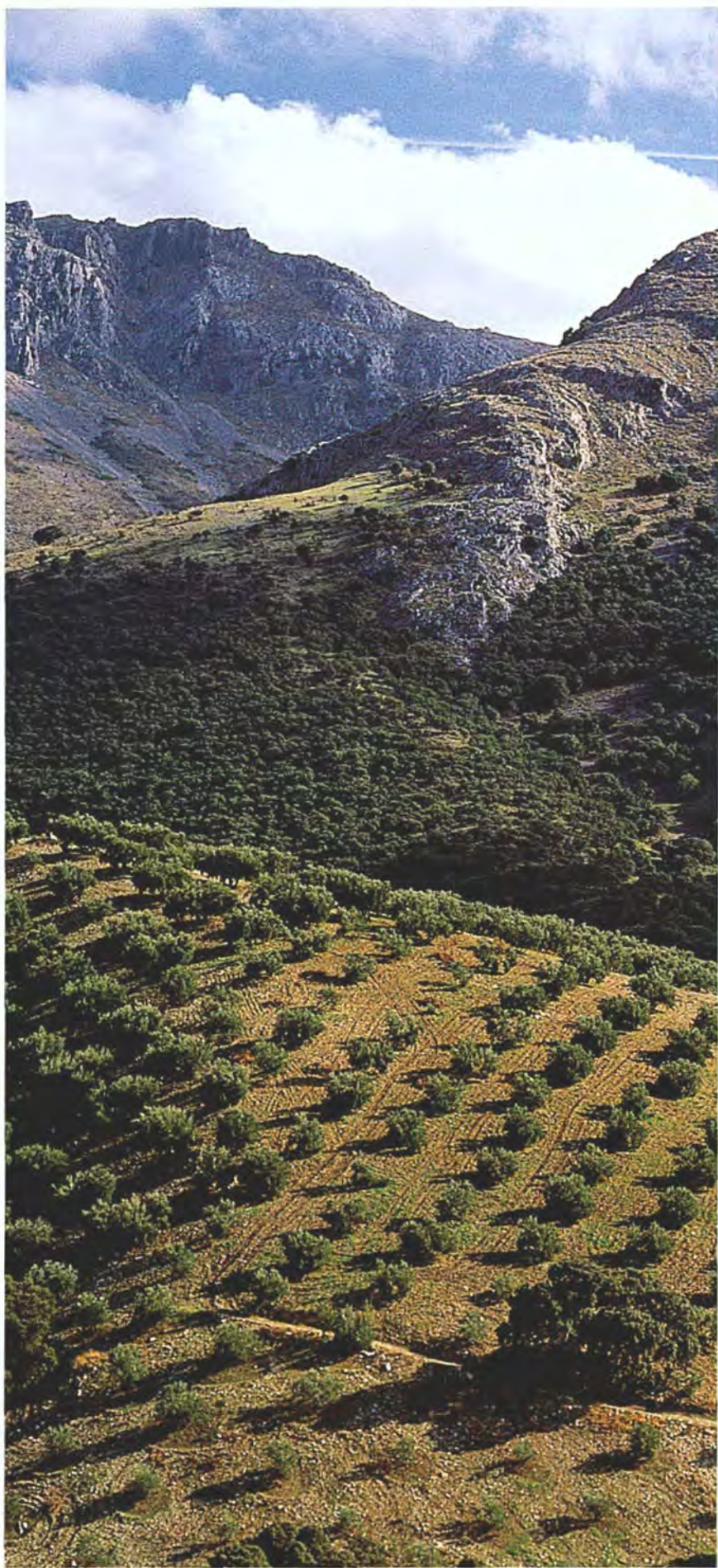
## Denominations of Origin for Virgin Olive Oil (2000)

Denomination of origin	Province	Varieties Authorized	REGISTRAR			PRODUCTION (tons)		SALES OF PROTECTED OIL			
			Registered growing area (has/acres)	Oil mills	Bottling companies	Total extra-virgin olive oil	Extra-virgin olive oil suitable for protection	MARKET (tons)			Total (tons)
								Spain	Other countries (EU)	Other countries (Rest of world)	
Aceite del Bajo Aragón (1)	Teruel and Zaragoza	Empeltre, Arbequina and Royal	15,000/37,065	33	2	400	400	390		10	400
Baena	Córdoba	Picudo	45,000/111,195	18	11	31,000	6,000	1,800	500	200	2,500
Gata-Hurdes (1)	Cáceres	Manzanilla Cacerena	15,100/37,312	12	6	260	245	24	0.1		24.1
Les Garrigues	Lleida	Arbequina and Verdial	33,000/81,543	17	17	4,094	4,094	1,927			1,927
Montes de Toledo	Ciudad Real and Toledo	Cornicabra	28,628/70,740	41	30	20,000	1,002	945	32	25	1,002
Priego de Córdoba	Córdoba	Picual, Hojiblanca and Picudo	28,571/70,599	16	6	3,702	1,711	600	959	108	1,666
Sierra de Cazorla (2)	Jaén	Picual and Royal	32,000/79,072	17	8	10,000					
Sierra de Segura	Jaén	Picual	46,000/113,666	25	12	1,118	1,118	429	99	22	550
Sierra Mágina	Jaén	Picual	67,000/165,557	32	13	6,090	6,090	1,027	43	30	1,100
Siurana	Tarragona	Arbequina, Royal and Morrut	13,176/32,558	30	20	5,622	5,527	3,470	1,928	128	5,527
<b>Total</b>			<b>323,475/799,306</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>82,286</b>	<b>26,186</b>	<b>10,612</b>	<b>3,561</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>14,696</b>

1) In progress for D.O. registration.

2) No oil could be protected during 2000 because the regulations were only published in the Official Bulletin (B.O.J.A.) on 30 November.

Source: Subdirección General de Denominaciones de Calidad y Relaciones Interprofesionales y Contractuales.



D.O. Priego de Córdoba

But the existing denominations will also see changes. During the next five years, they will all be implementing European norms and ISOs that guarantee certification processes, laboratory methods and environment-friendly milling (such as EN45011, 45001 and ISO 14000). At the same time, quality criteria will continue the shift away from the subjective tasting panels to laboratory characterization.

Scale is another issue. "The single greatest change may be the consolidation of the existing D.O.s," comments Luis Herrero Álamo, head of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fish and Food's department that directs Spain D.O.s. "There's enormous potential for growth within the established boundaries." Two new denominations, in particular, which currently sell most of their oil in bulk—for example Sierra Mágina and Montes de Toledo—have the capacity to supply supermarkets and other distributors requiring large-scale production. Meanwhile, the oils themselves will keep evolving. In Córdoba, at the Carcabuey cooperative, trials are underway for making sweet oils from traditionally pungent olives by removing the stone and the skin before pressing. A few growers are planting olives from elsewhere: Greek Koroeiki trees, for example, are planted in Siurana, and Italian



D.O. Sierra Mágina

Frantoio in Málaga. Earlier harvesting—brought forward by as much as a month in some areas—and mechanical picking, lower temperature pressing and new stainless steel storage vats are also bringing huge leaps in quality with them. Many of these fine oils will soon be bottled in sleek smoked glass to protect them from light and oxidation.

All the growing areas will benefit from new research, much of it using the Córdoba world germoplasm bank (see page 34). In Catalonia, for example, farmers are planting a disease-resistant clone of the Arbequina developed through twelve years study and selection work at the

Centro Mas Bové, an agricultural research institute near Reus, Tarragona. “It has good fruit levels, it is sweet, balanced, complex and rich in ripe fruit aromas,” says Dr. Joan Tous Martí, who runs the project.

Just outside Baena, a strangely futuristic building spells out another key development for the coming century: the El Téjar electricity plant, its tall steel chimney rising above the groves here, is powered by *alpeorujo*, or discarded wet olive pulp and cracked stones, once a problem pollutant. One of four such plants in Córdoba province, each of them able to process half a ton of pulp in 24 hours, El Téjar provides enough

power for a town of 40,000 people. Separately, the olive pits are broken into granules that can be used as active carbon in chlorine and other filters. The plant’s potential for dealing with the toxic waste—once thrown into the river—sets a new slant on the landscape for the next century. Meanwhile, Marino Uceda will continue looking for answers at the research station in Mengíbar. A new generation of researchers are experimenting here with leaf analysis, the plasticity of different varieties, the effect of temperature during pressing, and—a recent development—the aromatic oils that give olive oils much of their character.



D.O. Montes de Toledo

"But now practice is beginning to run ahead of the research," explains Uceda. "Today people are designing their olive groves around varietal mixes." He beckons me over to a laboratory desk, where different test samples of oils stand, pulled out of the refrigerator.

He pours three oils from varieties grown in different regions into glass beakers. We taste each separately—one is very big, the other is a little bland, and the final one is strong and peppery. And then he makes his own coupage, a finely judged blend of all three. As he lifts the beaker to taste it, he toasts the future. "To the next generation of makers."

**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.

*Photo credits on page 156 and Exports on page 136*

# Stars of the Groves: Olive Oil Varieties

Among Spain's vast diversity of olive varieties, a dozen stand out as the defining flavors of the finest extra-virgin olive oils. Here is a brief rundown on them and on the growing areas with which they are most closely linked



## Arbequina

Oils from Les Garrigues and Siurana are the best known examples of Arbequina oils. A small olive, it gives subtle oils varying from delicate gold to smoky green, depending on the groves' altitude and time of harvesting. Catalonia's most emblematic variety, it is being widely planted today in other areas such as Andalusia and Extremadura.



## Blanqueta

Originally from Alicante and now grown in scattered small pockets around the Valencian region, this variety gives a very sweet, aromatic golden oil with a peppery finish. The best varietal oils are sold with a regional quality label.



## Cornicabra

Literally meaning goat's horn, after its pointed shape, this outstanding variety is aromatically fruity and exceptionally stable. It originated in the Montes de Toledo, but has now spread throughout Castile-La Mancha to become Spain's second most widely planted variety after Picual.



## Empeltre

A small, skinny olive, excellent eaten salted and dried, this variety makes up 85 percent of the groves in Bajo Aragón, but is also planted in Catalonia, Navarre, La Rioja and the Valencian region. It is mild and straw-gold, with sweet apple overtones.



## Farga

One of the oldest Spanish varieties, with trees that are over a thousand years old today, mainly growing in Bajo Aragón and other areas along the River Ebro. It has a very slow ripening cycle and gives excellent golden oil.



## Hojiblanca

A rounded olive which throws up a multitude of flavors and colors, it contributes green flavor notes—such as hints of avocado—to Baena's, Priego de Cordoba's and the Sierra de Cadiz's coupage oils. In northern Málaga, it gives excellent, assertive golden varietal oils, such as those of Antequera.



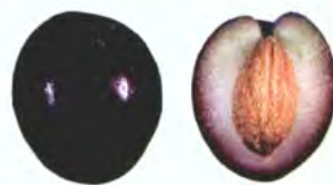
### Lechín de Sevilla

A robust, sturdy, drought-resistant olive variety that gives fully flavored, grassy green to gold oils. It is the defining olive in the Sierra de Cádiz and is one of the varieties used in small quantities in Baena's coupage oils.



### Lucio

One of the most characteristic local varieties, it is blended with Picual to make the Montes de Granada oils. Early ripening, and resistant to both drought and frost, it grows in the dry mountain areas and has a green-gold, lightly fruity character.



### Manzanilla Cacerña

Traditionally grown in Portugal and western Spain for table olives and oil, this variety gives golden, fruity varietal oils from northern Extremadura's newly established Gata-Hurdes D.O. They mix tropical fruit hints with leafy green flavors.



### Picual

Also known as the Nevadilla, Martena, Lopereña and Jabata—and a string of other local names—this is the queen of Spanish varieties, which gives magnificently robust, full, big, stable oils. It gives the golden-green, sometimes almost herby D.O. oils from the Sierras of Segura, Cazorla and Mágina. Their characteristic bitter-sweet pungency is also a component of oils from Montes de Granada and Monterrubio, in Extremadura, and a secondary variety in Baena's and Priego de Córdoba's oils.



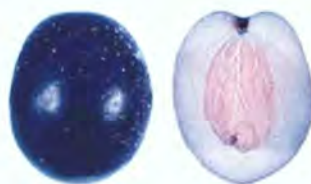
### Picudo

Considered a native of Córdoba province, known elsewhere as the Carrasqueña, this round, fleshy fruit predominates in Priego de Córdoba's oils and contributes to Baena's, lending them satisfyingly rounded, complex, balanced flavors and aromas. Golden, but full of green flavor overtones, it is used for early- or late-season oils.



### Royal de Cazorla

A hardy rustic variety, well adapted to poor terrains, it gives wonderful fruity varietal oils in the Sierra de Cazorla. Early flowering and late ripening, it is not widely planted at the moment and its oil is generally blended with Picual.



### Verdial de Vélez Málaga

This very old variety is native to Málaga and was widely planted by the Arabs. It gives a light, golden-fruity oil very rich in Vitamin E. Its traditional growing area is the Axarquía, where it is used in varietal oils.

European union official descriptions and definitions of olive oils and olive-pomace oils referred to in article 35\*

**Virgin olive oils**

Oils obtained from the fruit of the olive tree solely by mechanical or other physical means under conditions that do not lead to alteration in the oil, which have not undergone any treatment other than washing, decantation, centrifugation or filtration, to the exclusion of oils obtained using solvents or using adjuvants having a chemical or biochemical action, or by re-esterification process and any mixture with oils of other kinds.

Virgin olive oils are exclusively classified and described as follows:

**Extra-virgin olive oil**

Virgin olive oil having a maximum free acidity, in terms of oleic acid, of 0.8 per 100 g. The other characteristics comply with those laid down for this category.

**Virgin olive oil**

Virgin olive oil having a maximum free acidity, in terms of oleic acid, of 2 g per 100 g. The other characteristics comply with those laid down for this category.

**Lampante olive oil**

Virgin olive oil having a free acidity, in terms of oleic acid, more than 2 g per 100 g. The other characteristics comply with those laid down for this category.

**Refined olive oil**

Olive oil obtained by refining virgin olive oil, having a free acidity content expressed as oleic acid, of not more than 0.3 g per 100 g. The other characteristics comply with those laid down for this category.

**Olive oil-composed of refined olive oils and virgin olive oils**

Olive oil obtained by blending refined olive oil and virgin olive oil other than lampante oil, having a free acidity content expressed as oleic acid, of not more than 1 g per 100 g. The other characteristics comply with those laid down for this category.

**Crude olive-pomace oil**

Oil obtained from olive pomace by treatment with solvents or by physical means or oil corresponding to lampante olive oil, except for certain specified characteristics, excluding oil obtained by means of re-esterification and mixtures with other types of oils. The other characteristics comply with those laid down for this category.

**Refined olive-pomace oil**

Oil obtained by refining crude olive-pomace oil, having a free acidity content expressed as oleic acid, of not more than 0.3 g per 100 g. The other characteristics comply with those laid down for this category.

**Olive-pomace oil**

Oil obtained by blending refined olive-pomace oil and virgin olive oil other than lampante oil, having a free acidity content expressed as oleic acid, of not more than 1 g per 100 g. The other characteristics comply with those laid down for this category.

Official Journal of the European Communities  
L 201/7. 26.7.2001

\* Regulation No 136/66/EEC of 22 September 1966 on the establishment of a common organization of the market in oils and fats

WEB SITES

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/index\\_es.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/index_es.htm)

Continually updated details of European Union policy on agricultural policy includes material on olive oil. (English, French, German, Spanish)

[www.alimentaria.com/index02e.html](http://www.alimentaria.com/index02e.html)

The Web site of Barcelona's biennial food fair gives access to Interoliva a new area of the fair devoted entirely to the theme of Spanish olive oil, with tastings and a wide overview of related history and culture. (English, Spanish)

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

The Ministry of Agriculture Web site gives access to information about every olive oil D.O. and to the Agencia para el Aceite de Oliva's (A.A.O.) page, which gives details of production and olive oil plants around Spain. (Spanish)

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

Linked to the olive oil futures market in Jaén, "poolred" gives minute-by-minute warehouse prices for Spanish oils, covering over 50 percent of national output. Originally designed as a mechanism for transparency, it makes fascinating reading. (Spanish)

[www.aceitedeolivainfo.net](http://www.aceitedeolivainfo.net)

Run by the E.U.-subsidized Centro de Información del Aceite de Oliva, this general page covers history, olive varieties, a glossary of technical terms and details of the promotional campaign, recipes and news.

## OLEICULTURA: A PASSION FOR OLIVE OIL

Olive oil lovers are now spreading its culture—the history, architecture and the way of life in the groves—in books, Web pages and museums. Here are a few starting points for dipping into Spanish “oleicultura.” (See also Lasting Impressions, page 127).

## Museums

**Andalusia****Museo del Aceite**

Also known as El Molino Viejo, this 19th-century mill in Cabra, Córdoba, includes life-size reconstructions of different presses: Greek and Roman presses, 17th–18th century beam and hydraulic. (Cabra, Córdoba; tel: 957 521 771, [www.hecoliva.com](http://www.hecoliva.com))

**Museo de la Cultura del Olivo**

In the heart of Jaén's olive-growing country, surrounded by a farm with 100,000 olive trees, this small educational museum shows the various stages of oil making, as well as its uses. You can also visit the elegant 19th century *trujales*, vast storage tanks glazed with ceramic tiles. A collection of 40 Spanish olive trees varieties can be seen in the patio. (Puente del Obispo, Jaén; tel: 953 765 084)

**Castile La Mancha****Museo del Aceite**

Excellent modern museum run by the Patrimonio Comunal Olivarero. It contains historic oil presses, work-related and household artifacts, as well as miniatures of Phoenician, Greek and Roman mills. Mora also celebrates a traditional olive festival at the end of the harvest in April. (Mora de Toledo, Toledo; tel: 925 300 895, visits by appointment only.)

**Catalonia****Ecomuseu de l'Oli de Pobla de Cervoles**

Built inside the mid 18th-century Moli del Comu. (Pobla de Cervoles, Lleida; tel: 973 175 152)

**Museu de l'Oli i del Mon Rural**

Castelldans' museum of rural life, built inside one of the 1930s olive mills that pioneered the use of electricity, has a clear emphasis on olive oil: there are displays of agricultural tools and old pressing equipment. (Castelldans, Lleida; tel: 973 120 308)

**Parc Tematic de les Borges Blanques**

Once used by the Knights Templar as a monastery, the farmhouse has now been extended to include twelve exhibition spaces tracking the history of oil making from classical times. Outside, the Jardín de Olivos has a wonderful collection of trees over a thousand years old. Books and oils are on sale; all kinds of educational activities are organized by the foundation running the museum. (Masia Salat, Borges Blanques, Lleida; tel: 973 140 018)



*Note: Olive museums are also due to open in 2002 in converted historic mills in Antequera (Málaga) and Soller (Mallorca). Other general museums with displays on olive oil are the Museo de Artes y Costumbres Populares del Alto Guadalquivir, in Jaén province, and the Museu de la Vida Rural, in Tarragona province. Les Garrigues, the Sierra de Segura and Cabra (Córdoba) have signposted routes through the groves for driving, walking or cycling.*



Museo Mora de Toledo



# From Frómista

*St. James' Way in Body and Soul. Part 2*

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TEXT

SONIA ORTEGA

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TRANSLATION

HAWYS PRITCHARD

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PHOTOS

BLANCA BERLÍN/ICEX

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This is the second and final article in our series dedicated to the Jacobean Pilgrimage Route, trodden for over ten centuries by countless pilgrims from all over Europe—and nowadays from all over the world—with the goal of paying homage at the distant tomb of the Apostle St. James, nearly at what used to be known as *Finis terrae*, the end of the earth. This stage of the journey takes us through two regions, Castile-León and Galicia, both characterized by very different landscapes and products. As in Part 1, our account is divided into two: above, what could be called the “spiritual” route, concerned with art, history, legends, and so on. Its feet more firmly on the ground, the parallel account, below, reports on more bodily concerns such as food, local products, wine and stopping places.



# to Santiago



A dovecote in *Tierra de Campos*

## CASTILE-LEÓN

### Palencia

The Jacobean Pilgrimage Route, or St. James' Way, may or may not be the most trodden in the world, but I can say with confidence that it is one of the most varied. My colleague Bettina's personal pilgrimage took her as far as Frómista (Palencia province), in the heart of the great plateau of Castile, whose historical architecture is dominated by the Romanesque. That was in May, when the horizon looked like a sea of green wheat. By the time I set off, at the very end of June, the never-ending wheat fields of this cereal-growing region (traditionally known as "Spain's granary") were as golden as the altars of the churches we visited. This is the part of Castile known as *Tierra de Campos*

## Palencia

There must be an equivalent of "Man does not live by bread alone" in every language. This part of my account of traveling to Santiago de Compostela turns the saying around: total immersion in art, history and landscape is wonderful, but bodies need attention too, even though ours were admittedly given a relatively easy time of it.

A Castilian lunch with the *Mesonero Mayor del Camino* (Innkeeper in Chief of the Pilgrimage Route) seemed a good way

to start. The *Mesonero* is otherwise known as Pablo Payo, who opened his *mesón* in Villalcázar de Sirga back in 1955. A *mesón* is not so much an inn as a country-style or "olde-worlde" restaurant serving local cuisine.

Though by no means exclusive to Castile, *mesones* are a very typical feature of this region.

Pablo is over 80 but still works away with his four sons serving up roast lamb, a Castilian culinary classic. It consists of top quality *cordero lechal* (suckling lamb, namely fed only on its mother's

milk) roasted in a wood-fired domed brick or adobe "bakery" oven. Sounds easy? Well it isn't. Judging the moment when the meat is melt-in-the-mouth tender and the skin crisp is an art that few have mastered and that requires years of experience. They roast over a thousand *lechazos* (as suckling lambs are known in Castile) here every month, so they certainly have the experience. They salt the meat the day before, then, having added a wedge of onion, some bay leaves and a little water, cook it in the oven for around two

and a half hours. With a jug of light red clarete from the nearby D.O. Cigales, a plate of salad and delicious homemade *morcilla* (black pudding,

The *Mesón* de Villasilrga

(Land of Fields), so called for its huge areas of cereal crops. Its vast, almost steppe-like expanse is the classic and enduring image of Castile. It does not appeal to everyone, but when it does it captivates, as it did some of Spain's finest poets, such as Azorín (1873-1967) and Antonio Machado (1875-1939). It also provides the backdrop for much of the work of Miguel Delibes, winner of the 1993 Cervantes Prize (the Spanish language equivalent of the Nobel) and the writer who has perhaps best succeeded in portraying the Castilian character. Traditional lore has it that the Castilians are honest and, above all, austere, as if to match the landscape. This is perhaps the toughest part of the route, though not for us, I must confess: because time is limited, we are traveling St. James' Way by car.

From inside our air-conditioned capsule, we observe brave pilgrims tackling long sections of the route under a searing sun, with only the very occasional distant tree for comfort. There are plenty of trees on the banks of the Canal de Castilla on the outskirts of Frómista, however, where they are massed to form dense shaded avenues. The canal is a fascinating hydraulic system which extends for 207 kilometers (130 miles) and incorporates 49 locks; it was built in the 18th century to provide transport for cereal and flour from Castile to the port of Santander on the Cantabrian coast at a time when roads were appalling. Construction of the canal began in 1753 but was interrupted again and again, either by war or lack of money, so that its final stretch was not completed until 1849. Barges were drawn through

the water by teams of mules on either side of the canal. The thick towropes which connected mules and barge were called *sirgas*, and in Old Castilian, towpaths were known as *caminos de sirga*, or simply *sirgas* for short. By extension, paths in general and the pilgrimage route in particular, became known as *sirgas*. This explains the name of the village where we made our first stop, called Villalcázar de Sirga, or Villasilrga despite not being on the canal. With barely 300 inhabitants, this is a small village but—as is the case of many other places we visited on our journey—it was once a crucial point on St. James' Way. Proof of this is provided by its impressive church, Santa María la Blanca, visible from a good distance away. This 13th century building, on the cusp between Romanesque and Gothic, is all that remains of what

or blood sausage) spiced with aniseed and cumin, this is the lunch menu for restaurants full of people. Pablo Payo's picturesque official title, awarded by the Association of Friends of the Pilgrimage Route doesn't come free: he has given many a pilgrim a glass of wine and a bowl of *sopa albada*, a variant on the classic *sopa de ajo* or *sopa castellana*—humbly but deliciously composed of bread, garlic, cured ham, *pimentón* (a type of paprika from Spain) and a glass of wine. A spouted wine jar of the same wine is available to passing



Pablo Payo, *Mesonero Mayor del Camino*, entertains pilgrims and guests.

Wedding at Santa María church



was once a very important Templar settlement. Half monks, half soldiers, the Knights Templar dedicated their lives and weapons to providing protection for pilgrims at a time when the route was subject to all sorts of risks and vagaries, both spiritual and corporeal. Members of the order were of aristocratic provenance, a fact which, in conjunction with donations from royalty and nobles grateful for their services, made it a very powerful order. It also seems to be indissolubly associated with esoteric rites and legends. The church has the look of a fortress and dominates the little village. It has an unusual angled double porch which is richly carved. The chapel dedicated to St. James in the interior contains finely worked Gothic tombs and the seated polychrome stone figure of the *Virgen Blanca* (the White Virgin), to which Alfonso X, The Wise (1221-1284), attributes twelve miracles in his *Cantigas de Santa María*. She is traditionally believed to have cured the crippled and several pilgrims whom the Apostle himself had failed to help.

The church's cool interior is itself something of a miracle in comparison with the merciless heat that awaits us outside. The sun is at its height, the asphalt is melting, but this seems not to affect a lively group led by a pair of newlyweds who, to the sound of *dulzaina* (the traditional Castilian flute) and drum, are on their way to celebrate the wedding at one of Villasirga's typically Castilian *mesones* (inns). There they are greeted by Pablo, who interestingly bears the official title of *Mesonero Mayor del Camino* (Innkeeper in Chief of the Pilgrimage Route). But that's another story, recounted below.

Not far from Villasirga is Carrión de los Condes, one of Castile's most important towns in the Middle Ages, much of whose prosperity derived from the pilgrimage route. Aymeric Picaud, author of the *Codex Calistinus*, the first guidebook to St. James' Way, describes it as "a prosperous and magnificent town, where there is an abundance of wine, bread, and products of all kinds." Today it still retains many buildings

pilgrims at the mesón door. Pablo enjoys dressing up in the cape and hat worn by pilgrims in olden times, and puts on his own personal show: calling his diners to attention with a toot on the cornet, he declaims a blessing in verse on all the food, rounding it off with the disconcerting declaration "And if anyone doesn't like it—there's the door!" But it seems that everyone does like it, for nobody moves. If your visit to Villasirga coincides with a wedding, as ours did, the show is completed by escorting the newly-weds from the

church to the Payo family's other mesón, to the accompaniment en route of drum and *dulzaina* (Castilian flute) and bearing a huge six-story wedding cake on a litter, as if it were the effigy of the saint himself.

And as well as these picturesque goings-on, the lamb is delicious. We know about the demand; supply of prime material is also plentiful. This is controlled by the Denomination of Origin (D.O.) *Lecchazo de Castilla* which guarantees that *lechazos* originate from Churra, Castellana and Ojalada

native breeds, have been exclusively mother's milk-fed, weigh between 9 and 12 kg (20-26 lbs) and are slaughtered at 35 days or under. Castile-León is the region of Spain with the most head of sheep, totaling around 4.5 million, and with some 2,250,000 *lechazo* lambs being slaughtered a year. The figures tell you a lot about Castilians' appetite for roast lamb. We left with sweet memories of Villasirga after a visit to La Perla Alcazareña, a confectionery highly recommended for sweets such as *amarguillos* (made of a soft almond, egg and



Cecina de León

from that period, such as the Monasterio de Santa Clara, the church of Santa María del Camino (with a lovely 12th century Romanesque arch-volted portico) and the 12th century church of Santiago, whose remarkable carved external frieze is considered one of the finest examples of Romanesque architecture. Leaving the town by the medieval bridge over the River Carrión, we come upon San Zoilo monastery. This began as a Romanesque building, as proven by its church's lovely portico, discovered just a few years ago, but it reached full artistic splendor during the Renaissance. The Plateresque cloister (1537-1604), designed by Juan de Badajoz, is one of the sculpturally finest and richest in Spain, its vaulting decorated with figures of popes and emperors, all members of the Cluniac Order which founded the monastery, and its corbels with the faces of biblical characters. There among them we recognized the unmistakable figure of the Apostle St. James, with his trademark hat, scallop shell and gourd. This



Jacobean Library and St. James' Study and Documentation Center in Carrión de los Condes

was our first face to face encounter with the progenitor of the whole Jacobean Pilgrimage phenomenon, but it was not the last, for depictions of Santiago in stone and wood, paint and sculpture, abound all along his 800 km (500 mile) route. We also encountered Ángel Luis Barreda, guide to the monastery, director of the Jacobean Library and St. James' Way Study and Documen-

tation Center, and thoroughly entertaining person. The center possesses over 2000 volumes arranged beneath vivid 19th-century frescos in beautiful cross-vaulted halls. The library is the end product of an exhibition entitled *Camino de Santiago, mil años de historia, mil libros para conocerla* (St. James Way, a thousand years of history... a thousand books about it) which, organized by the Association

sugar paste) and *pastas de limón* (lemon biscuits). Similar sweets are made by the nuns of the Monasterio de Santa Clara at nearby Carrión de los Condes, carrying on the long tradition of convent-made confectionery (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 43). This part of Castile-León traversed by the pilgrimage route has other D.O. or quality controlled products (see Glossary on page 155), apart from *Lec hazo*. *Cecina* is another. This beef product is made from the hindquarters of cows preferably belonging to breeds native to Castile

## 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  
[www.bibliotecajacobea.org](http://www.bibliotecajacobea.org)

### 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

### Comer y beber en el Camino de Santiago

#### Peregrinación gastronómica

by Blas Calzada  
Vivir Galicia Editorial  
[vivirgalicia@interbook.net](mailto:vivirgalicia@interbook.net)

of Friends of St. James' Way, traveled all over Spain between 1998 and 1999. Once the exhibition was over, the organizers decided to capitalize on its success and this is the result, encompassing history, legends, personal accounts, art, music, literature, gastronomy, all with the pilgrimage route as their central theme and with pride of place given to a facsimile of the *Codex Calistinus*. In tune with the times, it now has a Web site, too (see page 71).

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and León. The meat is salted and later washed, then smoked over oak or ilex wood, a process which must last a minimum of seven months from the time of salting. The Regulatory Council sells around 20,000 cuts—weighing between 3 and 5 kg (6.5-11 lbs) a year (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 37).



Romanesque paintings from the 12th century in San Isidoro Church, León

## León

Our next destination, Sahagún, is in León province, but before leaving Palencia behind us we stopped off at the Roman ruins of Quintanilla de Cueva, where in 1970 excavations revealed the remains of a 4th-century villa with wonderful mosaics covering the floors of what were once its various rooms, featuring human figures and geometric designs incorporating swastikas and checker board patterns, some of them superbly preserved. Equally amazing are the hypocausts, a sophisticated "under floor heating" system consisting of channels through which hot air circulated to keep buildings warm during the cold Castilian winters. There

is another villa at Olmeda, a little further off the pilgrimage route, again with outstanding mosaics. In all, remains have been discovered in Palencia of a total of 37 Roman villas, relics of a time when the *Via Aquitania*—the Roman road which led from Bordeaux to Astorga—passed through this part of the country. Dotted here and there on the outskirts of villages are the dovecotes which are a typical feature of Tierra de Campos. Though some are now in ruins, others are in excellent condition: some circular, others rectangular or square; some whitewashed, others the ocher color of the earth from which they are built, they are all adobe buildings, namely built from sun-baked mud-and-straw

bricks. They are reminders of a tradition which lasted ten centuries on the strength of providing country people with an efficient supply of good meat, quarry for hunting and excellent fertilizer for their land in the form of excrement. They are barely used today, however, and are now architectural relics more than anything.

Brick of the more conventional kind typifies the architecture of Sahagún. The Romanesque style is still very much in evidence, but built here of brick rather than golden stone. The reason is that this town was populated by groups of Mozarabs—Christians living in Spanish territories under Muslim occupation—who brought with them Arab craftsmen highly

## León: Revitalized Flavors

Lots more D.O. products—*botillo*, peppers and wine—awaited us in the rich agricultural area of El Bierzo, but first we had a date in the city of León with Carlos Cidón in his restaurant, Vivaldi. Vivaldi is right in the heart of the Barrio Húmedo, a tangle of pedestrian streets in the center of the city's Old Quarter. In fine weather, the terraces of its countless bars spread onto the street, and a lively at-

mosphere is always guaranteed, especially on Saturdays and Sundays. Bars such as La Mazmorra, La Gitana, El Tizón and El Besugo serve excellent *tapas* of, for example, local charcuterie, sweetbreads, and traditional *tortilla de patata* (Spanish omelet). Though Vivaldi has a bar area where *tapas* are served, our date is in the restaurant itself which turns out to be as welcoming as its proprietor, Carlos Cidón. Cidón is a big local produce enthusiast, a fact which, in combination with his having trained with star chefs

Arzak and Subijana, has produced a style of cuisine which exemplifies beautifully a phenomenon that has revitalized the food scene in Spain: recreating the traditional repertoire. Dynamic and creative, he uses *lechazo*, *cecina* (see Recipes in *Spain Gourmetour* No. 47), *reineta* apples from El Bierzo (for which he has created a collection of recipes), chestnuts, also from El Bierzo, Sahagún leeks, fungi, chick peas... Here are some examples of his food: tender Sahagún leeks cooked with flaked cod in oil and dressed

with a caramel and poppy seed vinaigrette; minced fillet of *lechazo* lamb with fried onion bread and *reineta* apple and mustard sauce. The dish that has

Chick peas with prawns, Carlos Cidón's recipe



skilled at building in brick, fascinating examples of whose work (in what is known as the Romanesque-Mudéjar style) still survive. The most important of these are the 12th-century church of San Tirso with its spectacular three-story tower with round-arched windows, and the church of San Lorenzo. Sahagún, which grew up around a Cluniac monastery (it used to be known as "the Spanish Cluny"), developed over time into an outstanding cultural center. It also contains the monastery of La Peregrina, now in bad repair, once closely involved with the pilgrimage route. The work of Arab craftsmen is in evidence here, too, particularly in a little chapel covered in delicate plasterwork—a taste of the wonderful Arab architecture of Granada and Seville

in the heart of Old Castile. A curious painting above the altar of its church depicts a Franciscan and a Benedictine (Cluniac) monk—traditional rivals—embracing.

We arrive in León to find *fiestas* in honor of San Juan and San Pedro in full swing; everyone turns out to celebrate, and the streets are teeming with people until the early hours. This city came into being as an encampment of the Roman legion, *Legio Septima Gemina*, founded by the emperor Galba in the 1st century A.D. to provide protection for the gold mines at Las Médulas (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 37). Capital of the ancient kingdom and the modern province of León, the city's historical and artistic heritage is impressive. Three of its buildings merit particular mention: the church of San

Isidoro, the cathedral and the Hospital de San Marcos, all of which have close links with the pilgrimage route. The church of San Isidoro, one of



Maruja Botas proudly displays her *cocido*



won him the most fans is probably his combination of superb local chick peas fried with prawns, chili and garlic and a forcemeat of bread, garlic, parsley and egg poached in a pot au feu-style *cocido*, Spain's most traditional stew. The key to this dish's success are the tender, buttery chick peas which come from a little village in Castile where his supplier reserves her small but top quality harvest just for him every year. His approach is this: to capitalize on a local larder which is rich in ingredients, some

of which may be humble, but which are always attractive when their quality and flavor are showcased and given a modern twist.

## La Maragatería: More than just Cocido

Maruja Botas uses the same approach, though she is much more traditionalist. We are in Castrillo de los Polvazares, right in *La Maragatería*, where *cocido* predominates local

Cathedral of León  
interior  
and exterior

Spain's finest examples of Romanesque architecture, was enormously influential on subsequent use of this style throughout the country, and, thanks to the pilgrimage route, its innovative architecture was imitated beyond the Pyrenees. Yet marvelous though the church itself is, the royal pantheon within, burial place of the early kings of León and Castile, is more marvelous still. Its walls are completely decorated with incomparable Romanesque paintings dating from the 12th century depicting New Testament scenes and a beautiful sequence of the months of the agricultural year. These priceless paintings, still in their original colors, earn the Pantheon its reputation as "the Sistine Chapel of Romanesque painting."



cuisine (see *Spain Gourmet* No. 26). This area's version is rather eccentric in that it reverses the usual order of serving, starting with the various meats (up to ten different kinds, including *chorizo* sausage, chicken and shin), moving on to the cabbage and chick peas and finishing up with the broth. Maruja is a local institution, a sort of "mother of all the cocidos." She devotes her life to making sure that everything works perfectly, getting up before dawn in winter to put on her pots so that they can cook slowly

in time for lunch. She is also rather eccentric, being very choosy about who eats at her place (for it is more like her house than a restaurant). Her fame has spread so widely that you now have to be recommended to be able to eat there. This filtering process does not go down well with everybody but she simply doesn't care, making it clear that the system works for her when she declares: "I don't make much money, but I have a good time." And I can vouch for the fact that her customers have an

even better time: all three courses of her cocido are sublime. Dessert is traditional egg custard *natillas* with sponge cake. This is the sort of food that tastes even better when it's cold outside. Those not on Maruja's list of acceptables need not despair, though. La Maragateria's famous cocido is served at other restaurants in Castrillo itself, in Astorga, the local "capital," and in various of the area's lovely villages such as Santiago Millas. There you can sample the famous dish made by a Dutch-

man! Scandalous though this may seem to purists, Sjoerd of the Hospedería Guts Muths has no



Hospedería Guts Muths



qualms. The Hospedería provides rural accommodation in a typical maragata house, complete with grand entrance and lovely south-facing gallery. Sjoerd and his wife Maripaz used to work in the tourist sector on the Costa Brava, but changed their lifestyle radically when she felt the need to return to her *maragato* roots. The hugely energetic Sjoerd is happy with the result, transmitting his enthusiasm for his adoptive region to his guests, for whom he is constantly thinking up new schemes, such as liter-

ary and theater-themed days. This artistic side of him is also in evidence in the bedrooms' décor, each of them having been decorated in individual style by art students from Salamanca University. The results are eight very different spaces, ranging from the cool colors of one called "Urban Landscape," through "The Cake," to "The Garden of Eden." A welcoming lounge with a large sofa pulled up to the fireplace is the focus of life during the cold weather; the sunny, flower-filled garden takes

over in the warmer months.

Guts Muths—the unusual name is a tribute to an Austrian teacher—is a good example of how many houses have been turned over to "rural tourism" all over Spain in the last few years, especially inland, near picturesque towns and villages where accommodation used to be nonexistent or of very poor standard. Now one can stay at accommodations where the standard is excellent, including *de luxe* in some cases, in the most unexpected parts of the

country. Some of these, including Guts Muths, have formed a "quality club" under the name of "Rusticae" and offer some of the most outstanding small-scale accommodations in the country, some of them along the pilgrimage route. Another marvelous option for sybaritic modern-day pilgrims is the Paradores chain of hotels. These are generally converted historic buildings, so it is unsurprising that some of the finest are to be found along St. James' Way, including some, such as the San

The cathedral, known traditionally as *Pulchra leonina* (Beauty of León) for its elegance and formal harmony, is one of the masterpieces of Spanish Gothic. The main façade, flanked by two imposing, asymmetrical towers, has three doorways. The tympanum over the central one contains a depiction of the Last Judgment, impressive not only for the quality of the carving but also for the awe-inspiring effect of the scenes it represents. More awe awaits in the interior, inspired by its height and grace illuminated by multicolored light filtered through magnificent stained glass and rose windows. When we emerge, the streets of León's Old Quarter are still busy, while storks wheel overhead before settling on the golden cathedral's highest pinnacles—a phenomenon imitated every

summer in all Castilian towns, as if the birds intuitively chose splendid historic buildings on which to perch. León's third gem—of many, many more—is the ancient Hospital de San Marcos, one of the best examples of the Spanish Plateresque style, and today one of the best of the Paradors, the state-run chain of hotels generally housed in historic buildings. Mother house of the Order of Santiago and pilgrims' refuge, everything about it is grand and majestic: the cloisters, the stairways, the attached church... That classic Jacobean symbol, the scallop shell, is ubiquitous here, incorporated into friezes and walls. And what, you may be wondering, has a scallop shell to do with a route that goes nowhere near the sea, at least in the case of the most-trodden *Camino Francés* (French

Route). The explanation is that although Santiago de Compostela is indeed in the interior, many pilgrims kept going that little bit further to reach Finisterre, Galicia's "Land's End," where they gathered shells which, in time, came to represent proof that they had completed the pilgrimage.

The next destination on our own personal pilgrimage itinerary is Astorga, via Hospital de Órbigo.

Castrillo de los Polvazares



Marcos in León and the Reyes Católicos in Santiago itself, that were originally built as refuges or hospitals for pilgrims of their time. Paradors also provide a good opportunity to sample local products, since it is their policy to make a special feature of regional gastronomy.

## El Bierzo: Land of Plenty

We head for El Bierzo, but before leaving La Maragatería take the opportunity to stop at Astorga for

some of its famous *mantecadas*, little paper-wrapped rectangular sponge cakes, rich with butter, eggs and sugar, which have been made here since the 18th century, as documents show. They are a classic thing to buy when visiting Astorga, and various cake shops all over the town bake them daily. The town has other sweet-toothed connections, too, as revealed by the fascinating Chocolate Museum which traces its long chocolate-making tradition: the combined forces of the Marquisate of

Astorga, the local diocese and monasteries, and maragato carriers resulted for various reasons in Astorga being a pioneer of chocolate-making in the 17th century. The industry reached its apogee in 1914, however, when no fewer than 49 chocolate manufacturers were registered in the city, only two of which remain today. The museum's exhibits include old utensils, packaging and other fascinating chocolate-related curiosities. It is cherry time in El Bierzo, and everything there seems to be cherry-

related. In Cacabelos is a complex of buildings called La Moncloa containing a restaurant, a fine foods preparation workshop and a shop selling its products. We find several women at work around a table full of vivid cherries, this being the time for preserving them in *aguardiente* (marc), a specialty of the area. The soul of this place, Leni Prada, tells us the formula, which is none other than the traditional recipe: cherries, sugar, cinnamon, mint, star anis and 50° proof El Bierzo aguardiente, which

Crossing the River Órbigo by the Roman bridge, we are reminded by two stones flanking it that this is the famous *paso honroso* (crossing of honor) bridge, known by that name since 1434 when it was the scene of a jousting tournament which became famous throughout Europe. This was the story: knight Suero de Quiñones declared his love to Leonor de Tovar, who rejected him. Don Suero went on to declare himself "a prisoner of love" and vowed in the name of Santiago to regain his freedom by breaking 300 lances. For 30 days, from 10 July to 9 August, and with a notary in attendance, the Leonese knight, helped by a cohort of nine compatriots, defeated French, Italian, German, Portuguese and Spanish knightly challengers. The jousting over, they all went off on a celebratory pilgrimage to Santiago, where the

knight presented a bracelet to his lady... of whom nothing more is known. With the swashbuckling image of Quiñones of León still vivid in our minds, we reach Astorga, a Roman military settlement and center of communications on which Augustus capitalized, and point of confluence of the Camino Francés and the Silver Route (which linked Seville and Astorga). Astorga is a peaceful city with fine buildings, such as the imposing late Gothic Cathedral of Santa María, with many Jacobean effigies in its interior. Perhaps more characteristic of Astorga today is the Episcopal Palace, designed by the renowned and idiosyncratic Catalan architect Gaudí, who rarely worked outside his home region but made an exception in this case to please fellow Catalan, Bishop Grau. The palace, which looks like something

out of a fairytale, houses the *Museo de los Caminos* (Museum of the Pilgrimage Routes) whose contents reflect the city's historical importance as a hub of communications including, of course, St. James' Way. Astorga's architectural repertory also includes Roman ruins such as La Ergástula, and an elegant Town Hall with Baroque façade and belfry decorated with *maragato* figures. Astorga is capital of an exceptional part of the country, known as *La Maragatería*. This is a tough region, its terrain virtually a wasteland where growing anything or grazing livestock is extremely difficult, yet it has an undeniable basic beauty. Earning a living here was never easy and *maragatos*, as the local people were known, made transportation of goods their business. For many months of the year, maragato men



Preparing cherries for preserving them in mar.

will preserve them for as long as ten years, though the less patient can start eating them after four months. They have to work quickly because the season is very short: it begins in mid-June and lasts barely two weeks. In summer they preserve pears in wine; in September roasted peppers; in autumn they prepare chestnuts... El Bierzo is agriculturally very productive, and an important preserving and canning industry has developed here making top quality products which essentially carry on the pre-



Cruz de Ferro, one of the oldest Jacobean monuments

drove their wagons all over Galicia, Extremadura, La Mancha and Castile, dealing in goods of all sorts, while the women and children back home subsisted on the little that could be coaxed out of the land. This style of life often paid dividends, though, and some local carriers famously made fortunes, especially throughout the 19th century. Their success stories are reflected in impressive mansions in towns such as Santiago Millas, Santa Colomba and Castrillo de los Polvazares (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 26). This last is a lovely example of a maragato town which has been restored and is still virtually intact: red-tinged stone, houses with imposing entranceways and courtyards accessible by wagon, and with galleries so that the interior could benefit from the warmth of winter sun, doors and windows

serving tradition formerly practiced in every household in the area. Some of the products now have D.O. or D.E. status, examples being *Pimiento Asado del Bierzo* (slightly piquant roast peppers) and *Reineta del Bierzo* apples. The star meat product is the *botillo*, an example of country charcuterie composed of various pork cuts still on the bone, marinated with *pimentón*, garlic and oregano then stuffed into a pig intestine and smoked. It is eaten boiled, served with potatoes, chick peas and cabbage.

At lunchtime, La Moncloa's kitchens are in full swing. Several large pans containing *botillos* are bubbling away, while from the ovens emerge beautiful *empanadas*, large flat pies filled with marinated pork, potato and onion. These are known as "*empanadas de batallón*," a name which dates back to harvest-times when such pies were taken out to the fields to feed the "battalion" of workers. *Empanadas* are made at La Moncloa twice a day, every day, at 1 p.m. and 9 p.m. so that they are always

*Empanadas de batallón*, filled with pork, potato and onion

painted green with a white surround, cobbled streets to prevent wagons getting bogged down in mud...

We encountered many pilgrims in La Maragateria. Many were foreign, from as far afield as Australia, the U.S. and Brazil. We gave a ride to two Brazilian pilgrims, one of whom was having trouble with a leg muscle and needed to see a doctor. It is no coincidence that so many Brazilians have traveled the pilgrimage route in recent years. Best-selling author Paulo Coelho has had a lot to do with it: in the late 1980s he wrote *El peregrino de Compostela. Diario de un mago* (The Pilgrim of Compostela. Diary of a Wise Man), which evidently convinced his compatriots that it was worth the effort. Seeing how influential it has been, I read it out of curiosity but

Molinaseca, El Bierzo



fresh. Any left unsold are donated to pilgrims, whose route passes the door. Many of them know, either from guidebooks or word of mouth, that there is always a glass of wine ready for them, too. In a corner of the restaurant, we notice a shelved wall cupboard containing large loaves of bread, and recognize it as a *cambeira*, an antique food cupboard designed to protect its contents from mice and rats. Its very name is evocative of Galicia, as was the sight on market day in Cacabelos of a couple of *pulpeiras*, women

who sell cooked octopus, a Galician specialty. The *pulpeiras* are a quintessentially Galician phenomenon: they are a great feature of all popular fiestas when they boil their octopus out of doors in big copper cauldrons. They then cut it up, arrange it on wooden plates, and dress it with olive oil, sea salt and pimentón to create a dish known as *pulpo a feira* (fiesta-style octopus). They are said to make it better inland than on the coast.

## Wine en Route

And what about wine? Between Frómista and Santiago, the pilgrimage route passes through only one wine-growing D.O., namely El Bierzo (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 44). Not too far away are Cigales and Ribera del Duero, in Castile-León, and Valdeorras, Ribeira Sacra and Rías Baixas, in Galicia (see *Spain Gourmetour* Nos. 41 and 46).

El Bierzo has nearly 4,000 hectares (10,000 acres) of D.O.-registered vineyards. Palomino, Doña Blanca,

Malvasía and Godello are the principal white varieties, and Mencía and Garnacha, the reds. Mencía is the most characteristic of the area—a productive variety which gives light, fresh wines. It is usually combined with the French variety Cabernet Franc, and is said originally to have been brought into El Bierzo, along with other vine varieties, by the religious orders which established themselves along the pilgrimage route. After the phylloxera outbreak, it was also planted in the wine-growing parts of

Templars Castle, Ponferrada



Carracedo Monastery, El Bierzo

found the Jacobean route barely recognizable among its accounts of initiation rites and the like: for me, it is a book that lives up to its subtitle far better than its primary one. Towns such as El Ganso and Rabanal del Camino have changed little: when you make out the figure of a pilgrim in the distance around here, the scene must look much as it did many centuries ago.

We climbed Mount Irago, crowned by the famous *Cruz de Ferro* (Iron Cross), one of the oldest Jacobean monuments and certainly one of the humblest: a little hill of stones has been built up by passing pilgrims, carrying on a pre-Christian tradition, from which emerges a stripped pole five or six meters high topped by a crude iron cross. Other pilgrims have

left personal mementos and messages tied to the trunk beneath the stones. Our route takes us rapidly downhill as we leave La Margatería and enter another part of León province, El Bierzo (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 37), a sort of transition zone. The landscape changes, becoming greener, and the architecture changes, too, being built not of La Margateria's red stone and terra cotta roof tiles but of darker stone with slate roofs. The equivalents of the interior galleries in the houses of La Margateria here give directly onto the street. This all indicates that we are getting near Galicia. The first town we come to in El Bierzo is El Acebo, where all these differences are well exemplified. There we met Félix Martín, a *hospitalero* and pilgrimage route veteran, having



Vineyards near Cacabelos, El Bierzo

traveled it 14 times. Hospitaleros are volunteers who live in inns along the route and provide assistance for pilgrims. They are people from all walks of life who devote themselves to the pilgrimage route, some for just a short time and others for much of their lives. Félix has also acted as guide to "important," or simply famous, pilgrims, such as Shirley McLaine, who apparently walked in silence, and for Paolo Coelho himself. Ponferrada is the capital of El Bierzo. The ancient iron bridge, the *pons ferrata* from which it takes its name, no longer exists. Today it is a thrusting, industrial city, most of it the result of new development, but it still preserves a very attractive Old Quarter. Standing out above the city is the castle built by the Knights Templar in 1185, much altered over the centuries so that it combines various

architectural styles, yet with its majesty unaffected.

It is cherry time, and there are fruit stalls along the roadside. Cherries are just part of the range of produce (which includes peppers, chestnuts, figs, and wine) grown in this particularly agricultural area, known all over Spain for its excellence. The parallel account, below, goes into more detail on this subject, but here we will limit ourselves to describing the landscape from which it comes: dense chestnut woods, extensive, well kept vineyards and orchards. Cacabelos, an appealing town, though not especially attractive, with an interesting archeological museum, is the center of all this agricultural activity. Nearby is the 12th-century Monasterio de Carracedo, a Cistercian monastery beautifully and grandly built, but now partially in

ruins. The "controlled ruins" approach to conservation has been taken here, major parts, such as the refectory and the queen's kitchen, being maintained in all their magnificence. Surrounded by vineyards, we arrive in Villafranca del Bierzo. Originally a Frankish town, as its name suggests, Villafranca is an excellent example of a town brought into being by the pilgrimage. As a foretaste of its wealth of fine buildings, the modern-day pilgrim comes first to the 12th-century Romanesque church of Santiago, with a fine door known as the *Puerta del Perdón*, the Door of Pardon, opened only during "holy years" (when 25 July, Santiago/St. James' Day, falls on a Sunday). Passing through this doorway entitled pilgrims too ill to travel as far as Santiago de Compostela to the same indulgences as if they had completed

Galicia. Another variety common to both regions is Godello, an interesting grape reinstated in the last 25 years as part of a plantation restructuring scheme in Valdeorras which has been instrumental in recovering ancestral varieties on the point of extinction. As well as D.O.-authorized varieties, some wineries are experimenting and making wine with foreign varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Gewürztraminer, though these wines are not covered by Denomination of Origin.

The ecological trend has also caught on here, as in wineries such as Pérez Caramés. The stasis of which El Bierzo has sometimes been accused in the past seems to be about to change: big wine names have become involved here recently. Mariano García—formerly the enologist at Vega-Sicilia for twenty years and now co-owner of several famous bodegas in Ribera del Duero and other areas of Castile-León—is advising Bodegas y Viñedos Luna Beberide. And Álvaro Palacios, one of the prime

movers in earning Priorato its almost legendary reputation, is also operating here and bringing out his first wine this year.

A small showcase of Galician products



the pilgrimage. Villafranca's monumental buildings are surprising for their sheer size. With the exception of the relatively modest church of Santiago, the churches of San Nicolas, San Francisco, the collegiate church, and the castle of the Marquises of Villafranca are eloquent symbols of the importance this quiet town once enjoyed. On Calle del Agua, a street running the length of the town, are a succession of noble houses with the escutcheons of their original aristocratic inhabitants built into their façades—happily, these houses are now being restored. It is market day, and the town is full of people, a further clue to our proximity to Galicia being provided by the sing-song *gallego* accent with which Castilian is spoken around here.

St. James' Way into deepest Galicia



## Galicia: Dairyland

We arrive in green Galicia: official figures tell us that we are amid 500 million trees and huge areas of pastureland which feed a million cows. No wonder Galicia is known for its good meat and milk. Many cheeses are made along this stretch of the route: in barely 100 kilometers (62 miles), there are three different cheeses: Tetilla (with a D.O.), Arzúa-Ulloa and Cebreiro. All three use milk from Rubia Gallega, Frisona and

Pardo Alpina cows, though they come from geographically different production areas. The largest is Tetilla, which can be made in the four Galician provinces and is the region's best-known cheese, not least because of its characteristic breast-like conical shape (*tetilla* means nipple). The origin of this is interesting: the Pórtico de la Gloria of Santiago Cathedral includes a figure of a woman, originally bare-breasted, or at least revealing too much for the city's ecclesiastical authorities in

the 19th century. They issued the order for the breasts to be banished, and that part of the sculpture was destroyed. Local country women are said to have made their cheese tetilla-shaped out of solidarity with the poor breastless figure. Cebreiro cheese is also curiously shaped, rather like a large mushroom or a chef's toque. Though usually made of cow's milk, it is also permitted to incorporate up to 40 percent goat's milk. It is a granular, soft, buttery cheese that melts on the palate and

has a very individual, slightly acidic flavor. These cheeses weigh from 1.5 to 2 kilos (1 to 4 lbs). Cebreiro was a similar case to Godello grapes, close to extinction despite being a historic cheese to which documentary references exist dating from the 18th century. By 1989, it was being made by only two women, at home and for their own use. But the E.U.-imposed reduction of the milk quota provided an opportunity for cheese making and thanks to the determination of a few, we can still eat the cheese of

## GALICIA Lugo

We set foot on Galician soil for the first time in Piedrafita do Cebreiro, high up in a mountain pass, the rigors of whose ascent, pilgrims dread. A few kilometers more take us to O Cebreiro. We have witnessed another dramatic change of landscape—and of temperature: 24 hours ago we were sweltering at 35°C (95°F) and now it's less than 15°C (59°F). The view is magnificent: mountain ranges surround this little village, which marks

an important point on the pilgrimage route. One interesting feature are its *pallozas*—ancient Celtic round-houses typical of this region, with stone-built walls and thatched roofs perfectly suited to this environment. Close by is the lovely pre-Romanesque Santuario de Santa María, focus of a densely attended festive pilgrimage in September where—as related in the parallel account below—the local *pulpeiras*, who sell plates of octopus, are a major attraction.

O Cebreiro is also the original fount of the yellow arrow symbol that

points the way all along the pilgrimage route. Back in the 1970s, when the route exerted less popular appeal than more recently, a group of enthusiasts, determined to reinstate it, wondered how to make things easier for pilgrims when so many rural roads had either been turned into highways or disappeared completely. The simplest ideas are so often the best: Elías Valiña, O Cebreiro's parish priest, suggested a plain arrow in the most visible color—yellow—painted on stones, trees and fences as a cheap and easy answer. Since then,





the arrow system has become the modern equivalent of the Milky Way which guided pilgrims in olden times.

We head downwards into deepest Galicia: eternally green, wooded, and dotted with little, often tiny, hamlets. We are on our way to Samos, but stop off first at Triacastela. During the long-drawn-out construction of Santiago Cathedral, pilgrims helped provide the lime needed as building material by picking up a chunk of the locally plentiful chalky rock and carrying it as far as Castañeda, not far from Santiago, where the lime was extracted in great furnaces. Samos is an impressive Benedictine abbey nestling in a valley. The monastery's history dates back to the 6th century. It was destroyed by fire in the 16th century and was rebuilt and extended throughout the next two centuries—its solid walls withstood another, more recent, fire in



which, in the time of Charles III, the Spanish royal family made a gift to the court of Portugal. Arzúa cheese is more conventionally shaped and its smooth, slightly salty flavor is excellent. It is made very near Santiago, in specific areas of A Coruña and Lugo, deep in rural Galicia. These are the areas where one finds lovely *pazos*, rural mansions built in a characteristic style, usually of granite which eventually takes on a special color in this damp climate. "*Hórreo, capilla y ciprés, pazo es*" ("If it has

an *hórreo*, a chapel and a cypress, it's a *pazo*"), claims a local saying. The *hórreo* is a little stone building, rather like an elongated dog kennel, raised above the ground on four pillars used for storing grain out of harm's way. Many are still used for their original purpose. Though not a *pazo*, Casa de Díaz, where we stayed, is a lovely 18th-century farmhouse just off the pilgrimage route and very close to Samos monastery. What was once Casa de Díaz's hayloft is now a bright dining room, and

former outbuildings have now been converted into a little gym with a sauna. It is another good example of the attractive accommodations increasingly available in remote parts of the country. One aspect of their appeal is that they provide such a good opportunity to get to know the surrounding area at close quarters, including trying out little restaurants where they serve local produce, perhaps not in huge variety, but always genuine. We ate local eel. So, town by town, village by village, we finally made

1951. The principal of the monastery's two cloisters is the biggest in Spain. The fact that it once exercised jurisdiction over no fewer than 200 towns gives some idea of the abbey's former importance. We are getting very close to Santiago now. In Sarriá, we seek out the streets in the upper part of town which still retain a strong medieval flavor, especially the remains of the castle tower and walls, destroyed in the 15th century during civil unrest between the aristocracy and the serfs and burgesses traditionally known as the "*Guerras de los Irmandiños*" (Wars of the Brethren). A little further along the road in Portomarin, the scene is very different. This is a newly built town, moved to its present location when the original was drowned by the creation of the Belesar reservoir. Its monumental buildings—such as the fortified church of San Nicolás and the

church of San Pedro, both Romanesque—were dismantled and re-assembled here stone by stone, though the layout of the town is now different.

There are over twenty little Romanesque churches in the municipality of Palas de Rei, the finest of them being San Salvador in the village of Vilar de Donas. This Romanesque gem once belonged to the Knights of the Order of Santiago, who made it into their official burial place in Galicia. Close at hand is Mellid, first town of the province of A Coruña and also geographical center of Galicia. Its lovely Romanesque church of Santa María contains priceless mural paintings from the late 15th century.

We approach Santiago via Castañeda, where pilgrims used to deposit their limestone contributions collected in Triacastela, and then Labacolla. This, just five kilometers (three miles)

from Santiago, is where pilgrims washed themselves thoroughly in the river so as to arrive at their destination cleansed in both body and soul. Having been relatively protected from the dust of the route, we feel we can skip this ritual and head directly for Monte del Gozo (Hill of Rejoicing), from which pilgrims caught their first sight of Santiago and expressed their pleasure with a cry of "*Ultreia!*," roughly translatable as "On, on, ever on!"

Santiago at last! What a marvelous city it is. The whole of its splendidly preserved Old Quarter is a treasure (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 17), but the Plaza del Obradoiro is particularly so, imposing in scale but harmonious and beautiful. They say that Santiago has made raining into an art form. I remember crossing this square on a previous visit, late on a wet, misty February evening. Then, it was empty and mysterious, with

Tetilla cheese, Santiago de Compostela





Pórtico de la Gloria, Cathedral of Santiago

an almost magical feel to it. Today, it is bright, lively and full of people, and appealing in quite a different way. Fine buildings bound it on all sides: to the west, the neoclassical façade of the Palace of Raxoi, to the south, the Colegio de Fonseca, to the north, the Plateresque Hostal de los Reyes Católicos and, closing the square, the cathedral, a resumé of the architectural styles exemplified along the route: immediately inside its Baroque west front is the Pórtico de la Gloria, generally recognized as

one of the most important works of Romanesque sculpture and the masterpiece of sculptor Maestro Mateo. The portico is densely populated with the most expressive portraits of biblical figures to be found anywhere in the Christian world. Among them, on the central shaft, is a figure of Santiago at which pilgrims and non-pilgrims alike perform the ritual of placing their fingers in the five deep indentations of a handprint worn into the stone over the centuries, then touching foreheads three times with

the figure of Mateo himself to the rear of the column, the tradition being that they absorb some of his skill and wisdom in the process. Swinging high in the interior, the cathedral's famous giant censer known as the *botafumeiro*, spreads the scent of incense. Outside, the streets, or *rúas*, of Santiago, full of fine churches, lovely old houses and exciting bars are waiting to be explored. But that's another (parallel) story...

it to Santiago (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 17). You won't go hungry here, that's for sure—I have never seen so many restaurants and bars! Galicia has always enjoyed such quantities of good produce that *gallego* cuisine seems not to have bothered much with transforming it, but has left it alone to speak for itself. A piece of fine hake, for example, needs nothing more than brief cooking and a dressing of *ajada* (garlic fried with pimentón) to be perfectly delicious. Some see this simplicity as a defect,



Appetizing sea food and *pimientos de Padrón* from O Gato Negro, Santiago de Compostela



Galician *hórreo*

others as a great virtue. Whichever school of thought you subscribe to, you will find what suits you in Santiago. Those who like sophistication can seek out Toñi Vicente, pioneer of “modern” Galician cuisine (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 50), or Marcelo Tejedor (see page 74 of this issue), for example. Those who prefer to stick with the classics have a huge range of choice, from the veteran Casa Vilas to the hundreds of *tabernas* and restaurants that line entire streets, such as Rúa do Franco, offering all

kinds of sea food, empanadas, a wide range of fish from the waters around Galicia, meat from the aforementioned million cows, octopus, tiny *pimientos de Padrón* (little green peppers of which the occasional one is searingly hot)... Some are trendy, others old fashioned, but if we had to single out one, it would be O Gato Negro, as simple and genuine as Galicia itself.

*Sonia Ortega is a journalist, has been coordinator of Spain Gourmetour since its first issue, and is now also a genuine pilgrim having walked part of the route, inspired by the experience of researching this article.*

## Castile-León

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Bodega Regia  
Regidores, 9-11  
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Vivaldi  
Platerías, 4  
Tel: (34) 987 260 760  
www.elvivaldi.com

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Portería, 2  
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Hotel Astur  
Pza. de España, 2-3  
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Maruja Botas  
Tel: (34) 987 691 045

**MOLINASECA**

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Jardines Ángeles Balboa, 2  
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Tel: (34) 987 54 00 95

El Capricho  
Ctra. N-VI, Madrid-A Coruña,  
km 406  
Tel: (34) 987 542 506

Parador de Turismo  
Av. Calvo Sotelo, s/n  
Tel: (34) 987 540 010

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Vilachá, 4  
Tel: (34) 982 187 990

**SANTIAGO**  
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Rúa Hortas, 1  
Tel: (34) 981 558 580

Casa Vilas  
Rosalia de Castro, 88  
Tel: (34) 981 591 000

La Tacita d'Juan  
Hórreo, 31  
Tel: (34) 981 562 041

Toñi Vicente  
Rosalia de Castro, 24  
Tel: (34) 981 594 100



Above: Hostal de San Marcos, León  
Below: Casa de Díaz, Samos (Lugo)

Parador de los Reyes Católicos  
Pza. Obradoiro, 1  
Tel: (34) 981 582 200

O Gato Negro  
Raiña s/n  
Tel: (34) 981 583 105

Rúa do Franco  
Tapas Bars along this  
street and adjacent: Patio, Titos,  
Paradiso, 42

**PARADORS CENTRAL BOOKING OFFICE**

www.parador.es

**RUSTICAE**

www.rusticae.es

## Wine

### LEÓN

#### C.R.D.O. Bierzo

Language: Spanish  
www.crdo-bierzo.es/

### GALICIA

#### C.R.D.O. Ribeira Sacra

Language: Spanish  
www.ribeirasacra.org/

#### C.R.D.O. Rías Baixas

Language: Spanish  
www.doriasbaixas.com/  
Idioma: español

## Products

### CASTILE-LEÓN

#### C.R.D.O. Cecina de León

Language: English, French, German, Spanish  
www.cecinaleon.org

#### C.R.D.O. Lechazo de Castilla

Language: English, Spanish  
www.jcyl.es/jcyl/cag/dgiadr/svca/denominaciones/lechazo/home.html

#### C.R.D.O. Botillos del Bierzo

Language: English, Spanish  
www.jcyl.es/jcyl/cag/dgiadr/svca/denominaciones/botillo/home.html

### GALICIA

#### C.R.D.O. Qeixo de Cebreiro

Language: Spanish  
www.lugonet.com/cebreiro/

#### C.R.D.O. Ternera Gallega

Language: English, French, Spanish  
www.terneragallega.com/

## Culture and Tourism

### CASTILE-LEÓN

#### Junta de Castilla y León Touristic Information

Language: Spanish  
www.jcyl.es/jcyl/cict/dgt/svfit/turismo/

### Palencia

Language: Spanish  
www.turwl.com/

Language: Spanish

www.palencia.com/ayuntamiento/

#### Carrión de los Condes

Language: Spanish  
www.carrion.ciudad.org

### Tierra de Campos

Language: Spanish  
www.fontun.com/leon/campos.htm

### León

Language: Spanish  
www.aytoleon.com/

Language: Spanish  
www.falamosa.com/

### La Magaratería

Language: Spanish  
www.usuarios.tripod.es/hcordero/

### Astorga

Language: Spanish  
www.astorga.com/

### Bierzo

Language: Spanish  
www.ccbierzo.com/index.htm

Language: Spanish

www.bierzovirtual.com/

### Ponferrada

Language: Spanish  
www.ponferrada.org/inicio.htm

### Cacabelos

Language: English, German, Spanish  
www.iranon.org/cacabelos/

### Villafranca del Bierzo

Language: Spanish  
www.bierzonet.es/ieb/patri/villafranca/index.htm

### GALICIA

#### Tourgalicia

Language: English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish  
www.turgalicia.es/

#### Guías Turística de Galicia

Language: English, Spanish  
www.galinor.es/galicia.html

Language: Spanish  
www.galiciaonline.es/camino.htm

#### Asociación Gallega de Turismo Rural

Language: Spanish  
www.turismo-rural.com/agatur.html

### Lugo

Language: Spanish  
www.diputacionlugo.org/

Language: Spanish  
www.lugotur.com/

### Ribera Sacra

Language: English, Spanish  
www.pangalaica.com/ribsacra/

### O Cebreiro

Language: Spanish  
www.usuarios.cif.es/cebreiro/presenta.html

### Sarria

Language: Spanish  
www.sarriaweb.com/

### A Coruña

Language: Spanish  
www.dicoruna.es/

### Arzua

Language: Spanish  
www.pdc.es/castella/fundacio/arzua/arzu\_5.htm

### Santiago

Language: English, Spanish  
www.santiagodecompostela.org/

Language: Spanish  
www.santiago-compostela.com/

Language: English, Spanish  
www.galinor.es/santiago/

Language: Spanish  
www.comarcasantiago.com/intro.htm

## More about St. James Way

### Federación Española de Asociaciones de Amigos del Camino de Santiago

Language: Spanish  
www.caminosantiago.org

### Friends of the Road to Santiago

Language: Spanish  
www.geocities.com/TheTropics/Equator/2254/

### El Camino por etapas

Language: Spanish  
www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Forest/1286/Etapas.htm

Language: Spanish  
www.galiciaonline.es/camino.htm

### Centro de Estudios y Documentación del Camino de Santiago

www.bibliotecajacobea.org

# A SHERRY

## Treasury



When the Regulatory Council of the Jerez-Xérès-Sherry D.O. decided around two years ago to create a new quality

seal age dating the oldest wines, the project raised quite a bit of dust in more than one *sacristía*, the wineries' "holy of holies." In the silence of the *sacristías*, hidden away from prying eyes, lies a treasure trove of wines, some well over one hundred years old, that are only broached on extraordinary family occasions or for very special friends. Since the beginning of this year, these gems have become available to a wider circle of connoisseurs and wine lovers the world over.

### Text

Bettina Krücken

### Translation

Synonyme



The Regulatory Council's initiative was no shot in the dark. In fact, it has been a long-held and frequently expressed wish of the wineries to provide an indication of the age of their wines on the label, though this seemed practically well nigh given the mixing of vintages in the dynamic solera system (see Glossary, page 155). Under the new age-dating system, three types of dry sherry—*amontillado*, *palo cortado* and *oloroso*—as well as the sweet Pedro Ximénez (PX), the classic wines from the area around Jerez de la Frontera in southwest Spain, are tested, classified and marked by the Regulatory Council as VOS or VORS on a special back label that guarantees the age of the wine. These abbreviations are admittedly derived from the English terms Very Old Sherry and Very Old Rare Sherry, which are already widely used in the trade. They have, however, been transformed into the Latin *Vinum Optimum Signatum* (Best Selected Wine) for wines over 20 years of age, and *Vinum Optimum Rare Signatum* (Best and Extremely Rare Selected Wine), defining wines over 30 years of age.

To qualify their wines as age-dated sherry, the bodegas have to present special, limited batches to the Regulatory Council on one of four dates during the year for sampling. These batches are sealed in the cel-

lars and the samples taken are passed on for appraisal to an independent tasting committee and then to the laboratory of the Jerez Institute for Viticulture and Enology, where the average age and other variables of the wine are analyzed with the help of state-of-the-art technology. Only these limited and separately sealed batches are certified and not, as one might imagine, the whole of the *solera* system in which the wine developed.

The six-member tasting committee, comprising independent wine experts and particular connoisseurs of sherry wines, is responsible for assessing the organoleptic qualities of the wines presented in blind tastings. The results of these tastings are of prime importance, since the old wine must, in the first place, demonstrate its exceptional quality in the nose and on the palate of the professional tasters, and later, consumers. Only after tasting is the age of the wines established, though this is of course the factor behind their developing such elegant bouquets of hazelnut, walnut, ripe figs and fine woods, their many-layered notes of flavor and their powerful body. According to César Saldaña, managing director of the Regulatory Council, "we were surprised to find" at the very first examination of 31 wines from nine bodegas held in

November 2000, and in subsequent tests, "that the majority of the wines presented fell into the older VORS category. That is their average age was 30 years in solera." By the time of the most recent age-dating process in October 2001, the number of participating bodegas had risen to 16 and wines classified to 40 (9 VOS and 31 VORS).

## Wine Archeology

The classification of a wine is initially established by the wineries themselves on the basis of available data for the age of the soleras from which it was drawn, before testing by the Institute for Viticulture and Enology. However, it has always been common practice in Jerez for wineries to take over whole batches of butts from other bodegas if there was any break in the chain of inheritance, or if the wine was sold for any other reason. These old wines were used to improve the winery's own, younger stock, or were hoarded away after being refreshed with younger wines to guarantee survival. In many cases, the date the *botas* came into the ownership of the cellar is known, but not the precise age of their contents, since cellar masters only seldom revealed the secrets of the wines they kept and tended in writing. The oldest cellars in the *Marco de Jerez*, the sherry



triangle, already matured their wines in huge butts in the 17th century, although these were still separated by vintages and were not kept in the solera system, which developed in the second half of the 19th century. Often enough, therefore, there is no accurate record of the birth of these "ancestors," whose character still influences the oldest wines of the various bodegas to this day. This makes it practically impossible to determine the average age of the wine in a given solera, the so-called solera years, without technological assistance. In archeology it is usual to use the C-14 dating method to establish the age of finds and, astounding as it may sound, this method is also the best suited when it comes to the ancestors of these wines. Of course, in this case it is not a matter of millions of years, but the quantity of unstable C-14 isotopes present in the atmosphere, in plants and therefore in wine has changed since the mid-1950s (because of atomic testing), and the age of the wines can in fact be established very accurately on the basis of their half-life. Luis Pérez Rodríguez, who is a member of the tasting committee, a chemist and a professor of food and environment technology at the University of Cádiz explains, "The majority presence of molecules from a given vintage represents the average age of the wine." Obviously, it is only ever possible to establish an average age, because the oldest wines are gradually blended or "refreshed" over the years with younger ones in order to refill the butt after wine has been removed for drinking or to replenish losses due to evaporation. Whether these are wines from different vintages that were initially matured separately, or

later wines regularly refreshed in a solera system, the wines in the butt undergo a symbiotic process of binding in which the maturity of the older generation influences the younger wines, and these, in turn, lend new strength and vigor to their elders. The wine enjoyed by the aficionado in the glass is thus created and its character refined over generations by a whole dynasty of wines.

The select old wines granted the VOS or VORS seals are conditioned by the slow and complex process of development, and this makes them an extremely rare species, whose future survival must be protected. The D.O. Regulatory Council ensures this through the system known in Jerez as *cupo*, which is also used by the wineries for many of their commercial lines, though in a less restrictive manner. The *cupos* or quotas require that a predetermined quantity of wine of the same type must be on hand in the cellar for a given volume of wine removed from the solera butts and bottled for sale. For example, if an oloroso XYZ has an average age of three years (the minimum), three liters of the same oloroso XYZ must be matured in the bodega's solera system for every one liter sold. In the strictly limited series of wines that are over 20 or 30 years old, the *cupo* volumes are increased 20 and 30 times respectively in order to ensure that wines in these age categories remain available in the future. Any bodega intending to market its oldest wines under the new quality seal created by the Regulatory Council must undertake to abide by this "preservation order," strictly limiting sales to perhaps between 500 and 1,500 liters, and proving to the Regulatory Council that the relevant

quantities have been set aside in its "sacristías." Nevertheless, the sherry wineries retain the option of selling their wines without the age-dated-Sherry label.

Four years ago, Sánchez Romate brought out its "Sacristía de Romate" (Romate Sacristy wine). The wine was not as yet age dated, but the launch lent a commercial character to the term, which was in general use in Jerez itself. Founded in 1781, the firm was among the first to present its wines to the Regulatory Council and obtain the age-dated quality seal. Romate's Oloroso Viejísimo has an average age of more than 30 years, as does its Amontillado Viejísimo, an impressive dark amber wine with a particularly intense bouquet of dried fruits and seemingly unending length on the palate. Pedro Ximénez Viejísimo, an almost black wine of over 20 years of age, completes the trio. It stands out for its full, smooth raisin and sweet fig flavors.

## Sherry Legends

A walk through the old town of Jerez de la Frontera takes the visitor through a maze of high whitewashed walls punctured by high, narrow windows and occasionally broken by a massive gate, opening onto the sherry cathedrals of Sánchez Romate, González Byass and Pedro Domecq, not to mention other smaller bodegas such as Emilio Lustau and Dios Baco, and, finally, the almost unknown Bodega de la Calle Ponce, owned by Valdespino. Around the delightful inner patio, which is shaded by the growth of a pair of two-hundred year old vines, are the storerooms housing the butts of the

eight *criaderas* and the solera of the prize-winning Fino Inocente. It was here, that I had the rare opportunity to follow the natural and original development of an old amontillado step by step from the fresh young fino in *criadera* 7 through the perfectly mature, wonderfully aromatic fino of *criadera* 5, on to the green-gold, full fino of *criadera* 3 and finally to the elegant, burnished fino of the solera, where the wine is covered only by the slightest layer of yeast. At the end of the solera is the "No" butt. This butt, which is clearly marked "No," has hardly been touched since 1948 and is in itself the heart of a miniature sacristía. No wine is drawn from the butt (at the very most a few drops when somebody like myself has the good fortune to try a sip), and wine from the Fino Inocente solera is added only to replenish the loss from evaporation. What was once Fino Inocente, protected from the air under a dense layer of yeast, has over the years become an extraordinary amontillado, whose noble breeding still shows through its clean and distinguished bouquet.

Valdespino's sacristy wines do not, however, come from this tiny sleeping beauty of a bodega, but from the botas of the Bodega Grande de Valdespino, where the base is kept for the oloroso Su Majestad, the exceptional amontillado Coliseo and the palo cortado Cardenal, all three VORS category wines. Bodegas Valdespino was acquired in 1999 by José Estévez, S.A., which also owns Marqués del Real Tesoro (since 1989). By the end of 2001, all of the Valdespino butts will have been transferred to José Estévez's new facility, but the fate of the magical little



Bodega de la Calle Ponce and the historic Bodega Grande is not yet sealed, as Estévez has in fact taken over only the wine stocks but not the properties.

González-Byass, one of the oldest bodegas in Jerez and still family owned to this day, has Vinum Optimum Rare Signatum of all four possible types in its "holy of holies." These are the Amontillado del Duque, Apóstoles (palo cortado), Matusalém (sweet oloroso) and PX Noé. The name Amontillado del Duque was given for the simple reason that the founder of the firm, Manuel María González, purchased the solera from the Duke of Medinaceli in 1857.

According to the 1880 price list, a bottle of Amontillado del Duque cost 7.50 pesetas at the time—the price that such a bottle might command at auction today is hard to gauge (see box "Sherry Auctions"). This amontillado still retains its finesse with hints of the biological aging process under yeast, being partly refreshed with wine from the traditional fino soleras and with fine, old vintage amontillados.

The name palo cortado Apóstoles is quite a different story. Its origin goes back to a visit made by Queen Isabel II of Spain to González Byass in late October 1862. Their Majesties wished to observe how the grapes were pressed, though several weeks after harvesting this looked all but impossible. Nevertheless, grapes originally intended for the production of raisins and hung out to dry were brought in from the households of Jerez. From these grapes, 16,000 liters of wine were pressed. This quantity would have been enough to fill 33 normal butts, but was instead distributed among 12 immense barrels. The name is thus derived from the

numerology—33 is the age of Christ, while the number 12 is associated with the Apostles.

The names of the other two wine types, Methuselah and Noah speak for themselves. The unbelievably smooth and richly nuanced PX Noé comes from a solera which has the grand total of 19 criaderas behind it, or over it I should say. The impression this gives

indeed reminds the beholder of the Ark, in which the whole heredity of the wine is assembled and concentrated.

## Wines for Meditation

Domecq's Amontillado 51-1<sup>a</sup> is another example of a fino whose solera, after long years maturing under its protective layer of yeast, has naturally become an amontillado without the usual addition of alcohol to fortify the wine. In the matter of breeding, oloroso Sibarita, which also has an average age of well over thirty years, is the perfect counterpart to the amontillado. The

## S H E R R Y U N D E R T H E H A M M E R

The wines of the area around Jerez were already highly prized in Roman times and exports to the metropolis thrived. In the late 17th and 18th centuries, numerous English and French wine-trading houses established themselves in southern Spain in order to guarantee supplies of this noble wine, called "sherry" after the Arabic name for the city, "Sherish."

Nowadays, a wide variety of excellent sherry wines is available the world over, and the attention of the most demanding sherry connoisseurs and aficionados, and of course collectors, has turned to the acquisition of unique, rare old wines at auction.

Sotheby's in London placed a lot of Antonio Barbadillo "Reliquias" under the hammer in May last year. Some of the bottles went for £420

each to private collectors from the United Kingdom, the Far East, Brazil and the U.S.A. In October this year, a bottle of the same wine fetched a new record price of £450 at Sotheby's. The exact age of the wine is unknown, though Barbadillo affirms that it has lain in botas in the firm's home town of Sanlúcar de Barrameda for some 150 years.

Christie's East in New York auctioned a one-of-a-kind lot of old vintage wine from Bodegas Williams & Humbert on 1 October this year. These were the best vintages, one butt of each having been kept by the winery since 1920. The bottles were filled specially for Christie's. Two bottles of the 1945 oloroso were offered for US\$ 300-400, two 1957 amontillados for US\$ 240-300 and three 1962 palo cortados for US\$ 240-300.



solera in the El Molino Bodega was started more than 250 years ago and remains redolent of the long history of this traditional winery. A wine for meditation, best taken in moments of solitude and reflection. This wine, together with the matchless PX Venerable and palo cortado Capuchino, has been on the market for decades in strictly limited series. It will now be officially recognized as Vinum Optimum Rare Signatum through the new label.

Sandeman's "Royals"—Royal Esmeralda (amontillado), Royal Corregidor (oloroso), Royal Ambrosante (PX)—are among the younger wines, being on average "only" twenty or more years of age, but they all come from soleras that are more than a century old. A scion of the seventh generation, George Thomas David Sandeman is responsible for steering the firm into new waters, having recently escaped the clutches of the multinational Seagram's.

The oloroso Cruz Vieja solera has a rather unusual story behind it. The wine itself is the product of the Faustino González winery, a small undertaking that has decidedly not been crowned with vine leaves for centuries. The solera butts, however, come from the cellars of the Alcázar (citadel) of Jerez, where the noble Villavicencio family lived.

In 1758, Don José María Núñez de Villavicencio y Fernández de Villavicencio laid down the first butts for this wine and ordered that they might only be passed on in inheritance to daughters by the name of Inés. The ancient botas went down the female line from daughter to daughter, always with the name Inés, until 1862, when they fell to the male line until, in 1971, Doña Mercedes

Aranda y Paul, who had no heirs, sold the wine to Faustino González, a local doctor. I was offered to try an oloroso drawn directly from the butt in this small, family bodega. Searching for a description, I find "the perfect lover" on the tip of my tongue, almost literally. Intense and promising in the nose, smooth, but with a mature and noble character and extraordinary body...

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

*Exporters on page 136 and photo credits on page 156.*

## W E B S I T E S

### The Jerez wineries

Languages: English, German, Spanish

This site gives full details of the wines and wineries in the sherry-producing district of Jerez, as well as information on the local climate and soil, harvesting process, fermentation and classification.

[www.jerez.org/es/turismo-ocio/bodega01.html](http://www.jerez.org/es/turismo-ocio/bodega01.html)

### Wine search

Language: English

This page offers a powerful search engine with thousands of links, 281 of which offer information on sheries and on wineries in the Jerez district.

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

### Sherry and gastronomy

Language: English

A selection of recipes featuring various sherries.

[www.sherry.org/envgas00.html](http://www.sherry.org/envgas00.html)

### C.R.D.O. Jerez-Xérès-Sherry and Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda

Languages: English, French, Spanish

This is the official site of the Regulating Council for the Jerez-Xérès-Sherry and Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda D.O. It offers full information on the wines covered by the D.O. (must, fermentation, classification, aging, sherry types and consumer statistics), as well as a history of sherry and descriptions of the vineyards, gastronomy and wineries.

[www.sherry.org](http://www.sherry.org)



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Characterful

# CAVAS

Cava is one of Spain's many contributions to the world of wine, yet this sparkling wine—so much a part of Christmas and special occasions generally—is one that most of us know little about. Cava wineries produce more than young sparklers; behind the scenes, in-the-know *cavistas* who understand how prolonged aging can fine tune these wines to bring out special characteristics, are demonstrating their conviction with projects of their own, mainly *gran reservas*. In the process, new facets of Cava are being revealed—there is hitherto unsuspected character behind the fizz.

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TEXT

ANABEL PASCUAL

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TRANSLATION

HAWYS PRITCHARD

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The traditional method of making sparkling wine means that Cava is wine twice over insofar as it undergoes a second fermentation in the bottle. Cava is officially denominated a *vino espumoso de calidad producido en región determinada* (vecpd for short), or “quality sparkling wine produced in a specific region.” The designated region encompasses 159 municipalities, most of them in the Penedès (where San Sadurn de Noya is the Cava hub) and other areas of Catalonia, though it is also produced in some wineries in La Rioja, Aragon, Navarre, the Basque Country, Valencia and Extremadura, which between them have a total of 32,000 hectares (79,072 acres) of vineyards.

The three star Cava grape varieties are, unquestionably, whites Macabeo, Xarel.lo and Parellada. Varieties authorized later in addition to this trio for their aromatic contribution include Chardonnay, Subirat or Malvasia Riojana, and reds Garnacha, Monastrell, Pinot Noir and Trepas, these last two for rosé Cavas.

At harvest time, the grape juice is vinified with selected yeasts and each variety is fermented separately. The next stage after vinification is the blending of the base wine, mainly using the Macabeo, Xarel.lo, Parellada trio. Once the wines judged the optimal basis for sparkling wine have been chosen, the *método tradicional* proceeds to

the bottling with sugars and selected yeasts which, during the second fermentation in the bottle hermetically sealed with a crown cap, will generate the carbon dioxide or fizz so characteristic of Cava.

For this process to take place, the bottles are laid down horizontally in cellars so that carbon dioxide can form gradually and naturally—the slower this process is, the finer and more elegant the eventual bead will be.

After the aging period, the lees or sediments produced during the second fermentation form deposits in the bottle. The riddling process is designed to move the sediment gradually into the neck to facilitate its eventual removal. This is done by placing the bottles in riddling-racks (for manual treatment) or giro-palettes (for automatic treatment) and giving the bottle a fractional turn and a slight shake while inclining it gradually towards the vertical until the deposits are up against the stopper, at which point the bottles are ready for disgorgement.

As a general rule, the next step is to freeze the neck of the bottle and remove the stopper, allowing the accumulated pressure inside the bottle to expel the frozen sediment with a minimal loss of liquid. If the Cava is to be a brut nature, the bottle will be topped up with more of the original blend, while for other types of Cava (extra brut, extra dry, dry, semi-dry and sweet), a “dosage,” usually a mixture of wine and sugar, will be

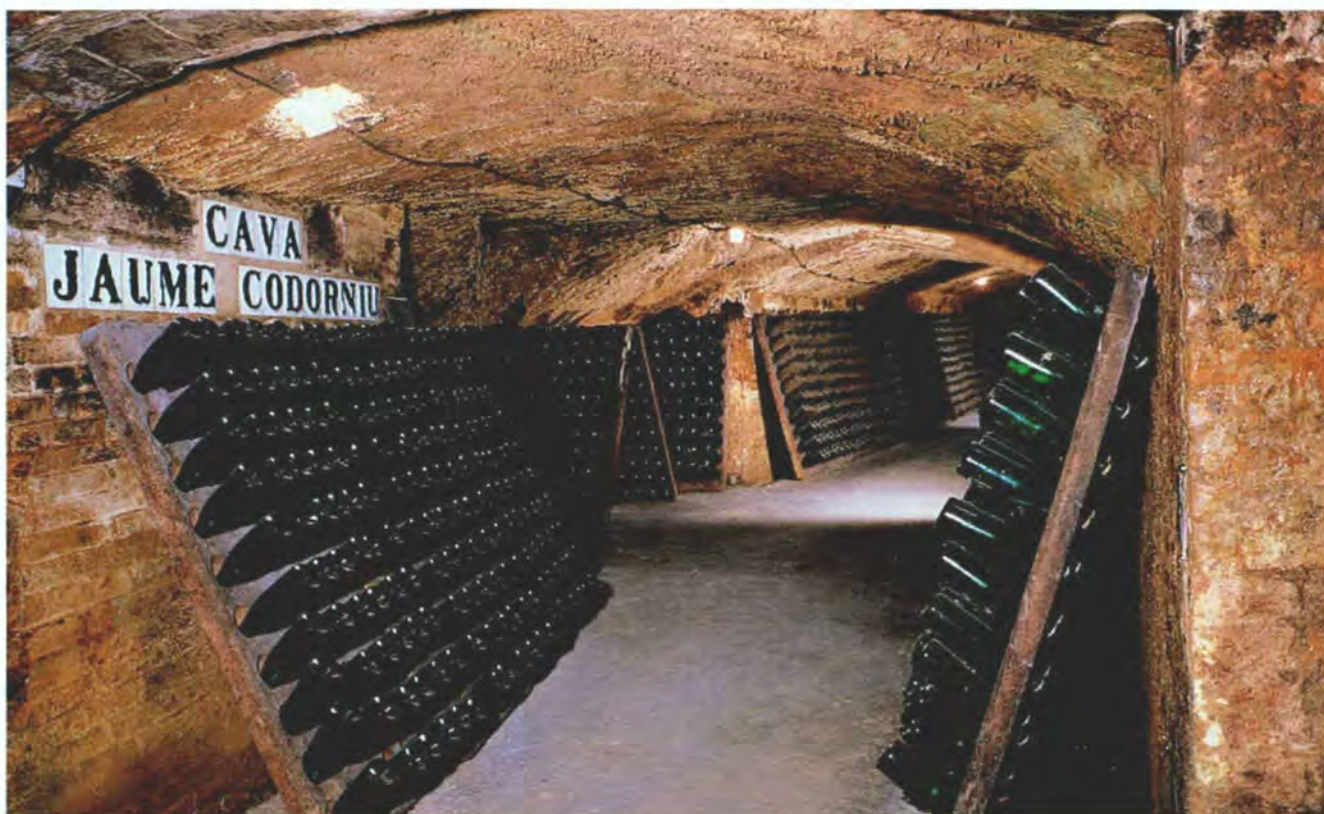
added before stoppering the bottle with its final cork and capsule and applying the appropriate back label issued by the Regulatory Council.

## Complex Cavas

When an “average” Cava arrives in the marketplace, it will have undergone an obligatory nine months’ aging, which technically qualifies it for *reserva* designation. In practice, however, Cava makers use the term *reserva* on the label only when, in their opinion, a wine possesses a definite personality, is the product of a special method, and, generally, has been aged for longer than the minimum obligatory period. Vintage dating of Cavas is becoming more frequent, generally in the case of aged Cavas, or of the products of a vintage the winemaker considers exceptional. *Gran reservas* will have been aged for at least 30 months, during which time the acidity of the white base wine harmonizes with the carbon dioxide and alcohol, integrating these elements to give wines which are rounder and milder in the mouth.

Gran reservas are not produced on a large scale, both because of their high quality targets and for reasons of economic viability: an average aging period of four years entails multiplying by four stocks held at any one time, tying up capital meanwhile. Xavier Gramona of the winery Gramona explains that this sort of

Gran reservas are complex Cavas, and their complexity derives from slow aging on the lees.



specialist winemaking increases production costs significantly, particularly so when, as in his own case, a winery opts for the artisan approach. A lot of patience is called for before the product reaches the marketplace given that from the second fermentation on, the whole process is manual (riddling, disgorgement and even final presentation).

These Cavas are carefully made wines which, with no cask aging and up to eight years old, show no negative signs of old age or of oxidation. These are complex Cavas, and their complexity derives from long, slow

aging on the lees. These sparkling wines produce none of the gassy feeling which Cava with just nine months aging can produce in the stomach; these can be drunk in quantity without acidity or carbon dioxide causing discomfort. To achieve a successful gran reserva, a winemaker has to start with good raw materials—a good wine starts in the vineyard.

Gabriel Suberviola, managing director of Segura Viudas, stresses that for a Cava to improve over the course of aging, it is essential to select consistently for quality. In general terms,

this means starting off with old vineyards, selecting particular plots and grapes which are healthy, ripe and balanced as regards appropriate sugar and acidity levels. At Segura Viudas, to avoid unpleasant surprises at harvest time and to ensure that grapes reach the winery in peak condition, the raw material is transported in perforated boxes to avoid unwanted fermentation occurring when grapes split during transportation. Cutting edge technology is important at Segura Viudas—a member company of the Freixenet Group—but intuition and backing new hunches



also have their place. The bodega's latest venture is called Torre Galimany, a 1998 vintage Cava which will be released onto the market as a gran reserva. The predominant variety is Xarel.lo, made by pellicular maceration (involving skin contact) and fermentation in the cask where it stays for several months on the lees. Also involved are Macabeo and Parellada, which also spend several months in the same tank where they ferment on the lees. Suberviola assures us that the resultant Cava will be "amazing." Once the grapes have reached the presses, only must obtained from the first pressing is vinified to provide the base wine. Selecting the most suitable base wines for an aged Cava is a skilled business. At Raventós i Blanc (whose founder, Josep Maria Raventós i Blanc, is a member of the Codorníu family) a tasting panel made up of five professionals, company president Manuel Raventós among them, tries the different wines to create the coupage or blend they consider ideal for three or four years of aging. The benefits of such selectivity will show with the passage of time, as Cava ages slowly. Gran Reserva Personal MRN is the end result of this kind of sustained selection for quality at Manuel Raventós' winery.

Though there is no such thing as a set formula for varieties and the exact proportions in which they should be used to achieve a good gran reserva Cava, Xarel.lo has emerged as one of the Cava maker's favorites. Not only is it the second most suitable variety for the production of the bubbles, but it also contains high levels of polyphenols and higher acidity, both attributes qualifying it unquestionably as a leading ingredient in a wine intended for aging, alongside Macabeo and, to a lesser degree, Parellada, which is a little lacking in acidity and concentrated sugars to benefit from aging. Manuel Raventós agrees that there is no fixed recipe for making a gran reserva, though he puts great stress on the importance of the symbiotic vineyard-Cava relationship, opting definitively, when making gran reservas, for old vines whose grapes take on personality from their terrain. Yeasts play a formative function in the second fermentation, so no self-respecting Cava maker will obtain his from anywhere but his own vines. At Gramona, they recognize the importance of skilled selection of yeasts, especially when a wine may spend up to eight years in close contact with them. Gramona still retains its artisan tone and tradition, as exemplified by the labor-intensive

process of riddling which is still done in riddle-racks and by hand. This winery's Cavas are still aged in corked rather than crown capped bottles, which means that disgorgement cannot be done mechanically, but requires a specialist with pincers and considerable dexterity to remove the cork with minimum loss of liquid. Tradition and craftsmanship are the trademark of this bodega, but five generations' worth of accumulated winemaking know-how by no means precludes embracing ultra modern technology.

The years of experience which Agustí Torelló, head of the bodega of the same name, acquired in other companies before setting up his own, have stood him in good stead. By his own account, the market has treated him well, a fact that is not surprising given his quality oriented business philosophy and his way of involving the consumer therein through sharing information—"the more the better." His most personal creation is a wine called Kripta, a Cava originally thought of as a special treat for friends. The friends in question insisted that he should launch it commercially on the grounds that this four-year-old gran reserva Cava, an artisan product from start to finish, including the bottle design, deserved wider recognition.



## More Consumer Information

The Regulatory Council is promoting the establishment of guideline standards for gran reservas; the Council's technical expert, Francisco González, explains why: "Age and quality are not synonymous. The product may not be finite, but quality is."

Maximum quality guarantees are what the Regulatory Council aims to provide by introducing more rigorous monitoring for the benefit of the consumer. One example is limiting the gran reserva category to Brut Nature, Extra Brut and Brut Cavas. The wines will also be submitted to strict organoleptic tastings and will be differentiated from other Cavas by means of specific back labels.

Manuel Raventós, president of Raventós i Blanc, believes: "If we're going to offer the public a gran reserva, a product with greater added value, then we must provide them with guarantees about that product."

The recommendation will also be made that labeling should also display the date when disgorgement took place. Agustí Torelló was one of the pioneers in doing this. He explains the relevance of this apparent detail: "It indicates a Cava's life span" (namely a year to eighteen months

after the disgorgement date). "This is something a consumer needs to know if he is to enjoy a Cava at its best," he explains.

Gabriel Suberviola also advocates telling consumers more—"There is an increasing demand for information"—and is confident that the additional information required for gran reservas will "raise both Cava's quality and its image. Furthermore, making a top of the range product makes you more demanding with the rest of your range." They know all about this at Gramona, a bodega which prides itself on making longer-aged Cavas, the minimum aging period being eighteen months and the average around four years. Nothing earns customer fidelity like quality, as "Gramonaddicts"—devotees of Gramona Imperial, a brut gran reserva—will testify.

Though Cava is still a very seasonal choice—over 50 percent of sales occur between December and January—people are gradually changing the way they drink it.

Consumers are starting to discover how well it works as an aperitif and even as a wine for drinking right through a meal. For this second option, the more strongly flavored the food, the more mature the Cava you should drink with it. And this is precisely why reservas and gran reservas

are receiving so much attention. The Catalans drink Cava virtually all through lunch or dinner. The advantage of a gran reserva Cava is that it stands up well to food with more complex flavors, as Sergi Torres, chef at the Cava d'en Sergi restaurant in San Sadurn de Noya, affirms. One of his specialty dishes is *arrosejat de fideus*, a dish typical of the Catalan coast (noodles cooked in a fish fumet to which a chopped garlic and parsley *picada*, clams and chunks of fish are added). Its rich flavors call for a gran reserva Cava with plenty of body, scope and the tertiary aromas that only an aged sparkling wine can offer.

The principle is obvious. All it takes is an initial leap of faith to discover how well the elegance and character of a gran reserva Cava will match some of your favorite dishes.

*Anabel Pascual is a journalist who specializes in wine-related issues at EFEAGRO, the agrifood subsidiary of EFE news agency.*

*Exporters on page 136 and photo credits on page 156.*

FROM THE  
CANARY  
ISLANDS



## The Taste of Summer All Year Long

Warm from the garden, firm and juicy, a perfectly ripe tomato embodies the taste of summer. If you live in northern Europe, chances are that your tomatoes are sun-filled emissaries from the Canary Islands that, thanks to the fortunate combination of a privileged climate and a constant striving for quality, reach their destination in excellent condition just days after harvesting.

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TEXT  
LAURA KUMIN

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# TOMATOES



*Lycopersicon lycopersicum*, the true denomination of our contemporary salad staple, has a curious social and culinary history. The fruit of the *Lycopersicon Esculentum*, native to Latin America, most likely reached Europe in the 16th century with returning Spanish colonizers whose word *tomate* is an adaptation of the Aztec *tomatl*. Its relationship to the *Solanaceae* or nightshade family, an honor it shares with potatoes, eggplants and capsicum peppers, probably had something to do with the initial suspicion it aroused here. European botanists make references to the *mala aurea*, or golden apple as early as 1554, the term suggesting that earlier varieties were yellow. Rumor of the tomato's supposed aphrodisiac qualities earned it the name "love apple." At first used as a decorative plant, it is only at the end of the 17th century that evidence appears of the tomato finding a place in continental cuisine. Ninety-three percent water and refreshingly acidic, tomatoes are a modest source of vitamins A and C. Today the versatile fruit, fresh, puréed or in sauce, is a staple of kitchens throughout the world.

The Canary Islands began cultivating tomatoes in earnest a century ago. Tomatoes are currently the region's principal export crop, along with bananas. Most growers export 100 percent of their production with principal destinations being the U.K., for local consumption, and Rotterdam, the distribution point for the rest of Europe.

The islands' unique geographical characteristics, the same that have attracted tourists for decades, are key



factors in explaining the popularity of the Canary Island tomato. Long hours of sunshine, a benign climate with temperatures that normally range between 12° and 22°C (53 and 71°F) and the slight salinity of both soil and water all combine to give this fruit its unique character.

At the same time, commitment to quality, innovation, and environmental and health safety have helped the Canary Island tomato to maintain a high profile in spite of competition from growers in Holland and Morocco, the latter still exempted from E.E.C. export restrictions and with lower labor costs.

The islands of Tenerife and Las Palmas are the region's principal producers, with 1,300 hectares (3,200 acres) planted and an output of 132

million kg in Tenerife and 222 million kg in Grand Canary Island, where 2,300 hectares (5,700 acres) are dedicated to tomato cultivation. An estimated 25,000 families make their living directly from tomatoes, not to mention 6,000-8,000 related jobs. That refreshing red accent gracing your salad bowl moves approximately 210 million euros in the Canary Islands, supplying supermarkets throughout the U.K., Scandinavia, Germany, and more recently Poland, the Czech Republic and Russia. Growers on both islands reduce costs by sharing shipping contracts through export associations FEDEX in Las Palmas and ACETO in Tenerife. Although the Canary Islands have a long-standing reputation for produc-



ing high quality tomatoes, the industry has been hard hit during the past five years by tomato yellow leaf curl virus. The resulting decrease in tomato production has prompted cultivators not only to research virus-resistant varieties, but to concentrate on maintaining, and improving quality control as well as investigating new growing techniques.

In spite of a drop in production and planting surface, the past decade has brought about higher production volume per plant. The majority of growers that I spoke with, however, were more concerned about quality than quantity. The tomato's flavor depends on its sugar content, approximately 3.5 percent and measured in points per brix. (1 brix = 1g sugar/l)

Long-life varieties, designed to maintain optimum consistency and color from harvest to arrival at the consumer's table, have to some extent sacrificed flavor for durability, a fact that growers are quick to recognize. For this reason, one of their principal concerns is recuperating the intense flavor and aroma so characteristic of Canary Island tomatoes, without sacrificing the fruit's hardness.

## Organic Farming

Although strict organic cultivation is still fairly limited in the Canary Islands, (40-45 hectares/99-111 acres are organically farmed on Tenerife, representing 4-5 percent of total tomato production), increasing numbers of growers are experiment-

ing with small areas dedicated to organic methods. Two cooperatives, Coabona and Verdevivo, are producing organic tomatoes on 18 hectares (44 acres) of land this year and expect to cultivate twice as much in 2002.

Organic farming is very strictly regulated and soil preparation can take several years. All tomato plantations on the Canary Islands are protected by netting that lets in light while protecting the fragile fruit from the winds that sing constantly through the fine mesh. Organic fields must be totally isolated in order to avoid contamination of water, air or tools by residual pesticides. They may only be treated with approved substances, including neem oil, sulphur, garlic extract, compost or purine and manure from organically fed animals.

With one kilo of tomato seeds fetching from 18,000 to 24,000 euros most growers, not only those following organic methods, prefer to produce their own seeds in order to achieve greater quality control. El Viso, an organic farm in Arico, Tenerife, is having positive results so far with Thomas tomatoes grafted onto Heiman plants, harvesting about 4 kilos (8.8 pounds) of fruit per plant. In spite of the greater vulnerability of organic farming to plant diseases or harmful insects and its labor intensiveness, organic farmers have one sure advantage over growers using more conventional methods: they know that there is a guaranteed demand for their product and that concerned consumers are willing to pay the higher price these tomatoes command.



Long hours of sunshine, a benign climate and the slight salinity of soil and water combine to give this fruit its unique character.

## The Hydroponic Option

Hydroponic cultivation is another option that is increasingly well-accepted. During a visit to Manuel Jesús Acevedo Hernández's nine-hectare (22 acres) farm in Tenerife where hydroponic methods have been in use since 1997, I spoke at length with Manuel, one of a new generation of young agricultural engineers that is bringing technological expertise to a traditionally family-run business.

"Conventional planting methods require bringing soil down from the northern part of the island which is expensive. With hydroponics and its inert planting medium, we can control the quality of the fruit by modifying the nutrients and irrigation according to the needs of each field," Manuel explained. "Four seedlings are planted in crushed volcanic rock in 17-24 liter plastic trays. The plants are watered between seven and fifteen times daily with a standard nutritive solution that is modified

according to the growth cycle of the plants. We adjust the water supply according to the amount of sunlight."

"Right now we are using an open system. Our idea is to eventually recycle the residual water," he continued. "It's a much more delicate process. An error or a break in a pipeline can be disastrous and two or three backup systems are required. Although organic farming is growing at a faster rate, I think that if we can make the necessary adjustments to a system of recycled water, hydroponics can be the technique of the future."

Tomato plants have traditionally been trained to grow up vertical guiding lines. When they reach approximately two meters (6.5 ft) the plant will begin to grow downward. Many farms are using another method involving pulleys for the guiding lines. As the plant gets taller the lines are gradually relaxed until the plants are growing almost horizontally. Fruit is located at a height that makes it easier to harvest and scarring is reduced.

## True Canary Flavor

The committed team at Coagisora, the 400-member cooperative located in Guía de Isora, Tenerife that produces 32,000 tons of tomatoes annually, maintains that traditional planting, using soil and water and the most natural methods possible, makes for the best flavor. "A Daniela tomato grown here has up to two points more flavor than the same variety grown elsewhere," explains Coagisora manager Julián Lorenzo Hernández. "We are also concerned with innovation and are building an experimental greenhouse that will yield its first harvest this spring. Our idea is to work together with seed companies to develop a variety that can be profiled as a true Canary Island tomato, consistent enough for shipping but with our traditionally intense flavor, starting from and improving upon older varieties such as the Angela, Estrella or Meltine. We hope to be ready for exporting in three years. In our opinion the next logical step would be to obtain denomination of origin for Canary Island tomatoes."

Coagisora, like many other growers, also follows a system of integrated pest control that works to prevent insect damage to crops by the selective introduction of natural predators. Respectful of the environment and the health of farm workers, integrated pest control is combined with the limited use of less aggressive pesticides that will not harm the insect predators. Although this system is increasingly popular, some growers feel that the benefits are not worth the risks involved by maintaining a low level pest population in order to keep the predators alive. Another concern is preserving the health of the colonies of native bumblebees that are purchased annually and used to cross-pollinate the tomato plants. The sturdy *bombus canariensis* was present in all the flowering greenhouses I visited.

Fresh water is scarce in the Canary Islands and one of the principal objectives of new cultivation methods is achieving maximum growth using the least water possible. Bonny, by far the largest producer on Grand Canary Island, is constantly researching new technological and business techniques. Bonny is a self-sufficient operation, overseeing production from seed to export and has invested in its own desalinization plant. President Pepin García is pleased with the results of last year's promotional campaign in the U.K. "We needed to maintain our distinctive identity", he affirms.

Producers realize that only the highest quality tomatoes can compete on the international market. Packing plants like the impressively high-tech Bonny S.A. in Tenerife, place the tomatoes, warm from the greenhouse, in cold storage to stop the

maturation process. From November through the end of May, 150 people check incoming fruit for blemishes and sort according to size. The tomatoes are then brushed clean, washed and dried, separated once again according to quality and then calibrated by photoelectric camera according to the standard 1-12 Dutch color scale or the color scale provided by the customer. Careful temperature regulation before and during ship-

ping ensures that the fruit reaches its destination without significant change in color. Customers may specify package and pallet size as well.

SOIVRE (Official Health Control Inspection) in Tenerife and in Las Palmas carries out further inspections. These portside laboratories analyze samples from tomatoes ready for export using chromatographic readings to ensure that fruit meets

The Canary Islands have a long-standing reputation for producing high quality tomatoes.





## AEROPONICS: PRODUCING TOMATOES OUT OF THIN AIR

San Nicolás de Tolentino, known as La Aldea, has the distinction of being the only town in Spain to make its living exclusively from tomatoes. Nestled in a valley surrounded by dramatic mountains on the western coast of Grand Canary Island, the town's 8,200 inhabitants have not seen a drop of rain in five years.

Celestino Suárez, a passionate advocate of informed innovation and managing director of Copaisan, the town's major tomato cooperative, gave us a guided tour of the cooperative's experimental aeroponic greenhouse. After visiting several conventional greenhouses, the concentrated, humid green profusion of Copaisan's aeroponic plants was a surprise.

Developed by Fernando Longini, an Italian architect, the deceptively simple system allows for permanent cultivation but requires carefully monitored conditions. Short lengths of hollow metal tubing called *husos* (similar to a spindle) are placed one on top of another. The narrow space where one huso nests within the next leaves just enough room to insert a plant, whose roots rest within the slot. Young plants are placed on top, each huso below housing a pro-

gressively more mature plant. The effect is visually akin to entering a forest of tropical tin woodsmen.

After approximately three weeks, depending on the light, the plant is ready to be moved down one slot. When the bottom plant is ready for harvesting its huso is removed, all of the sections are lowered one position and a new plant is placed on top. Plants need no soil and receive their nutrients through the water piped in periodically through the top which filters down to all the plants.

Copaisan has had excellent results with eggplants for two continuous years, and is still working on adapting the system for tomatoes, whose leafier plants prevent sunlight from reaching the fruit on the bottom. Although this affects color, flavor is excellent. At present these tomatoes are available only for local consumption.





AENOR (Spanish Norm Institute) health standards. Most growers also maintain their own laboratories. The elimination of pesticide residues, a high priority issue with consumers, is extremely strict.

Pride in quality, concern for consumer health and the environment, dedication to customer service and a passion for technological innovation... it's a lot to pack into one small fruit. But then again, the Canary Island tomato, like its ripe red color, has always been intense.

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

*Exporters on page 136.*

Native bumblebees are used to cross-pollinate the tomato plants.



## FOOD FOR THE GODS

I asked every Canary Island grower I met to define the perfect tomato. The answer was unanimous.

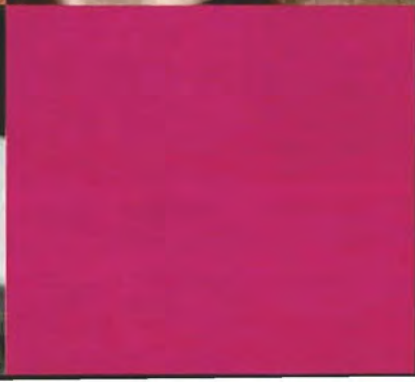
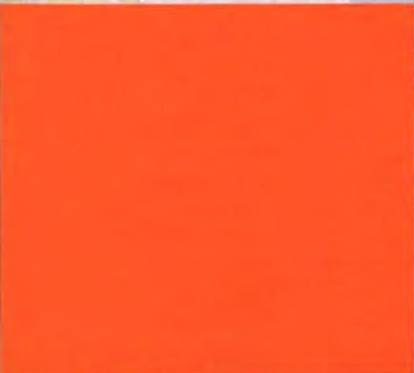
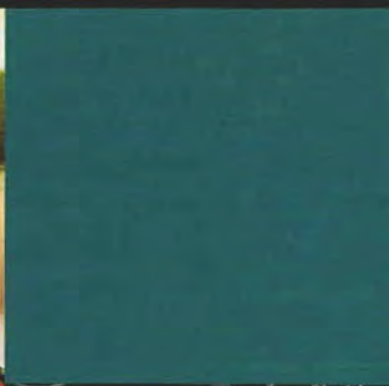
"Round, consistent, not too large, with an intense dark red color that is almost green or purple, and flavor, lots of flavor." This insistence on flavor, sometimes sacrificed in favor of more resistance to traveling long distances, is heard again and again, and for good reason.

Ninety percent of the Canary Islanders eat their tomatoes raw. What's their idea of food for the gods? A perfect tomato, sliced thin, slathered with extra-virgin olive oil and a sprinkling of coarse salt. Simple, direct and delicious. Celestino Suárez, managing director of Copaisan, in San Nicolás de Tolentino, simplifies even further. "When I was a child," he reminisces, "my mother kept tomatoes in a bowl on the table. We simply reached out and ate them like apples. We only began slicing our tomatoes about twenty years ago." Chef David Moraga at El Jable, a restaurant specializing in traditional Canary Island cuisine in San Isidro, Tenerife, pairs raw tomatoes with local cheeses, both fresh and grilled, using simple dressings of grated garlic, olive oil, fresh oregano and coarse salt. Tomato vinaigrette accompanied a succulent piece of grilled pollack fish. He



often garnishes dishes with a tomato comfit, prepared by slow cooking wedges of peeled and seeded tomato in olive oil, a process that brings out the fruit's natural sweetness.

This contrast of sweetness and acidity characterizes some of the more unusual recipes that I found. Bonny offers an interesting one for fried cherry tomatoes with sugar and oregano in their online cookbook ([www.bonny.es](http://www.bonny.es)). Tomato jam, prepared by slow cooking equal parts of tomatoes and sugar with a dash of lemon juice or cinnamon is a staple in local households.



# *The New Spanish Chefs. Part 2*

# Fresh

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TEXT

VICKY HAYWARD

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PHOTOS

TOYA LEGIDO/ICEX

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In the second of two articles on Spain's rising young chefs, we broaden our focus from the Basque Country and Catalonia, to look at other regions where new-wave kitchens are springing up in town and country. We portray seven chefs, each from a different area of Spain, and we look at recurrent themes that lie behind their work: the renovation of Spain's regional cuisines; a shared belief in the importance of a personal cooking style; the pioneering role of the self-taught cooks; and, finally, the belief in friendship as a common bond that is fundamental to their work.



## Who are these Spanish chefs?

Mainly in their twenties and early thirties, all these cooks now run their own kitchens. But they have achieved that independence via different routes. Some fell into cooking by chance and learned on the job, while others searched out a training in top French and Spanish kitchens. Some are chef-proprietors of their own restaurants; others cook in family businesses that have been up and running for generations; a few were offered the chance of running a kitchen by innovative restaurateurs and hoteliers. Whatever the differences, however, they see themselves as a like-minded, albeit scattered, community. "We often joke about the fact that what we really have in common is that we're just a bunch of people who chose to work crazy hours!" (Francis Paniego).



## Where are they working?

All over the place: each of the seven chefs portrayed here cooks in a different region. Round-the-year tourism has helped support clusters of young cooks close to the coast in Asturias, Alicante and Andalusia. Others have chosen to locate themselves in the countryside, or to stay where they were born. Most of them say

there are greater benefits than losses in working outside the main gastronomic circuits and close to the producers. "I want to work here at the roots, at the base of things, close to the suppliers. I'd never want to buy produce by phone. It's good to have your feet on the ground." (Marcelo Tejedor)



## What is their culinary Background?

Their training is very varied, ranging from studying at the new breed of Spanish cookery schools run by town-halls, regions and the state to doing apprenticeships with a string of European master-chefs. "The fact that we have world-level chefs in Spain now who have opened their doors for work practice is vital." (Manuel de la Osa, chef-proprietor of Las Rejas). At the other end of the scale are a group of self-taught chefs, who are strategically important in

the Spanish scene for the original thinking they bring to their cooking. Indeed, the entire group is influenced by an outstanding mentor who is self-taught. "Ferran Adrià is a reference point for everybody because he has created new concepts and set the standards very high without being self-congratulatory. He has made us all aware of how much work there is to do." (Pepe Rodríguez Rey)



## What sets this Group apart

from their Basque and Catalan colleagues?

Since these chefs are outside the main gastronomic circuits, they are often working in areas with little or no tradition of haute cuisine. For the same reason, they often tend to work in greater isolation. "We make the effort to travel to congresses and so on, and we'll drive for hours to eat with colleagues and friends on days off. It's important to get a sense of support." (Aizpea Ohianeder). Their distanced perspective also gives them a particularly free, questioning attitude unattached to established styles, fashions or schools of restaurant cuisine. But, perhaps what sets them apart most of all is geography or, rather, how that is reflected in Spain's extraordinary biodiversity, which gives them very different ranges of produce and local food traditions.



How far are  
they influenced by

# Regional cooking?

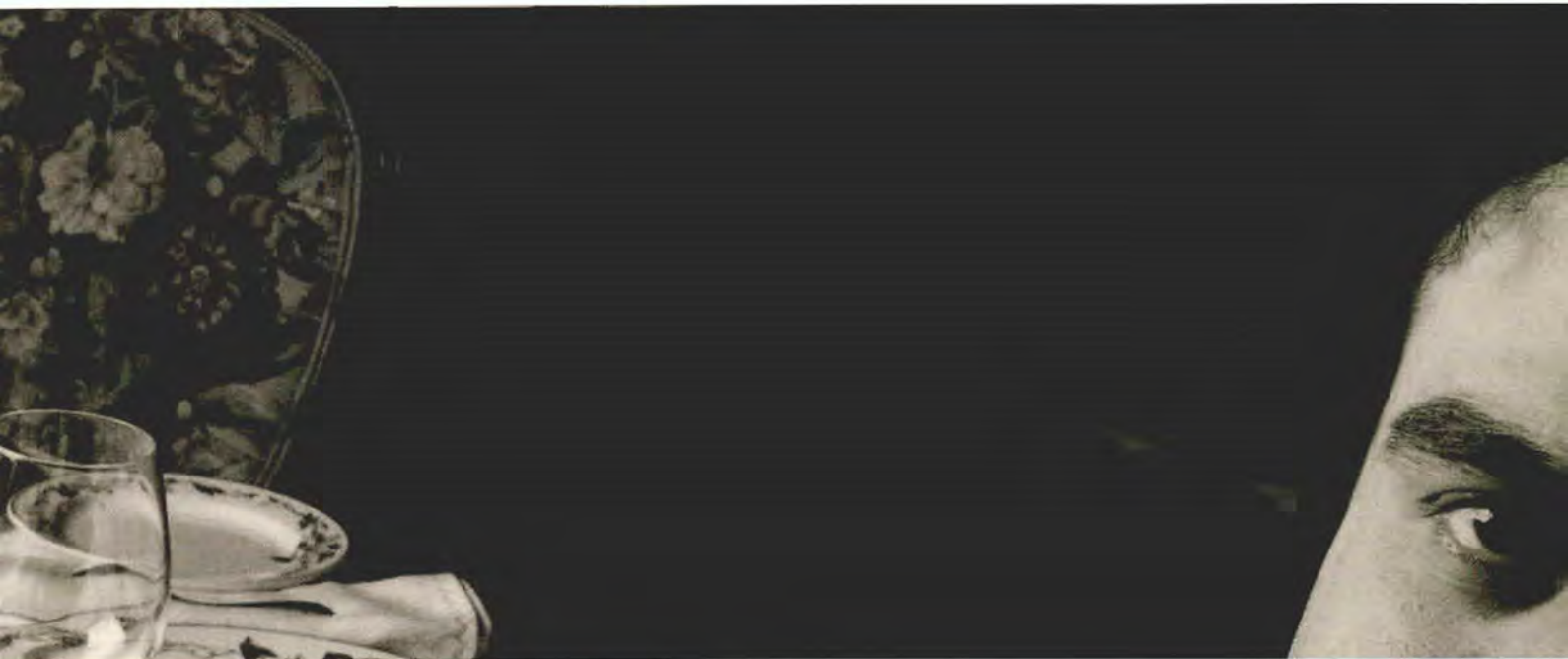
All their cooking is filled with a sense of place. "Here, in Spain, the important thing is that even if you eat with your eyes closed you know where you are." (José Carlos Capel, gastronomic critic of *El País*, the main daily newspaper in Spain) There are various reasons for this: one is that the Spanish have a strong bias towards regional tastes; another is that the produce and traditions of an

unexplored *terroir* provide scope for highly original and exciting menus. Sometimes there is a far deeper, instinctive sense of local tradition and produce that lends character to these young cooks' work. "We play with native tastes from past times. I like to identify that, as a way of balancing the shift to global flavors in many other areas." (José Antonio Campo Viejo)

## What are the Issues on their agenda?

First and foremost, quality of produce. Since these cooks live and work so close to the producers, they are particularly aware of the need to search out and buy their raw materials first-hand from fishermen, growers and rearers. Another important theme is originality. Jacques Maximin's comment, "Creativity is not copying," which Ferran Adrià made famous in Spain, is a

shared ethic. Finally, since they have often built up their clientele from zero, they are especially aware of its importance. "Here there's a sense that there's a quiet revolution going on and everyone can enjoy it. A big part of that is the public. They help, they really appreciate what we're doing and, even, to a certain extent, they provoke it." (José Carlos García Ortíz)



And, last of all,  
what does the  
**Future**  
hold?

"I'm convinced that this movement of chefs will keep on growing and spreading outwards. We may see it happen at two levels: first, in a new breed of eating places whose cooking is based on local produce, and second, in another more expensive type of modern restaurant with top-flight auteur cuisine."  
(José Carlos Capel)

We can expect to see more émigrés, like Aizpea Ohianeder, moving from well-developed gastronomic regions to set off in search of "fresh pastures." And at some point we may well see this group pull together to play an important role in defending the survival and quality of the Spanish produce on which they rely as their raw materials. What is certain is that

this new generation will keep surprising us; their long-term aims may not be what we expect. "At the end of the day, the friendships are what count the most. For me, the idea that we'll be sitting down and having a coffee in the sun together when we're eighty is more important than the achievements."  
(Quique Dacosta)



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# Marcelo Tejedor



When Marcelo Tejedor came home to Galicia after ten years in France he set up his restaurant, Casa Marcelo, a stone's throw from Santiago cathedral. Here, he offers an accessibly priced, no-choice, five-course tasting menu to just over two dozen people at lunch or dinner. Even more unconventionally, he repeats each dish—say a crab and barnacle soup, or sardines stuffed with basil cream and served with a tomato *gazpacho*—only a few times. “It’s my weakness. I love improvising around produce. I go to the fish and vegetable markets to see what is there and decide everything around the produce from one day to the next. I need to cook spontaneously like this, but with professional means.” The lure of the markets may be explained partly by the time he spent hauling crates in Vigo, the thriving Galician port where his father was a fruit wholesaler. But the underlying confidence, skills and commitment necessary to take such risks are explained by his experience: three years working alongside Jacques Maximin and a further year with Alain Ducasse. “I turned up there clutching a Galician cheese, a wine and a pottery statue and he burst out laughing.” Finally, he returned home after another four years running kitchens in Toulouse and Marseilles. “Like Maximin, I understand cooking as something that’s very visceral.



I'm more interested in how to express emotion than technique. The produce tells you everything you need to learn." His style, wherever he is working, is built around regional produce: here, in Santiago, for example, he buys root vegetables and well-grazed native beef and, at the coast, Atlantic fish and seaweed.

His confidence and his philosophy, clearly reflect his time spent abroad. "The Spanish cooks of the 1970s and 1980s have opened a door, but we still have a lot to do to raise everyday standards here right around Spain. My greatest pride is to see how many young people come to the restaurant. Now that's a real marker of change."

**Favorite ingredients:**

"All fresh produce. I am a fanatic about vegetables, things like courgettes (zucchini) with flowers or home-grown herbs. And I am very happy with a way I've discovered for cooking fish at a very low temperature."

## Tuna Fillets in Fig Leaves

"The beauty of this dish lies in the subtlety of the aroma from the fig leaves, which have to be as tender as possible, and the juicy but firm texture of a very fresh bonito."

**Serves 4:**

- 4 tender fig leaves
- 150 g (5 oz) courgettes (zucchini), trimmed
- 1 small onion, skinned
- 1 garlic clove, skinned
- Leaves from a small sprig of thyme
- 4 tuna fillets, each weighing 100 g (3 1/2 oz)
- A few drops of extra-virgin olive oil, for frying
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Maldon salt flakes, to serve

**Parsley vinaigrette:**

- 1 handful of parsley
- 1 garlic clove, skinned
- 1 dsp cider vinegar
- 2 dsps water
- About 200 ml (7 fl oz) extra-virgin olive oil

**Mustard and sherry vinegar vinaigrette:**

- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 2 dsps reduced meat stock
- 1 tsp sherry vinegar
- 6 dsps grapeseed oil
- Salt and pepper

Wash the fig leaves carefully and pat dry. Sauté the sliced courgettes together with the chopped onion, garlic clove and thyme leaves. Season lightly, drain and keep to one side. Puree the parsley, garlic clove, cider vinegar and water for the vinaigrette in a blender. Add the olive oil until you have a smooth emulsion. Season and sieve.

Mix the mustard with the meat stock and vinegar. Emulsify with the grapeseed oil and season.

Spread a spoonful of the sautéed courgettes on each fig leaf, place a tuna fillet on top of that, then spoon more courgette over the fish. Fold in the fig leaf to form a packet. Heat a few drops of olive oil in a heavy-bottomed pan and fry the fish for 3 minutes on both sides. (If you prefer your fish better done, leave it a little longer in the pan.) Serve with the emulsified parsley vinaigrette, extra-virgin olive oil and Maldon salt.

**Recommended wine:**

Marcelo recommends a traditional, unfiltered Albariño from Pedralonga, a small family bodega that uses no sulphur in the vinification.

## Pepe Rodríguez Rey

"I see myself as an eternal apprentice," says Pepe Rodríguez Rey. "I think one day they'll shut me up for being obsessed, like Don Quixote. I go to sleep and wake up reading cook-books." He learned to cook through necessity, aged 23, when his father, who ran the kitchen of El Bohío, the family's roadside restaurant near Toledo, fell ill. Pepe went to work at the stove while his elder brother took over front-of-house. "I got the bug and thought, wow, there's more to this than I realized." His cooking—bold and modern, with clear roots in Castilian provincial cooking—has evolved during a decade of work at El Bohío, with added input from early morning shopping trips to Madrid's wholesale market and summer courses with Spanish and French chefs and *pâtissiers*. "I'm mainly self-taught," he explains, "but that does not mean you do not learn. You need to keep learning all the time." His seasonal dishes play restlessly with color, flavor and decorative ideas, but they also reflect a down-to-earth instinct for good eating. Examples are a tomato *gazpacho*



with a floating crunchy croquette of liquid, hot Manchego cheese; a salad of green leaves bunched in a tubular wafer; a chunky fillet of salt-cod served with an earthy tripe sauce and a thin trail of plum compote. Surprisingly, perhaps, he describes his cooking as “pretty simple.” But his modesty and location outside the main gastronomic circuits are, perhaps, the key to his continuing development. “You have to be very self-critical, look at national and international standards, but at the same time do your own thing,” he says.

*Favorite ingredients:*

“I could pick one, but it wouldn’t be the truth. What I like about cooking is the idea that every kind of produce—fish, meat, vegetables—can be turned into something interesting.”





## Salt-cod Ajoarriero with Manchego, Pine Kernels and Black Olives

"I like dishes that have a renovated sense of tradition, a signature style of lightness combined with depth of flavor. This recipe is based on a very old regional dish traditionally made just with salt-cod, potato, olive oil and garlic. You need to start to make it one to two days ahead of eating."

### Serves 4:

- 250 g (8 oz) salt-cod fillet
- 250 ml (8 fl oz) extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 head of garlic, trimmed but not skinned
- 400 ml (13 fl oz) milk
- 1 1/2 leaves of gelatin, or 3g (1/8 oz) softened in water

### To serve:

- 16 toasted pine kernels
- 8-12 black olives
- 60 g (2 oz) fresh white cheese, optional
- 4-cm (1 1/2-in) thinly cut squares of mature Manchego cheese, rind removed
- Fresh chives or parsley
- Baby croûtons
- A little mild extra-virgin olive oil

Soak the salt-cod in water for 24-36 hours, turning every four hours, and replacing the water two to three times. When the salt is removed, skin the fish. Warm through the olive oil with the garlic over the lowest heat for 15-20 minutes, remove from the heat and leave to infuse.

Gently heat the salt-cod in milk for 10-15 minutes. Remove. Soften the gelatin in a cup of cold water, drain it and dissolve it in the warm milk.

Puree the salt-cod in blender, pour in the milk and then, slowly, beat in the olive oil until you have an emulsified puree. Leave to set in a cool place. Serve the *ajoarriero* slightly chilled or just below room temperature, spooning it on to each plate and scattering the pine kernels, olives and croûtons over the top. If you like, a finish with a trace of beaten fresh white cheese and a little mild olive oil. Prop up a square of Manchego vertically against the mixture.

### Recommended wine:

The El Bohío sommelier would serve a varietal white wine made from the Airén grape native to La Mancha D.O. and Valdepeñas D.O.

## Aizpea Ohianeder and Xabier Díaz

Like many Basque chefs, Aizpea Ohianeder and her partner Xabier Díaz left their native region to find a new cooking *terroir*. They arrived in Extremadura four years ago, aged 23 and 24, invited to run the kitchens at the Hotel Rocamador south of Badajoz. Aizpea had started young. "By the time I was nine, I was getting aprons as birthday presents. Later I tried to construct the equivalent of a university course by working and studying with major chefs." She and Xabier met while they were working together at Arzak. Then she took off for France to work with Michel Bras, who offered her a job, but she turned it down when the chance came up to work at the Rocamador. "We wanted to find a creative challenge together." She says they have now begun to find their own "anti-style," working with a small kitchen team of seven, including a local cook. They work with native animal breeds—local Iberian pork, Merino lamb and Retinto beef—as well as river fish, wild vegetables, and local herbs and spices. "We simply apply what we've learned to local produce. We research it and find out what we can do with it, how it works and reacts. There are so few people working here that it's easy to find your own personal approach without deliberately looking for a style." Their complex constructions—such as a main-course of *carpaccio* mille-feuille with thyme ice cream, marinated local wild earth funghi in red wine glaze, crunchy fatback and curly



endive salad, or local Merino lamb roasted with herb butter and foie gras, served with cumin puree—have earned them a formidable reputation. Aizpea says that working with Xabier imposes an added rigor. “It is really useful to have the discussion, two opinions. Our golden rule is that if one of us really doesn’t like an idea, then it’s vetoed. It’s much better to do that than be forced to do things you don’t believe in.”

#### *Favorite ingredients:*

“Iberian pork: we use the fresh meat and the cured ham in as many ways as possible—not just the prime cuts like the fillet, but also the fatback, trotters and so on. And we look for different ways of using the ham—for example in a cream served with a *jardinière* of sixteen vegetables topped by ham shavings.”

### Salt-cod Cream, Black Olive and Pimentón Brittle, and Bread Sofrito Salad

“We worked out this dish last year, when we were looking for something new to use salt-cod and local ingredients. First we found the way to use the olives, then we built in a *sofrito* of bread and garlic, and finally we hit upon the idea of caramelizing the smoked *pimentón* (a type of paprika from Spain) produced in the north of the region.”

*Serves 6:*

#### *Black olive and pimentón brittle:*

- 60 g (2 oz) black olives, stoned
- 80 g (just over 2 1/2 oz) unsalted butter, diced
- 100 g (3 1/2 oz) plain flour, sifted
- 25 g (3/4 oz) ground almonds

- 40 g (1 1/4 oz) sugar
- 10 ml (2 tsp) liquid glucose

#### *Pimentón syrup:*

- 45 g (1 1/2 oz) sugar
- 6 ml (1 tsp + few drops) glucose
- 100 ml (3 1/2 fl oz) water
- 10 g (just under 1/2 oz) La Vera smoked bittersweet pimentón

#### *Salt-cod cream:*

- 300 g (10 oz) spring onions, trimmed and chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, skinned and sliced
- 25 ml (3/4 fl oz) extra-virgin olive oil
- 220 g (7 1/2 oz) salt-cod, soaked to desalt
- 2 sheets of gelatin or 4 g (1/8 oz) powdered gelatin, softened in water

#### *Bread sofrito:*

- 25 g (3/4 oz) cured ham
- 1 clove of garlic, skinned and sliced
- 1-2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 100 g (3 1/2 oz) dried breadcrumbs
- 25 g (3/4 oz) unsalted butter

Dry the olives for the brittle in a very cool oven (110°C, 225°F, gas mark 1/4) for 8 hours and pulp them in a blender. Measure out 25 g (3/4 oz) of the paste. Use half of it in a short-crust pastry, rubbing it into the flour and dried almonds with the butter. Leave the dough to rest for 2 hours, roll it out and bake on a flat oven-sheet in a moderately warm oven (180°C, 350°F, gas mark 4). When cool, place in the blender and reduce to crumbs.

Slowly heat the sugar and glucose together over low heat and when they become a light golden syrup, stir in the rest of the olive paste. Mix in the same volume of pastry crumbs, stir-

ring over low heat for 20 minutes to give a dough-like consistency. Turn on to baking parchment, roll out and cut into squares with the help of a ruler and pastry cutter.

Make the pimentón syrup: caramelize the sugar and glucose, add the water and pimentón, and cook for 30 seconds. Cool.

Make the salt-cod cream: sweat the spring onions and garlic in the olive oil, add the flaked salt-cod and sauté everything together. Drain off the oil, add the soaked gelatin to the pan, pour everything into the blender and puree. Cool.

Fry the cured ham and garlic for the *sofrito* in oil in a heavy-bottomed frying pan. Remove the ham and garlic, wipe the pan clean, melt the butter in it and sauté the breadcrumbs until golden, stirring in the fried garlic and ham at the end.

Pour a thin line of pimentón syrup on one side of each plate. Alternate in a vertical sandwich small spoonfuls of salt-cod cream with squares of the black olive brittle in the center and place a spoonful of the sofrito on the other side of the plate laying it on a bed of green leaves if you like.

#### *Recommended wine:*

Aizpea and Xabier recommend one of the red wines from Extremadura with body and a balanced acidity, such as Cortereal Platinum, a Cabernet Sauvignon from Tierra de Barros D.O.

# Quique Dacosta



Twelve years ago, when Quique Dacosta started work in the kitchen at El Poblet in Denia, a coastal town in Alicante province, he had no formal cookery training. He explains: "I did not have any real notions of modernity. I looked at certain chefs' way of working, their philosophy, and it made sense to me." A dozen years later, now aged 28, Quique has experience cooking with other chefs—Jacques Chivois and Michel Bras in France, Juan Mari Arzak in the Basque Country, Santi Santamaria and Ferran Adrià in Catalonia—but he remains single-mindedly unattached to any regional cooking or established chef's style. "I'm more interested in the food memories we store away because that opens up much wider possibilities. My main guideline has been

to analyze constantly. Why? How? What could work? I have always wanted to try and develop an entirely personal style and aesthetic." Four years ago he stopped reading recipes to avoid other people's influence. Today, backed by a dozen-strong kitchen team and starting work on his own book, his menu revels in Spain's full range of produce, which he combines in unexpected, modern but never gimmicky ways: there may be Galician oysters sheened by an Albariño wine gelée and served with apple granita; or Atlantic clams baked in salt and served with Navarrese *jardinière* of vegetables; or a garlic soup with tastebombs of local lobster and black pudding floating in it; or fresh tuna with a sunflower-seed variation of Catalan *romesco* sauce. "First comes

the produce, then the imagination, and then the technique," he says without hesitation. "The last two should never come first." Nevertheless, his cooking uses very varied techniques and is full of imaginative attention to detail. "I think our generation wants to say something through our cooking, even if it's just about the smell of the sea that day or of the herbs on the mountain, or the market where you've shopped in the morning. It's not so much that we're looking for anything new, but more that we're conscious there's a lot to do."

#### *Favorite ingredients:*

"My caviar is sea urchins, when they're fresh and in season, with that wonderful sweet taste of the sea."



## Knuckle of Ham with Warm Ham Gelée and Fresh Pea Sauce

"If possible, I make this with smoked Iberian pork hams. The lettuce hearts bring a reminder of green earthy flavors and lift all the dish's textures."

*Serves 4:*

- 2 knuckles of smoked ham
- 2 garlic cloves, skinned
- 1 carrot, peeled
- 1 cardoon or celery stalk
- 2 leeks, trimmed

*Gelée:*

- 500 ml (16 fl oz) water
- 250 g (8 oz) ham bones
- 1/4 onion, skinned
- 1/4 leek, trimmed
- 60 g (2 oz) dried chickpeas, soaked in cold water
- 120 g (4 oz) boiling fowl or chicken bones
- 1/2 Tudela or Little Gem lettuce (or lettuce heart)
- 1 small sprig of thyme
- 1/2 garlic clove, skinned
- 4 g (1/8 oz) agar

*Pea sauce:*

- 1 leek, trimmed
- 1 onion, skinned
- 1/2 garlic clove, skinned
- 1 small sprig of thyme
- 120 g (4 oz) fresh peas
- 120 g (4 oz) snow peas
- 25 g (3/4 oz) cured ham fat (Iberian, if possible)
- 750 ml (1 1/2 pts) chicken or vegetable stock
- Salt, to taste

*Crunchy ham and vegetables:*

- 2 slices cured Iberian ham, diced
- 1 tsp toasted pine kernels
- 1 dsp sautéed baby peas
- 2 tsps finely chopped onion
- 8 leaves of Swiss chard

Cover the ham knuckles with water and simmer with the garlic and flavoring vegetables for 1 1/2 hours. Remove from the heat; leave the knuckles to keep warm in the stock. Put the ham bones and flavoring ingredients for the gelée in a large pan with the water, bring to a boil and simmer for 2 hours. Cool and scrape off the solidified fat on the surface of the stock, measure out 400 ml (1 1/2 pts) of it and clarify. Warm a cupful of the consommé, soften the agar in it and return to the pan. Spoon 30 ml (2 tbsp) of consommé into each deep plate and leave to cool until shortly before serving.

Make the green pea sauce. Sweat the leek, onion, garlic and thyme in the ham fat, and moisten with the stock. Simmer for 10 minutes, add the peas and the snowpeas, and cook for 3 minutes. Puree in a food-blender. Sieve, check the salt and keep warm. Shortly before serving, remove the ham joints from the stock, drain them well and cut off the meat. Keep warm. Dry-fry the diced cured ham in a very hot non-stick frying pan until browned and crunchy. Keep warm. Heat through the plates gently in a very cool oven (60°C, 125°F) so the gelatin reaches around 45°C, 113°F. Put about 25 g (1 oz) boiled ham on top

of each plate, and scatter the sautéed baby peas, snow peas and finely chopped onion around it. Place the crunchy fried ham and Swiss chard leaf to one side. Serve the pea sauce separately in small 60 ml (2 fl oz) glass mugs.

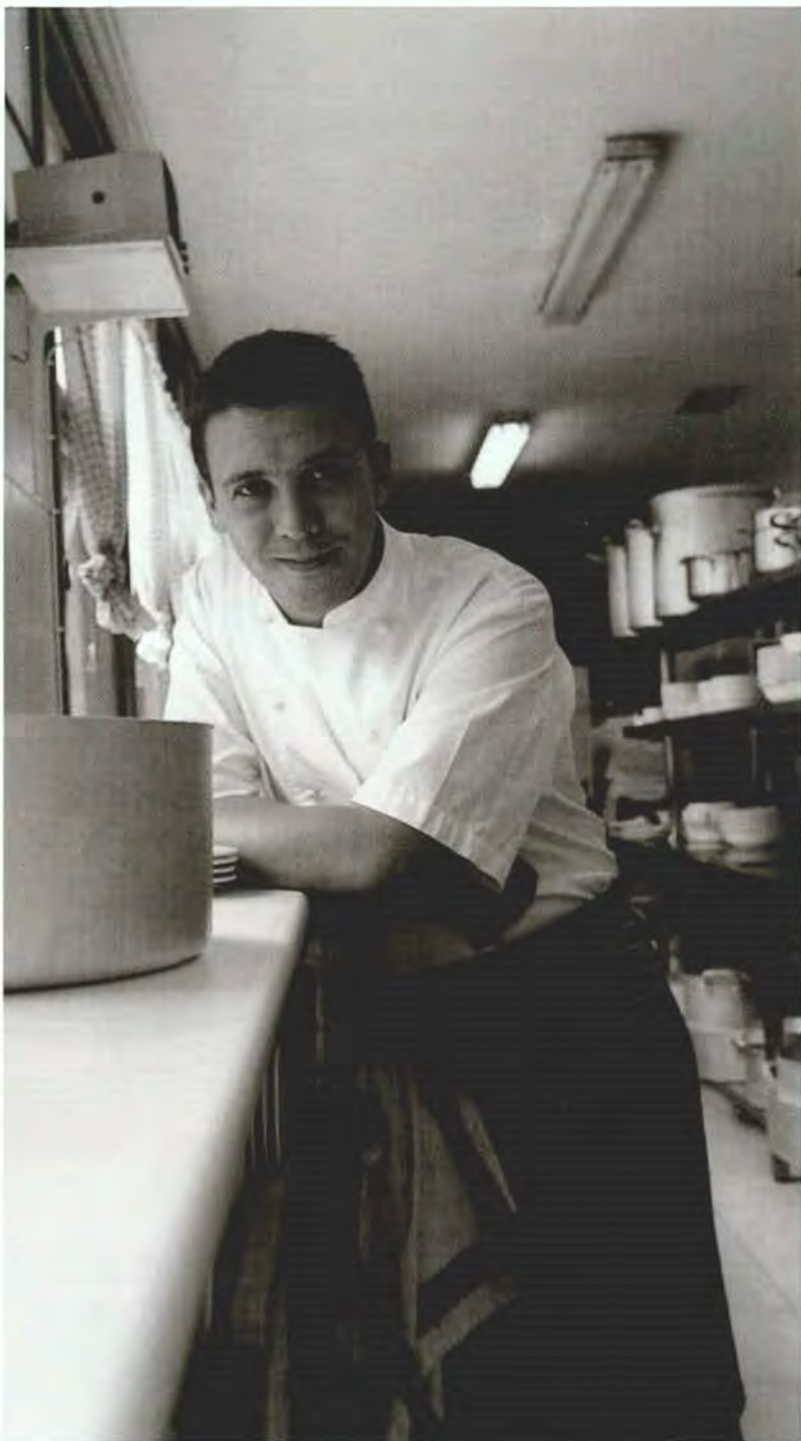
*Recommended wine:*

Quique recommends a red wine with red fruit flavors but not so powerful that it competes with the dish's personality: on home ground, for example, he would serve local winemaker Enrique Mendoza's Alicante D.O. Cabernet Sauvignon Crianza, produced at nearby Alfaz del Pi.

# Francis Paniego

"I wanted to be like my mother and grandmother from a very young age," says Francis Paniego. "I don't think it is very useful to talk about a vocation. Let's just say that I never wanted to escape the family restaurant." Aged 33, chef-proprietor of Echaurren, in La Rioja, he grew up in the kitchen of the family's cooking inn where his grandmother and his mother, Marisa Sánchez, both cooked before him. He studied at Madrid's cooking school and worked his way up through a series of restaurant apprenticeships, the final one with French maestro Fernand Arrambide in St. Jean Pied de Port. "I didn't really plan my career. I simply did what I could to work in the best kitchens. I worked really, really hard and I soaked up a lot in each place." In 1988, back at Echaurren, he scooped a major regional and national award for his style, an interface between traditional and modern cooking. Today he runs the kitchen, working alongside his mother. "I suppose my cooking is a personal vision of passing on the family tradition, but looked at in a different way," he comments. "It is a very regional point of view: it cannot be any other way in Spain. There isn't any cultural fusion here." For him, it is the idea rather than the produce that pulls together a dish.

"Sometimes, for example, you want to provoke people, particularly very orthodox gourmets, to make them smile. We serve pig's ear, snout and tripe, but the pig's ear is in a wine vinegar gelée, and the tripe is cut into ribbons like tagliatelli." In this sense, he says, it is not family tradition but the excitement of the new that motivates him. "There's a huge



unexplored potential in Spanish cooking because of the biodiversity, the ingredients. I think that's why our generation feels excited. There's so much to do. We're out there in virgin territory."

**Favorite ingredients:**

"The best thing I've ever done is olive oil aromatized with wood-smoke from vine shoots. I had spent years looking for a way to capture the aroma and flavor of Riojan grilling. Finally, inspired by Adrià, I hit upon the idea of smoking very pale-flavored olive oil in a pressure cooker for 24 hours. And it worked!"

## Langoustines Dressed with Tomato Tartare and Fried Dates

"The microwave oven is a kitchen tool that does not enjoy a lot of popularity among gourmets, and they are right in that it has been used indiscriminately and, in some cases, has destroyed good food. But it is perfect for this sauce because it allows us to extract the juices from the langoustines' heads. The langoustines can be chosen or adapted to whatever is available locally."

**Serves 4:**

- 12 langoustines
- Large pinch of finely ground sea salt
- 1-2 tbsp desiccated coconut
- Extra-virgin olive oil, for shallow-frying

**Tomato tartare:**

- 100 g (3 1/2 oz) tomato, diced
- 25 g (3/4 oz) preserved dates, chopped
- 250 ml (8 fl oz) extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 onion, skinned, chopped into julienne and browned
- 1/2 handful of trimmed and chopped spring onions
- Splash of Worcestershire Sauce
- Table salt, to taste



*Sauce:*

- Langoustine shells
- A little water
- Splash of extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp pine kernels
- 1 tbsp slivered almonds

*To serve:*

- 4 preserved dates, stoned and very finely diced
- Mix together all the ingredients for the tomato tartare and leave the flavors to blend.

Peel the langoustines (reserve the shells), remove the thin strip running down each one's back and divide them between four brochettes, piercing three langoustines on each. Season with salt and coconut.

Place the langoustine shells in a microwave dish, add a little water and a splash of extra-virgin olive oil. Cook in a microwave for three minutes at high temperature. Sieve and whisk to emulsify. Sauté the pine kernels and almonds until golden in a little olive oil in a heavy-based frying pan, and drain the nuts well (keep the pan with the oil). Pour some of the langoustine stock over the nuts to infuse with their flavors. Strain the sauce, keep it warm and reserve the nuts. Shallow-fry the langoustines briefly—for about 15 seconds—in very hot olive oil. Remove, drain briefly on kitchen paper towel and pass quickly through a hot oven (230°C, 450°F, gas mark 8).

Meanwhile, fry the date slices in the olive oil until crunchy and drain on kitchen paper-towels. Shape the tomato tartare (at room temperature) in a high-sided ring mold on each plate. Remove the brochettes from the oven and place one on each plate, next to the tartare. Moisten the brochette and tartare with the prawn stock and garnish with the dates, almonds and pine kernels.

*Recommended wine:*

Francis says there is only one possibility: a red Rioja Reserva made with 100 percent Tempranillo grapes.





"I'm trying to convey a certain simplicity, but an exacting one," says José Carlos García Ortiz, who grew up at his parents' restaurant, the Café de Paris, in Málaga, and has cooked there since 1997. He studied at a cookery school in Málaga and worked with a series of Spanish and French maestros such as Martín Berasategui ("because of his philosophy"), Michel Bras ("for the way he expresses something through food") and Joan Roca ("his system of work is so interesting"). But he says he was also lucky that he had helped out his parents as a teenager before his training. "That way you know what you need to learn," he laughs. His cooking since he took over the restaurant reflects his Andalusian roots in a deeply felt way, with everyday local products and dishes—like sardines, gazpachos, chickpeas and artichokes—given the same respect as the prized luscious local prawns, and langoustines. Three of the gazpachos are an example: gelled red gazpacho, cut into cubes and served as an *aperitivo*; white almond *ajo blanco*, served with a small scoop of red wine granita; and a melon soup, lightly enriched with mayonnaise. "I like to use simple, cheap ingredients in dishes which run through flavors from sweet to bitter and acid. He also cites as an influence "everything that works against stress: yoga and zen, for example, or doing things with the right eye for detail, like leaving

## José Carlos García Ortiz

the restaurant perfect at night with the spoons polished and the bottles of olive oil full. I don't want sophistication and protocol." He says he still finds some time for pleasures like motor-biking and swimming, but recognizes he has chosen a dedicated profession.

"If our generation of chefs has one thing in common, it is really that we've accepted a way of life. It's work, work, work. But there's a real camaraderie, the same feeling there is between motorbikers. You'd always stop by the side of the road to help your buddy."

### *Favorite ingredients:*

"I'm very drawn to sweetness from fruit rather than sugar—for example, quince or apple or sweet potato with pork. And I work with three types of olive oil. You do not need any more than that."



## Marinated Sardine and Pumpkin Jam Coca with Pistachios and Almond Gazpacho Sorbet

"This *coca*, something like a Spanish Mediterranean pizza, is inspired by the grilled sardines we eat on the beach here in Málaga. I like it because it is based on simple, cheap ingredients. Nearly all the other elements can also be found in popular cooking here."

### Serves 4:

- 1 kg (2 lb) fresh sardines, filleted
- 600 ml (20 fl oz) wine vinegar
- 150 ml (5 fl oz) water
- 60 g (2 oz) sea salt
- 3-4 tbsp angel's hair or other pumpkin jam
- Hojiblanca varietal olive oil, for shallow-frying
- Large pinch of Maldon salt flakes
- 10 ml (2 tsp) sherry vinegar

### Pastry:

- 500 g (1 lb) patisserie flour
- 20 g (just over 1/2 oz) fresh yeast, dissolved in warm water
- 5 g (1/8 oz) fine cooking salt
- 200 ml (7 fl oz) cold water
- 25 ml (3/4 fl oz) Hojiblanca varietal extra-virgin olive oil

### Vinaigrette:

- 7 g (1/4 oz) skinned green pistachios, chopped
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) homemade thick tomato and onion sofrito
- 60 ml (4 tbsp) Hojiblanca varietal extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp chopped spring onion

### Almond gazpacho sorbet:

- 250 g (8 oz) shelled and skinned almonds

- 2 garlic cloves, green shoots removed
- 2 thick slices of country bread, crusts removed, soaked in cold water and squeezed dry
- 300 ml (10 fl oz) extra-virgin olive oil, 0.4° acidity
- 50 ml (just over 1 1/2 fl oz) grapeseed oil
- 150 ml (5 fl oz) cold water
- Sherry vinegar, to taste
- Salt, to taste
- A sprig of fresh herbs

Make the pastry: work the water, oil and fresh yeast into the flour by hand or with a mixer and knead the dough until it is elastic and smooth. Leave to rise in a warm place (40°C, 104°F) for 30 minutes, knead again and roll out thinly into a large rectangle to fit a baking sheet (use any remaining pastry for a second sheet). Cover with a damp cloth to avoid drying out and leave to rise again at 40°C (104°F), for 20-30 minutes. Spread a thin layer of pumpkin jam over the center, leaving the edges as a border, and bake in a warm oven (170°C/340°F, gas mark 3-4) for 8 minutes or until just golden. Cool. Marinate the sardines in the vinegar, water and salt for 10 minutes, or until just white on top. Dry them well on kitchen paper towels, fry quickly in olive oil to leave the centers slightly raw and cut them across into slices revealing the white center. Mix all the ingredients for the vinaigrette. Mince or grind the raw almonds, garlic and dampened bread dough for the gazpacho, whisking in the olive and grapeseed oil as if for a mayonnaise. Dilute to a gazpacho-like consistency (like thickened milk) and add salt and vinegar. Keep

very cold. Make into ice cream; it should be set but creamy at the time of eating.

Lay the sardine slices over the pastry and dress them with a little sherry vinegar and Maldon salt. Serve the coca, sliced, on plates with drops of the vinaigrette around the coca. Spoon a small scoop of gazpacho sorbet on top and decorate with a sprig of herbs.

### Recommended wine:

In the restaurant, José Carlos' own recommendation to clients for dishes like this one, with raw fish and a wide range of flavor tones, is a light, fruity Penedès with enough underlying body to balance the stronger flavors.

# José Antonio Campoviejo



"I've always thought that when people go out to eat, they should be able to try things they cannot make at home," says José Antonio Campoviejo. "And there's another side to that: how am I ever going to make a *pote*, an Asturian pot-au-feu, as well as my grandmother?" José Antonio has worked that logic through his cooking, which he first learned while he was doing his military service and then in a restaurant in a western Asturian village called Arriondas. "Things went well and so my girlfriend, Yolanda, and I thought we'd set up here on our own in 1997. At first it wasn't easy. We had problems paying the rent. We went hungry." Now the pioneering years

are over: their Michelin-starred restaurant El Corral del Indianu with a dozen people in the kitchen, is a gastronomic landmark famed for modern but rooted Asturian cooking. A good example is, precisely, José Antonio's *pote Asturiano*, which he worked out at home, deconstructing the traditional weighty *pot-au-feu* to a plateful of black pudding mousse, geléed pig's ear, a slice of ham, a few buttery beans, a fatback and pig's tail ravioli, all sitting on a pool of thickened pot juices laced by a trail of chorizo-flavored oil. José Antonio—now aged 34—says that eating trips elsewhere are important to help give perspective, but that feedback from Yolanda,

friends and a trio of other young Asturian chefs have been the key in helping to set the pace. "It's great to have other chefs there so you are not alone. We have certain similarities of style and we're very close friends now." But he reserves his greatest admiration for his clients. "People who only ever wanted two kilos of lamb chops have become really discriminating eaters. I'd even say they're ahead of what we're doing in the kitchen, and I think that's something to applaud."

#### *Favorite ingredients:*

"The local salmon from the River Sella, just a few yards from the restaurant, is wonderful."

## Geléed Oyster Soup with Trout's Eggs, Fennel Ice Cream and Orange Granita

"I was looking for a cold summer soup when I came up with this recipe. At the same time I was interested in a fish soup which keeps all the flavor of the shellfish and avoids overcooking it. It is best made a day ahead of eating it."

### Serves 4:

- 4 fine oysters, in the shell
- 45 g (1 1/2 oz) trouts' eggs
- 1 leaf gelatin or 2 g powdered gelatin, softened in water
- Finely chopped fresh chives and/or parsley

### Orange granita:

- Juice of 4 freshly squeezed oranges
- 16 fresh chive stalks
- 8 Maldon salt flakes

### Fennel ice cream:

- 100 ml (3 1/2 fl oz) crème anglaise
- 45 ml (1 1/2 fl oz) natural yoghurt
- 3 stalks fresh fennel leaves

Open the oysters: reserve them and their juice. Leave the shells to soak for an hour in water to cover—no more than 200 ml (7 fl oz)—and stir the reserved oyster juice into it. Set into a light gelée with the gelatin. Stir in the trouts' eggs and sprinkle with a few chopped chives and/or parsley. Choose four open, deep soup plates, cover the base of each with a thin layer of the gelée and reserve, chilled, in the fridge until you are ready to serve.

Make the *granita*: freeze the orange juice with the chives and salt, stirring the granita around the edge into the center and beating it with a fork or electric blender at least three times to break up the ice crystals. Mix together the crème anglaise, yoghurt and finely chopped fennel to make the fennel ice cream, using either an ice cream maker or a metal dish in the deep-freeze.

When you are ready to serve the soup, remove the plates with the gelée from the fridge. Put an oyster, a quenelle-shaped spoonful of fennel ice cream and small teaspoonfuls of the granita on each one.

### Recommended wine:

José Antonio says that no wine is needed with the dish, as it can drown the subtle flavor of the clams, but that a delicate white—for example, a Rueda, 100 percent varietal Verdejo—would be the right match for wine drinkers.





## THE SELF TAUGHT CHEF: MANOLO DE LA OSA

Las Pedroñeas, a small garlic-growing town sitting on the main road south through Castile's flatlands, may seem a strange place to find one of Spain's most respected chefs and restaurants. But Manolo de la Osa, chef-proprietor of Las Rejas, is clear that he will never leave his hometown. "I learned to cook here, making the traditional dishes that my grandmother and aunts served in their restaurant. This is where I want to work. This is my *terroir*. I like the landscape, the peace and quiet, the people. I need to know what flavors are being lost and what the producers are doing. My work is a distillation of those things." De la Osa,

now aged 44, is a much admired figure within the restaurant world, not only for his personal vision of cooking—see, for example, his recipes in *Spain Gourmetour* Nos. 39 and 50—but also for the underlying values: his dogged support for local producers, the unflagging research that informs his cooking, his modesty and openness with other chefs. Many younger cooks have done practical work at Las Rejas, but, more importantly, Manolo has provided the proof that a self-taught chef can still measure up against the best of the rest. He suggests why. "There is a stage when you need information, from your family,

a cooking school, working with other chefs, traveling or reading. You can choose how you get it. But there is another stage, equally important, during which you need to escape all that and focus on ideas of your own, to search for your own flavors." He is optimistic about the take-off of such a vibrant young Spanish restaurant culture, but hopes that along the way the chefs will find more time to group together and act on such issues as guaranteeing the survival of quality produce.

## BUBBLING UNDER: NAMES TO WATCH

Ten more young chefs to watch over the coming years.

### Raul Aleixandre

Aged 29, and now running the kitchen of Ca'Sento, his parents' fish and shellfish restaurant in Valencia, Aleixandre is applying modern approaches to their premier quality seafood and coming up with wonderfully creative dishes.

### Carmelo Bosque

Cooking at Lillas Pastia in the Aragonese city of Huesca, Carmelo Bosque, aged 32, brings a sharp-edged, modern, complex approach to his native traditional Aragonese cooking and local produce, such as lamb, around which he is developing new dishes.

### Carlos Gamonal Jr

Carlos' father pioneered the renaissance of Canarian cooking twenty years ago at his restaurant, Mesón El Drago, in Tenerife, and his award-winning son Carlos, aged 29, joined him six years ago in the kitchen there, bringing in bright new ideas drawn from his experience in French, Swiss and Spanish restaurants.

### Dani García

Marbella-born and trained at cookery school, then in the Basque Country,

this 25-year-old chef took over the kitchens at Tragabuche, in Ronda, Málaga, a year ago and has consolidated its reputation with his streamlined modern version of Andalusian dishes, highlighting its latent sweet and salty contrasts.

### Andrés Madrigal

The imaginative cooking of this multi-talented photographer and self-taught chef, who cooks at Balzac, combines Provençal and classical influences with the cooking of Madrid, his native city, and an instinctive flair for aromas, textures and flavors.

### Nacho Manzano

After eight years learning his craft, Manzano took over his parents' restaurant Casa Marcial in the western Asturian village of Arriondas in 1993. Since then, working with his sister, he has been distilling a personal style full of surprising contrasts of texture, but clean harmonies of flavor.

### Pedro Martino

Chef-proprietor of El Cabroncín, buried in the heart of a small village close to the Asturian capital Oviedo, Martín, aged 30, is honing his own modern style, cosmopolitan and informed by that of other great chefs, but highly original in its use of local produce.

### Luis Mari Rodero

Known to his colleagues as Koldo, this self-taught cook has spent nearly 20 years pioneering the renovation of regional cooking at his parents' restaurant Rodero in Pamplona, Navarre. Eating with chef-friends in the Basque country has been, he says, his most important learning experience.

### Paco Roncero

Still aged only 31, Roncero trained at local cooking school and worked his way up in the kitchen of Madrid's Casino. He now runs its restaurant and catering, both under the eye of Ferran Adrià. But his approach is slightly distanced with a more classical cut to the modern creative edge.

### Miguel Ruiz

Alicantino by birth, Ruiz was a late starter—he began his training at the age of 27 and is now 39—but by conviction and spirit he belongs to the younger generation and, now launched at his own restaurant, he is beginning to make waves with reworkings of his mother's Valencian dishes and other Mediterranean cuisine at La Seu, in Moraira.



## FEATURED COOKS: THE FACTS

**Andalusia**

**José Carlos García Ortíz**  
*Café de Paris*  
Velez Málaga, 8, Málaga.  
Tel: (34) 952 225 043  
www.cafedeparis.es

**Asturias**

**José Antonio Campo Viejo**  
*El Corral del Indianu*  
Av Europa, 14. Arriondas (Oviedo).  
Tel: (34) 985 841 072

**Castilla La Mancha**

**Pepe Rodríguez Rey**  
*El Bohío*  
Av Castilla-La Mancha, 81, Illescas  
(Toledo). Tel: (34) 925 511 126  
www.elbohio@arrakis.es

**Extremadura**

**Aizpea Ohianeder and Xabier Díaz**  
*Monasterio de Rocamador*  
Ctra Nacional Badajoz-Huelva,  
km 41 (Badajóz).  
Tel: (34) 924 489 000  
www.rocamador.com

**Galicia**

**Marcelo Tejedor**  
*Casa Marcelo*  
Rua Hortas 1, Santiago  
de Compostela (A Coruña).  
Tel: (34) 981 558 580  
www.casamarcelo.net

**La Rioja**

**Francis Paniego**  
*Echaurren*  
Heroes del Alcázar, 2, Ezcaray.  
Tel: (34) 941 354 047  
www.echaurren.com

**Levante (Valencian Region)**

**Quique Dacosta**  
*El Poblet*  
Ctra Les Marines, km 2.5,  
Urb El Poblet, Denia (Alicante).  
Tel: (34) 965 784 179  
Ring (34) 966 421 441 after 3:30  
or 4:00 p.m.

## Further Reading

**Cocina de Asturias**

(Asturian Cooking), José Antonio Campo Viejo and others, Nobel, Oviedo, 2001. A compilation of recipes by a trio of young Asturian chefs.

**El gran libro del aceite de oliva**

(The Big Book of Olive Oil) ed. José Carlos Capel, Cajamar, Madrid. The recipes from 58 cooks include contributions from Francis Paniego and José Carlos García Ortíz.

**La Cocina del Vino y los Cinco Sentidos: Tradición y Modernidad** (Cooking with Wine and the Five Senses. Tradition and Modernity) Francis Paniego and Marisa Sánchez, Gobierno de La Rioja, 2000. Mother and son cover new and old cooking at Echaurren.

**Recetas de Porcelana. Creatividad en la joven cocina del nuevo milenio** (Recipes from Porcelana. Creativity in Young Cooking for the New Millennium.) ed. Mikel Corcuera, SPAM Servicios, SA, San Sebastián, 2000. An excellent book with portraits, biographies and recipes from sixty young chefs around Spain.



Jesús Garzón

We all have dreams, but few people have the passion and the drive to devote their lives to making them come true. Our 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.

## MOVING

In this issue we meet naturalist Jesús Garzón Heydt, whose life’s work has been dedicated not only to protecting native Spanish species such as the imperial eagle, black vulture and Iberian lynx, but also to reinstating the age-old practice of transhumance, the foundation of Spain’s rich ecology.

# FOR THE

*21st Century  
Quixotes. Part 2*

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TEXT

CARLOS TEJERO

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TRANSLATION

HAWYS PRITCHARD

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PHOTOS

MATIAS COSTA/ICEX

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Even before we actually meet, I gather that Jesús Garzón is a committed conversationalist: when he arrives by taxi, I observe him engaged in several minutes of animated chat with his driver before getting out of the car. My suspicions are confirmed as soon our interview begins. Garzón talks a lot and talks well. He communicates his passion for what he does through a torrent of talk which is nonetheless ordered and coherent, and which embraces history, anthropology, biology, economics, gastronomy... Complementary disciplines which could be summed up in one word—Life. Had he chosen to be a teacher, Garzón would have been one of those engaging, approachable figures who imbue their students with an appetite for life.

Jesús Garzón was born 55 years ago in Madrid, but spent his early childhood partly in Cantabria and partly in Extremadura, both of which were subsequently to provide the primary scenarios for his work. His German grandfather bequeathed him a copious library, particularly strong in biology and natural history, which Jesús consumed without delay. He worked with other Spanish ecologists such as Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente, whose 1970s television series opened up the world of flora and fauna to the Spanish public, and Javier Castroviejo, one of the directors of Doñana National Park and the mainspring behind the creation of Monfragüe Natural Park (in Cáceres, southwest Spain). Last year, Garzón was among the recipients of

a prestigious Slow Food Award. The Slow Food Organization, based in Bologna, Italy has 65,000 members worldwide, and its aim could be summed up as championing the production of quality food and its rational consumption while according maximum respect to the environment.

The practice of transhumance consists in herding livestock alternately from lowland pastures which are poor in summer but rich in the winter, to uplands which are cold and inhospitable in winter but fertile in summer. For Jesús Garzón, moving animals in this way in spring and autumn constitutes: "the only efficient method of using natural resources without harming the ecosystem."

"Transhumance was a natural, spontaneous phenomenon among wild herbivores before Man came on the scene. Later, when humans began to domesticate them, they simply capitalized on those habits, driving the livestock along the same routes."

Why is transhumance so important in Spain? "Transhumance is not exclusive to Spain; it is practiced in all places where there are marked climatic differences. But what makes transhumance different in Spain from elsewhere is that it is distinguished by a specific set of laws dating back to the 13th century. No other country in the world has laws protective of transhumants, nor such an extensive and regulated network of livestock tracks as Spain does."

Jesús Garzón's interest in transhumance was triggered by the Río de Janeiro Earth Summit organized by

the U.N. in 1992. For the first time in history, representatives of all governments in the world came together to debate and agree on measures to protect biodiversity. "Until ten years ago, transhumance was considered an outdated practice. But, thanks to the summit, we no longer discuss whether or not things are modern, but whether they are sustainable and viable in the long term. Practices such as transhumance, which have been sustained throughout history without damaging the environment, are viable. It was on this basis that the summit issued an appeal, subscribed to by all countries in the world, for indigenous peoples to be respected and for their knowledge to be conserved, for it is in them, and in protecting the ecosystems in which they have evolved, that Mankind's future lies. Society today is very modern but no one knows how long it's going to last." This is the theory of sustainable development, an increasingly widespread concept: modern societies—taking that to mean the predominant societies of industrialized nations—are based on a finite model insofar as they threaten future generations' access to those resources which guarantee quality of life. So the nations of the world have committed themselves to protecting biodiversity, but what solutions can we, our own country, contribute? "Spain's part is to protect its livestock routes, transhumance and the popular culture related not only thereto but to the rural world as a whole, which is still very much alive and which we



are still in time to preserve. Bear in mind that a large majority of Spaniards, aged between 60 and 80, were born at a time when there was no electric light, telephones or cars. These people are the repositories of lore which connects us to our ancestors thousands of years ago, given that there was not that much difference between the resources available to them and the survival techniques they used. We cannot allow this lore to disappear—it could serve us well in the future."

## Transhumance and Development

For many centuries, transhumance in Spain was a vivid example of how economic progress and respect for biodiversity could be compatible. In 1273, King Alfonso X formulated the *Leyes de la Mesta* (Mesta Laws) to protect the interests of livestock owners and herders (who formed local associations known as *mestas*, hence the overall name). For centuries, livestock farmers and herds-men were a privileged social class. And they were by no means alone in this, for the whole of Spain developed into a world power on the strength of the wealth generated, in one way or another, by shifting five million head of cattle and sheep around the network of livestock tracks (known by different names—*cañadas*, *cordeles*, *veredas*...) which crisscrossed the whole country. As domestic and foreign trade

evolved, so guilds of, for example, merchants, carters and shippers came into being. The State derived a regular, fixed income from the taxes and tolls levied on livestock farmers. Spain dominated the international wool trade—Spanish fleeces were renowned. By facilitating contact and trade among people from different regions, transhumance also influenced the linguistic unification of the country and the standardization of weights and measures.

"This whole system was thrown into chaos by the invasion of the French (during the Peninsular War 1808-1814). Then at the end of the 19th century the growth of the railway accelerated the abandonment of transhumance. Little by little, herds stopped using the tracks. The watering and resting places which punctuated them every ten miles were illegally appropriated by townships or private individuals." In the 20th century, roads and big public works gradually invaded and fragmented the cattle track network. Around the 1950s, these problems, combined with increased road transport, caused livestock farmers to abandon transhumance on the hoof almost entirely.

"Transporting cattle and sheep by truck was soon followed by another effect: leaving herds and flocks *in situ* all year round, it being more convenient for farmers to bring fodder and water to the farm than to herd their animals to pasture." Transhumant herds were replaced by static ones which, though apparently

in tune with the logic of progress, "triggered an ecological catastrophe. The disappearance of transhumance also meant the disappearance of great green corridors used by wildlife; wolves, which used to stalk the flocks along their tracks, became almost extinct in southern Spain, and other species such as the imperial eagle and the vulture were similarly affected; intensive grazing caused grass and tree species such as the ilex and cork oak to disappear, which in turn affected the snake and insect population and, at the end of the chain, the birds which live on them; depletion of vegetation cover allowed erosion by rain to set in, and so on and so on."

## Transhumance Today

Despite this dispiriting overview, transhumance has not died out completely in Spain. Though there is still a lot of convincing to be done, public authorities have become aware of the issue thanks to fighters like Jesús Garzón, among other factors. In 1995, for example, the Spanish Parliament passed a new "Cattle Track Law" which protects the tracks as "property in the public domain (which are) inalienable, imprescriptible and inembargable and whose primary use is reserved for the movement of cattle." Currently, a million head of cattle (some three percent of Spain's total) make use of the network "but only for short

distances, taking no more than a week or ten days. Long distance transhumance, with routes taking longer than a month, died out fifty years ago and is only practiced today by our *Trashumancia y Naturaleza* (Transhumance and Nature) Association in conjunction with our stockbreeder colleagues."

Jesús Garzón created the Spanish branch of the Transhumance and Nature Association—which also has branches in Switzerland and the Netherlands—in 1993, with three million borrowed sheep. Today, it has its own flocks, acquired through altruistic donations by the likes of Prince Bernard of the Netherlands and Luc Hoffman, director of the Camargue Reserve in France. Its activities have gradually impinged on social awareness, largely thanks to media coverage of Garzón and his collaborators' annual invasion of central Madrid with their herds, exercising their right of way along the livestock route to Extremadura from the mountains of Cantabria or León. *Trashumancia y Naturaleza* came into being under the auspices of the European Natura 2000 program, "but community subsidies ran out in 1997 and since then we have received hardly any support from central or regional governments at home. All our money comes from private donations, which are not enough to cover the costs of our activities. Were we to devote ourselves exclusively to livestock, stockbreeders would make a profit, but our operation is further reaching than that. We breed Spanish mastiffs—the dogs traditionally used by shepherds to protect their flocks from wolves—sheep, hens, donkeys...

We've bought up almost the entire population of Extremaduran Retinta goats, which were in danger of extinction, so that we can regenerate the flock and ensure its excellent milk yield; we lend support vehicles and trailers to transhumant herds-men; we lease out summer and winter pastures; we have a hand in the training of young shepherds; and we take part in national and international seminars concerned with conserving the livestock tracks. All in all, quite a gamut of fascinating activities which are difficult to carry on without institutional help.

## Transhumance and Food

But is transhumance an economically viable activity nowadays? How do you persuade a livestock farmer to readopt transhumance? "Economic viability is a very relative term. Intensive livestock rearing, the predominant pattern in Europe, is based on importing cheap fodder or fish meal. The only way for developed societies to produce food in an economically and ecologically viable way is to readopt solutions which are efficient in terms of energy and transport, but not at the cost of destroying the planet and the food resources of the poorest countries. Furthermore, the end products of intensive livestock rearing are of dubious quality, as shown recently by Mad Cow Disease and the discovery of dioxins in chickens and pigs. Something can look viable in theory but turn out eventually to be a double-edged sword. I champion transhumance—extensive livestock rear-

ing—as a major alternative approach to producing quality meat and milk, derived from virtually free-range animals, which are tantamount to free for most of their lives and which eat natural pasture and do not depend on imported fodder. It also represents a cheap alternative in terms of energy consumption—the livestock moves at a speed of two kilometers per hour—and meanwhile the animals fertilize the route as they move from one place to another, thus avoiding the organic pollution which static herds and flocks produce. Transhumance helps preserve the environment as well as being a fundamental part of our cultural heritage."

*Carlos Tejero is a journalist and has worked at ICEX since 1985.*

## W E B S I T E S

### The Livestock Track Corner

Language: Spanish  
[www.uco.es/~bb1lorua/](http://www.uco.es/~bb1lorua/)

### Transhumance Routes in Rioja

Language: Spanish  
[www.fundacion-cajarioja.es/trashumancia/index.htm](http://www.fundacion-cajarioja.es/trashumancia/index.htm)

### Livestock Tracks by Bike

Language: Spanish  
[www.arrakis.es/~azcola/informac.html](http://www.arrakis.es/~azcola/informac.html)

# LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Text  
Vicky Hayward



Two years after Catalan three-star chef Santi Santa María published his first memorable book (see Spain Gourmetour No. 49) comes a second, equally weighty and beautiful tome entitled **El gusto de la diversidad** (The Pleasure of Diversity). In his first book, Santa María was looking at cooking from the straightforward, almost intimate viewpoint of family tradition and native *terroir*, as he has nurtured them at his restaurant El Racó de Can Fabes; in this second volume, he balances that by taking us on a tour of the much larger cooking world from which he has drawn new ideas into his cooking.

Today, of course, that world means not only Italy and France—with a special nod to Alain Ducasse, who wrote the foreword to the book—but also Vietnam, Istanbul, Switzerland, North America and another dozen cooking cultures, which, appropriately, include the rich but still little known Hispanic cuisines of Argentina and Puerto Rico. Santamaría's lightning world tour takes us to markets and street cafes, cooking schools and sausage shops. He also introduces us to the chefs—ranging from Charlie Trotter and Raymond Blanc to Hiroyoshi Mikuni—who make up his personal cooking universe, dedicating a brief pen-portrait and recipe of his own to each of them. In the end, it is these seventy recipes, inspired by Santamaría's travels, that form the heart of the book. They are beautifully photographed by Joan Llenas, but that is not really the point. They are simply very good recipes:



creative, balanced, structured and developed from the first idea to the final execution with a loving eye for the detail that counts.

The book closes with short chapters on the food chain and fast food, the evolution of home cooking, and a personal charter laying out the future development of El Racó de Can Fabes. It is a mass of material to have held together in one book, but Santa María has pulled it off because of the coherence of his underlying philosophy of approach. It says much that he wrote most of the book in Santa María de Poblet, the Cistercian monastery in Tarragona province. As he writes in his foreword: "I sincerely believe my cooking would never have excited the interest of lovers of good eating if it had not been informed by an inner strength of meditation and affirmation." (*Editorial Everest; comunicacion@everest.es*)

**El Chef en Casa** (The Home Chef), by Iñigo Pérez, chef at El Amparo, a first-league Madrid restaurant, is a very different book, but also a satisfying one. Described on the jacket as a practical course in haute cuisine, it is really a book of 200 recipes written up in a precise and friendly style, with the key points for each one emphasized at the end of the method. This may sound predictable, but Pérez's creative sense of what is (and what is not) possible in a home kitchen, as well as his wide referencing of recipes, makes his choice a surprisingly original and appealing one. Some ideas—like the recipes for sweet aperitifs, dessert soups and Basque-



French vegetable dishes—come straight from modern restaurant cooking. Others, like the salted anchovies and sloe liqueur (*pacharán*), seem to be drawn from his grandmother's cookbook. And between these two boundaries lies a middle ground of economical everyday dishes with a chef's creative twist: a salmon *marmitako* (fish stew), a country potato salad with a *piquillo* dressing, and a trio of puddings with hot chocolate sauces, to give just a few examples. (Ediciones Martínez Roca S.A.; [sgomez@ediciones-martinez-roca.es](mailto:sgomez@ediciones-martinez-roca.es))

## OLIVE OIL

Manuel Vicent, the Mediterranean poet, wrote that men may come and go, but olive oil stays. Over the last five years a small Andalusian press called El Olivo (see next page) has been making the same point through reprints of long-forgotten books about olives and oil. The most recent title is a facsimile edition of agricultural engineer Diego Pequeño's **Nociones acerca de la elaboración del aceite de oliva** (Notions About the Making of Olive Oil), a practical manual published in 1879. Strikingly, it throws unexpected light on issues in focus today: for example, early harvesting; ancient methods for oil making with pitted olives; and speculative ideas about the influence of the growing environment on the final oil. Earlier titles—the **Tratado del cultivo del olivo en España y modo de mejorarlo** (Treatise on Olive Growing in Spain and How to Improve It) by José de Hidalgo Tablada, first published



# IT REIGNS IN SPAIN.



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in 1870, and *El aceite de oliva desde el punto de vista medico* (Olive Oil from a Medical Point of View), written by three scientists in the late 1920s—are also surprisingly relevant. Finally there is a beguiling little forty-page 1930s booklet entitled *El aceite español es puro de oliva* (Spanish Oil is Pure and Made of Olives), an altogether lighter read with a wonderful art cover and a range of home recipes ranging from lamb's liver with hazelnuts and pine kernels to cakes and biscuits, face masks, skin creams and honey soap.

The real message of this collection hits home when you look at all the titles together. Even looking back only a century, most of our supposedly new knowledge about olive oil really turns out to be rediscovered ancient wisdom given new life by scientific proof. In this sense, there's particular interest in some of the books' predictions for olive oil. "Will it not become a food of even higher quality than today?" wrote Gregorio Marañón in the introduction to *Olive Oil from a Medical Point of View*. "Will we not see Spain's and Italy's vast olive groves become forerunners of other immense ones whose starting points are already becoming a reality in America and Africa, those continents of the future?"

It is a thought worth bearing in mind as one browses through the **Catálogo Mundial de Variedades de Olivo** (World Catalogue of Olive Varieties). A prologue explains why this beautiful book was published and financed by the International Olive Oil Council. There is an urgent need to identify native stock from different countries now that many varieties are being transplanted outside their traditional habitat. So this is essentially an academic book, with a clear practical purpose: the identification of olive varieties. But it makes a classic coffee-table book for soothing reading, like older volumes of botanical drawings. Specimens of 175 varieties growing in

twenty-three countries—some in Africa and Latin America—are shown ripening on the branch and, separately, there are shots of the leaf, the fruit and the pit. The contrasts between the mottled fruits are extraordinary, as is the babble of different local names by which they're known. (*Olive Oil Council, 2000; ioooc@mad.servicom.es*)

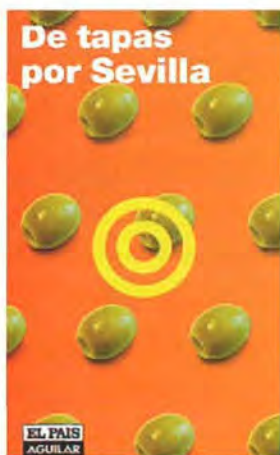
## In Brief

### WINE

**Análisis Sensorial y Cata de los Vinos de España** (Sensory Analysis and Tasting of Spanish Wines) Put together by Spanish specialists and backed by the Spanish Union of Tasters, this chunky 350-page manual is aimed at anybody who wants to learn to taste wines properly. Certain sections are of special interest for those interested in Iberian winemaking: the excellent hundred-page survey of Spanish wines, with tasting notes, by enologist Luis Vida Navarro; the tasting vocabulary; and the section on Spanish grape varieties. (*Editorial Agrícola Española; administracion@agricultura-revista.com*)

**Guía de Vinos de Denominación de Origen Navarra Año 2001** (The Navarra D.O. Wine Guide 2001) The fourth edition of this handy pocket guide to Navarrese wines includes not only bodegas with world-famous names like Chivite and Ochoa, but also the new and old cooperatives that have contributed so much to the region's emergence over the last two decades. There's a price code for each wine and four routes for touring the area, including cultural treasures. (*Consejo Regulador de Denominación de Origen Navarra; Tel: (34) 948 741 776*)

**Los 100 mejores vinos. País Vasco y Navarra** (The Hundred Best Wines: The Basque Country and Navarre) Designed as a foolproof beginners' guide, this large-format paperback presents the best hundred wines from the Basque Country and Navarre.



Tasting notes and a mark are given for each one next to a large photo of the labelled bottle. Somewhat overschematic and simplistic in its approach, this book—the first in a series—would nonetheless make useful instant reference to check out a wine menu in a hurry. (*Vivandar Guitas, Everest; comunicacion@everest.es*)

**Vinos de España** (Spanish Wines) Rounding off Everest's regional cooking series, Enrique Calduch gives a bird's-eye view of wines from around the country in a series of short essays. Although they're written for beginners, Calduch's deep knowledge informs the essays with real insights—for example, on the huge future potential of Castile-La Mancha for producing top-flight wines. (*Editorial Everest; comunicacion@everest.es*)

#### TRAVEL & GUIDEBOOKS

**De pintxos por Donosti; De tapas por Madrid; De tapas por Sevilla; De tapas por Valencia** (Pinchos in San Sebastián; Tapas in Madrid; Tapas in Seville; Tapas in Valencia) A welcome reissue of pocket guides to four Spanish cities known for having great tapas cultures. Written by *El País'* local restaurant critics, there's an insider's feel to the lowdown on each bar or restaurant, and a series of maps to help you make up exploratory routes hopping from one bar and its speciality to the next. (*El País Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es*)

**Gourmetour 2001. Madrid. Guia gastronómica y turística y sus mejores vinos** (Gastronomic and Tourist Guide and the Best Wines) Spain's big annual restaurant and hotel guide has now spawned mini-guides to the different regions and cities. The first of these deals with Madrid. It gives useful coverage of name restaurants, but skips over everyday eateries that make the capital's gastronomic life tick along at an extraordinary high level. (*Grupo Gourmets; www.gourmets.net*)

**Ruta de los Monasterios de Euskal Herria. Historia, gastronomía, remedios curativos** (A Monastery Route in the Basque Country. History, Gastronomy, Cures & Remedies) Calendula throat wash, disinfectant lavender infusion, orange-blossom cologne and diuretic holly syrup are just a few of the monks' and nuns' recipes for natural cures included here alongside architectural notes and recipes from sixty Basque monasteries and convents. Pedro Martín's choice of recipes in this armchair guide reveals cooking with a free and easy inventive spirit fostered by limited supplies, but the medicinal cures are the star turn. (*Ediciones Ttartalo; ttartalo@ttartalo.com*)



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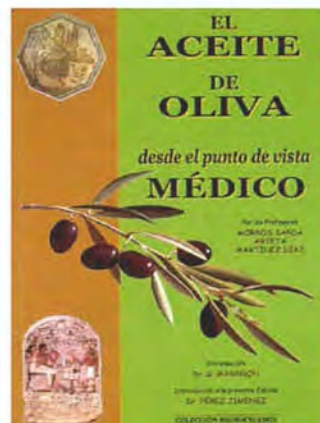
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## Homage to the Olive

"The olive represents a lot of things: poetry, literature, an economy and way of life," says José Miguel Crespo, founder of El Olivo, a small independent Andalusian publisher that has been publishing books about the olive tree since 1997. Its range of olive-focused titles published in the last four years—fourteen books including children's stories, novels, facsimiles of agricultural treatises (see review) and history books accompanied by CDs—was designed to prove Crespo's point. He set up El Olivo after looking around bookshops and realizing how little was available on the subject despite its importance in the local economy of Jaén, his native province. He himself had also worked as a day laborer in the groves when he was young. "Many people's working lives here are spent in the olive groves and yet there was very little for them to read to understand the relevant agricultural history, the importance of their work and the olive tree." The enthusiastic response to the books showed that his hunch was right, with the reprinted 19th-century agricultural treatises reaching sales of over 5,000 copies. "They worked particularly well because they described almost organic growing, the methods and results. That aroused a lot of interest." What, then, will El Olivo be publishing in the next few years? The next book, due at the end of this year, is about olive oil and soap making at home, still popular in Jaén, while a new collection of cookbooks entitled *Al oro de la lumbre*—meaning, literally, by the gold of the fire—is also in the pipeline. Crespo is clear, though, that he has only just scratched the surface of the culture that has grown up around the olive. "We have hardly begun," he says. "I already have ideas for the next five years."



# FOODIE'S CORNER



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

## Fairs and Congresses

After the Mediterranean diet, now it's the turn of another sea, the Atlantic Ocean. July saw the setting-up of the first multi-disciplinary working group for the study of the **Atlantic diet** in A Coruña in Spain. Its objective is to compile all the information available on the main eating habits of the countries and regions on the European Atlantic coasts such as Norway, Ireland, the United Kingdom, the French Atlantic regions and, in Spain, Galicia and the Canary Islands. The main features of the Atlantic diet are high consumption of fish, both fresh and cured, and shellfish, with potatoes as the main food of plant origin, and it also shares some of the character-

istics of the Mediterranean diet. A congress is to be held towards the end of 2001 in A Coruña to be chaired by the president of the Spanish Nutrition Foundation, Dr. Gregorio Varela, with participation by experts on the food and cuisine of the nations bordering the Atlantic.

## Wine

July was the month for what many considered to be the "tasting session of the year." **Alejandro Fernández** invited the specialist press to Madrid to a vertical tasting of his Tinto Pesquera wines, one of the most highly appreciated labels on the Spanish and foreign markets. Those present were able to try wines produced over 20 years—from 1975 to 1999. Their host explained that his aim was to show how the Ribera del Duero reds,



and especially his own, are long-lasting wines that can remain in tiptop condition for twenty-five or thirty years, thanks to Tempranillo's outstanding aging characteristics. All the wines were in perfect tasting condition, and Alejandro Fernández took the opportunity to advocate the abolition of the terms "*crianza*," "*reserva*" and "*gran reserva*"

**Text**  
Cristino Álvarez  
**Translation**  
Jenny McDonald



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which figure on Spanish wine labels. He says foreign consumers find them confusing and considers that the quality of a wine cannot be determined by administrative regulations governing aging periods. "It is the wine itself that decides how long it should be in the oak, and this cannot be laid down by law."

In Cambados (Galicia, Spain), the Spanish prime minister, José Maria Aznar, was appointed honorary taster for the D.O. Rías Baixas, and was invited by the Regulatory Council to attend the fiftieth edition of the Albariño Fair, an annual event held during the first weekend of August in Cambados. The Rías Baixas wines are white, made from the Albariño variety and generally consumed while young. These grapes are believed to have been brought to the western coast of Spain by Benedictine monks during the early years of the pilgrimage to Santiago, in the 11th or 12th centuries. They are probably Spain's most prestigious white wines and have a large following in the U.S.

A Spanish wine, the 1990 "Gran Reserva 904" from the La Rioja Alta bodega was the choice for the first royal wedding of the millennium, that of the heir to the Norwegian throne, Haakon Magnus, and Mette-Marit Tjessem. A spokesperson from the winery was not aware whether the wine had been a gift from the Spanish Royal Family (which had sent a wine from this same winery for the wedding of Alexia of Greece) or whether it had been chosen by Prince Haakon himself. Founded in 1890, this winery has 300 hectares (741.3 acres) of vineyards, mostly growing Tempranillo, which is a basic component of its Rioja wines along with a small proportion of Graciano grapes.

Osborne, one of Spain's most prestigious winemakers, introduces the newest addition to its diverse portfolio and launches **Osborne Solaz**. The result of 48 million euro investment in prime vineyards and the con-

struction of a new winery, Solaz is an innovative red wine from the Tierra de Castilla region, situated in the province of Toledo. Osborne's introduction of Solaz forms the foundation for what is destined to become a new collection of Selección wines. Winemaker César Fernández combined Tempranillo (80%) and Cabernet Sauvignon (20%) and aged it in hand-made oak barrels. "Solaz embodies the spirit of a new enlivened world culture that loves young, elegant, vibrant wines."

In line with its policy for growth, Freixenet, one of the main bodegas producing cava, has bought 60 percent of the Australian Wingara Wine Group for about 21.6 million euros. This is the approximate value of the total sales by the Australian winery which produces about 4,320,000 bottles of wine, half of which are sold in Australia with the remainder going to the U.S.A., Canada and the U.K. Freixenet, which already has a bodega in Sonoma Valley (California, U.S.A.) has recently bought the Yvon Mau winery in Bordeaux following its purchase some years ago of the Champagne producers, Henri Abelé. Its president, Josep Ferrer, states that they are still looking for an opportunity to enter the Spanish wine-producing district of La Rioja.

## Awards

The VII **Rioja Prestige Award**, granted by the Regulatory Council of the D.O.C. Rioja, was presented to Isidoro Álvarez, the president of "El Corte Inglés," the largest Spanish chain of department stores. The winners in previous editions were Federico Mayor Zaragoza, then director general of UNESCO, the scientist Francisco Ayala, the Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa, the Basque sculptor Eduardo Chillida, the Olympic sailing champion Theresa Zabell, the tenor Plácido Domingo and the cardiologist Valentin Fuster, director of the Cardiovascular Institute of the Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York.

In recent months, several Spanish wines have obtained awards in important international events. In the Olympiades du Vin during Vinexpo 2001 in Bordeaux, **Bodegas Torres** obtained the much-coveted gold medal for its Reserva Real 1997, as it did also in the Challenge International du Vin. Gold medals were also won by its Marimar Torres Chardonnay 1999, produced by Torres in California, and Manso de Velasco 1998, a Cabernet Sauvignon this Catalonian company produces in Chile.

In this same event, which held its 11th edition in Bordeaux this year with the participation of 4,860 wines from 32 countries, the Marqués de Valparaiso Reserva 1996 from the winery owned by **Bodegas Paternina in Ribera del Duero** was awarded a gold medal. Gold also went to the **Real de Irache Gran Reserva 1984** from Navarre in the Monde Selection International 2001 in Brussels, and to the **Valde-losfrailes Prestigio** from the winery of the same name owned by Matarromera in Cigales during MUVINA 2001, held in Slovakia.

The "Dauro de L'Empordà" extra-virgin olive oil obtained a "Diploma di Gran Menzione" in the 10th Golden Lion international competition held in the Sol Salon in Verona in the "delicate fruity" category. This award is especially significant this year because all the oils, both Italian and foreign, competed together in the "intense fruity," "medium fruity" and "delicate fruity" categories. Previously, the Italian oils had competed only against each other, with foreign oils being presented separately. This year, 202 companies from Spain, Greece, Turkey, Argentina, South Africa, Australia and Italy participated.

The **Sánchez Romate Hermanos** bodegas recently received the gold medal in the "International Design Awards 2001" held in London for the design of its Don José wine bottle. The design was by the Spanish



advertising company, PCYC. Organised annually by Wine & Spirits, the prestigious publishing group, these awards are much sought-after by brands and wineries all over the world for their designs in the field of wines and alcoholic beverages. The factors that the jury noted especially in the bottle were its innovativeness and elegance and the balance between minimalism and classicism that evokes the traditional spirit of sherry while giving it a contemporary look.

## Miscellany

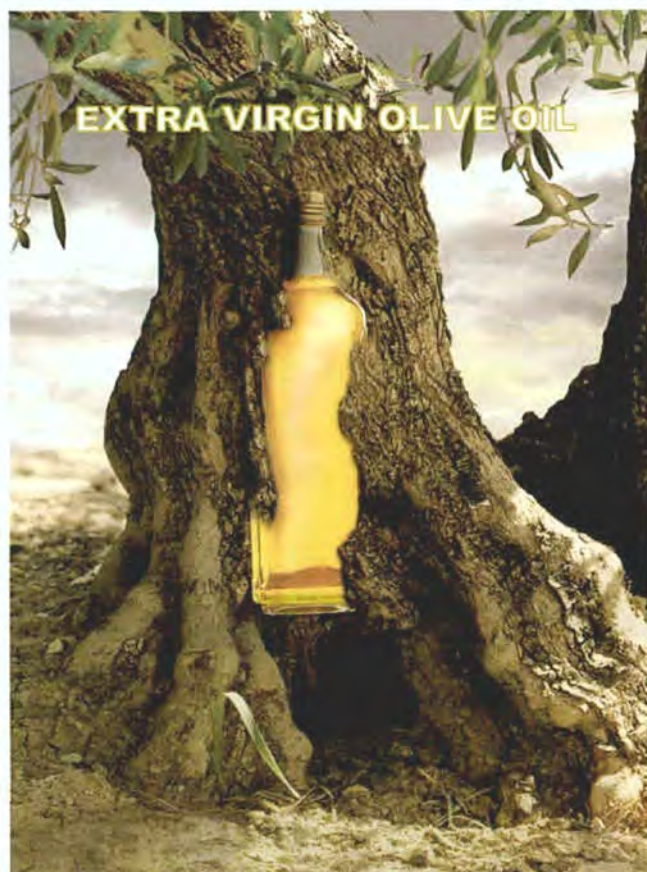
The Spanish National Parador network was present in the Four Seasons hotel in Los Angeles for a celebration of Spanish food lasting one month and entitled "The Flavors of Spain." Sponsored by the Spanish Tourism Office in Los Angeles, ICEX, Turespaña and Paradores Nacionales, the aim of the organizers was to spark interest in Spain as a tourism destination through its gastronomy.

Also in July, the Álvarez family, owners of the prestigious Vega Sicilia bodega, presented in Madrid the "León Mountain Integrated Meat Production Complex." This is an ambitious project for the production of high-quality beef. Bearing the "Valles del Esla" label, the meat will come from cattle belonging to the Parda Alpina breed, selected for its high suitability for the mountains

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of León and bred on natural pasturelands covering over 140,000 hectares (350,000 acres). The presentation was given by a large group of Spanish experts on nutrition and gastronomy and those present were able to taste cuts from a bullock weighing 1,034 kilograms, together with a sample of meat from the mythical Japanese Kobe bullock.

## Abroad

In July, the Spanish government and six Autonomous Communities—Galicia, Andalusia, the Basque Country, Cantabria, Madrid and Castilla y León—presented an advertising campaign in New York aiming to encourage tourism to parts of Spain that tend to be little known by Americans. Involving an investment of 2.6 million dollars, the campaign is to feature in about twenty U.S. magazines specializing in tourism, gastronomy and leisure and will direct consumers to a hotline (888-657-7246) offering information from the Spanish Tourism Office or the Far&Wide tour operator, co-sponsor of the campaign.

Acapulco, in Mexico, was the venue for an appetizing get-together between Spain and Mexico. Hosted by the Spanish winery, Domecq, which has production facilities in Mexico, and the National Guild for Mexican Rice, the "Paella and Wine Festival" was attended by groups from 18 different countries. More than twenty different rice dishes were served, from traditional Va-



lencian paella to black rice or rice with shellfish.

Paella, gazpacho, ibérico ham, potato omelet, wine... These are some of the traditional products to be promoted during the first edition of the Spanish Fair in Japan, to be held from 2 to 11 August 2002, in Tokyo. With flamenco as its theme, the 45 stands covering an exhibition area of 2,500 square meters (26,909 square feet) are to be decorated in the traditional festive style of the annual fairs in Seville and Málaga. In the words of the commercial director, Cristóbal Armada, the aim is "to link the image of flamenco with Spanish food and wine."

*Cristino Alvarez 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

### Olive Oil

An additional list of Spanish manufacturers can be consulted on Internet: [www.icex.es/repertorios/menuprin.asp](http://www.icex.es/repertorios/menuprin.asp)  
For more information see page 142

**Baena**  
[www.dobaena.com](http://www.dobaena.com)

**Les Garrigues**  
[www.svt.es/dopgarrigues](http://www.svt.es/dopgarrigues)

**Montes de Toledo**  
[www.domontesdetoledo.com](http://www.domontesdetoledo.com)

**Priego de Córdoba**  
[dopriego@airtel.net](mailto:dopriego@airtel.net)  
[origenpriego@navegalia.com](mailto:origenpriego@navegalia.com)

**Sierra de Cazorla**  
[www.desierracazorla.es](http://www.desierracazorla.es)

**Sierra Mágina**  
[www.sierramagina.org](http://www.sierramagina.org)

**Sierra Segura**  
[www.dosierradesegura.com](http://www.dosierradesegura.com)

**Siurana**  
[crdops@tinet.org](mailto:crdops@tinet.org)

Source: ICEX

## Canarian Tomatoes

**Agric. Luz Teno S.C.L. (Allfru)**  
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Fax: (34) 922 360 214

**Antonio Hdez. M.E. Hijos S.A.T.**  
Tel: (34) 922 160 078  
Fax: (34) 922 160 000

**C. Unión Agri. y Gan. OPFH 1031**  
Tel: (34) 928 750 451  
Fax: (34) 928 752 575

**C.B. Hdros. A. Alfonso**  
Tel: (34) 922 865 070  
Fax: (34) 922 865 291

**Coagrisan OPFH 1011**  
Tel: (34) 928 890 955  
Fax: (34) 928 891 157

**Coop. Agric. Gran Tarajal**  
Tel: (34) 928 871 006  
Fax: (34) 928 870 268

**Coop. Agric. Guía Isora**  
Tel: (34) 922 857 150 or 928 857 200  
Fax: (34) 922 857 155

**Coop. Agric. N.S. Abona**  
Tel: (34) 922 768 054  
Fax: (34) 922 768 241

**Coop. Agric. N. S. Carmen**  
Tel: (34) 922 390 445  
Fax: (34) 922 771 550

**Coop. Agric. Punta Blanca, OPFH 662**  
Tel: (34) 922 865 490  
Fax: (34) 922 865 557

**Coop. Agric. Tamaimo, OPFH 531**  
Tel: (34) 922 863 029  
Fax: (34) 922 863 381

**Copaisan OPFH 1007**  
Tel: (34) 928 891 094  
Fax: (34) 928 891 126

**Finca San Juan, S.L.**  
Tel: (34) 922 281 450  
Fax: (34) 922 245 742

**Marrero Flores, A.**  
Tel: (34) 922 281 450  
Fax: (34) 922 245 142

**Pretoso, S.L. OPFH 490**  
Tel: (34) 922 852 013  
Fax: (34) 922 850 140

**S.A.T. Beig**  
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Fax: (34) 922 390 858

**S.A.T. Fco. Rguez. Pérez OPFH 1012**  
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Fax: (34) 928 755 466

**S.A.T. Framape OPFH 1021**  
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Fax: (34) 928 755 532

**S.A.T. Juliano Bonny G. OPFH 484**  
Tel: (34) 928 303 200  
Fax: (34) 928 303 202

**S.A.T. Lupema OPFH 1019**  
Tel: (34) 928 782 305  
Fax: (34) 928 783 801

**S.A.T. Raymi OPFH 554**  
Tel: (34) 922 160 128  
Fax: (34) 922 160 113

**S.A.T. Valerón 349/05**  
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Fax: (34) 928 124 267

**S.C.L. del C. S. Rafael OPFH 1029**  
Tel: (34) 928 753 275  
Fax: (34) 928 755 292

**S.C. Lt. del C. Colican OPFH 1028**  
Tel: (34) 928 751 451  
Fax: (34) 928 752 639

**Sdad. Coop. Ltd. La Orilla**  
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Fax: (34) 928 172 306

**Yeoward del C.S. C. Lt. OPFH 1027**  
Tel: (34) 928 750 993  
Fax: (34) 928 755 458

Source: FEDEX (Provincial Federation of Associations of Fruit and Vegetable Exporters of Las Palmas)  
Tel: (34) 928 488 920  
Fax: (34) 928 463 770  
[ajuridica@fedex.es](mailto:ajuridica@fedex.es)

ACETO (Provincial Association of Tomatoes Producers and Exporters of Tenerife)  
Tel: (34) 922 280 200  
Fax: (34) 922 282 666  
[aceto@ctv.es](mailto:aceto@ctv.es)

## Wines

An additional list of Spanish manufacturers can be consulted on Internet: [www.icex.es/repertorios/menuprin.asp](http://www.icex.es/repertorios/menuprin.asp) For more information see page 77

## Cava gran reserva and/or vintage

### Agusti Torelló, S.A.

Tel: (34) 938 911 173  
Fax: (34) 938 912 616  
[agustitorello-sa@troc.es](mailto:agustitorello-sa@troc.es)

### Albet i Noya, S.A.T.

Tel: (34) 938 994 812  
Fax: (34) 938 994 930  
[albetinoya@troc.es](mailto:albetinoya@troc.es)

### Arvicaretey, S.A.

Tel: (34) 938 921 250  
Fax: (34) 938 921 250

### Bodegas Montesquius, S.A.

Tel: (34) 938 910 800  
Fax: (34) 938 911 747  
[montesquius@catanet.com](mailto:montesquius@catanet.com)  
[www.catanet.com/montesquius](http://www.catanet.com/montesquius)

### C. del Castillo de Perelada, S.A.

Tel: (34) 938 180 676  
Fax: (34) 932 231 370  
[perelada@castilloperelada.com](mailto:perelada@castilloperelada.com)  
[www.perelada.com](http://www.perelada.com)

### Castell de Vilarnau, S.A.

Tel: (34) 938 912 361  
Fax: (34) 938 912 913  
[cvilarnau@interceller.com](mailto:cvilarnau@interceller.com)  
[www.gonzalezbyass.es](http://www.gonzalezbyass.es)

### Castellblanch, S.A.

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Fax: (34) 938 910 126  
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[www.castellblanch.es](http://www.castellblanch.es)

### Chandón, S.A.

Tel: (34) 938 970 900  
Fax: (34) 938 970 925  
[www.chandon.com](http://www.chandon.com)

### Codorniu, S.A.

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Fax: (34) 938 183 131  
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[www.codorniu.es](http://www.codorniu.es)

### Freixenet, S.A.

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Fax: (34) 938 183 095  
[freixenet@freixenet.es](mailto:freixenet@freixenet.es)  
[www.freixenet.es](http://www.freixenet.es)

### Giró Ribot, S.A.

Tel: (34) 938 974 050  
Fax: (34) 938 974 311  
[giroribot@giroribot.es](mailto:giroribot@giroribot.es)  
[www.giroribot.es](http://www.giroribot.es)

### Gramona, S.A.

Tel: (34) 938 910 113  
Fax: (34) 938 183 284  
[cava@gramona.com](mailto:cava@gramona.com)  
[www.gramona.com](http://www.gramona.com)

### J. García Carrion, S.A.

Tel: (34) 938 936 404  
Fax: (34) 938 142 262  
[donsimon@jgarciacarrion.es](mailto:donsimon@jgarciacarrion.es)

### J.M. Raventós Blanc, S.A.

Tel: (34) 938 183 262  
Fax: (34) 938 912 500  
[jmrb@interceller.com](mailto:jmrb@interceller.com)

### Josep Masachs, S.A.

Tel: (34) 938 991 105  
Fax: (34) 938 991 561  
[info@cavamasachs.com](mailto:info@cavamasachs.com)  
[www.cavamasachs.com](http://www.cavamasachs.com)

### Juvé y Camps, S.A.

Tel: (34) 938 911 000  
Fax: (34) 938 912 100  
[juveycamps@juveycamps.com](mailto:juveycamps@juveycamps.com)  
[www.troc.es/juveycamps](http://www.troc.es/juveycamps)

### Manuel Sancho e Hijos, S.A.

Tel: (34) 938 918 281  
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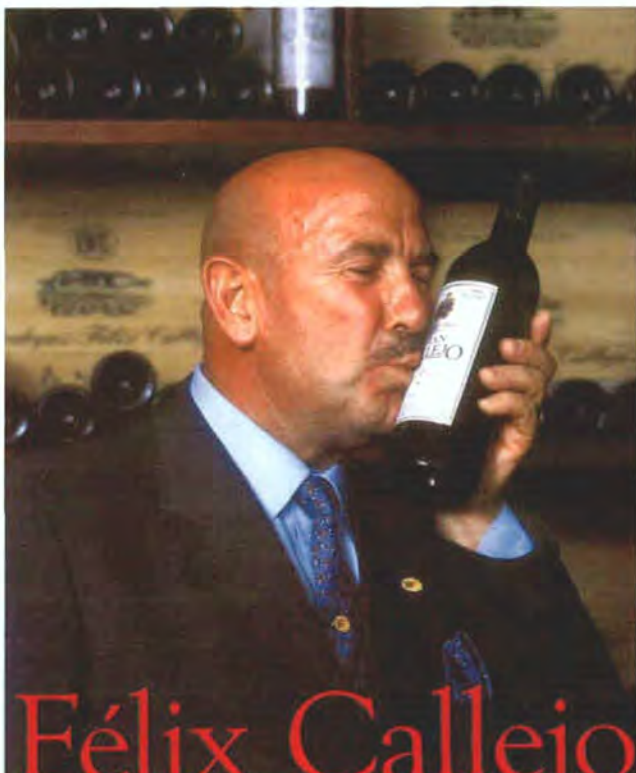
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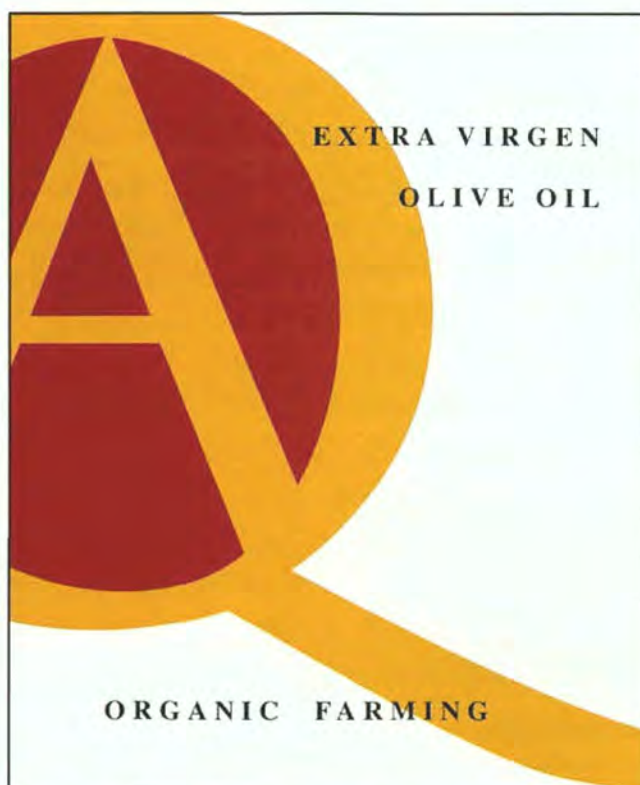
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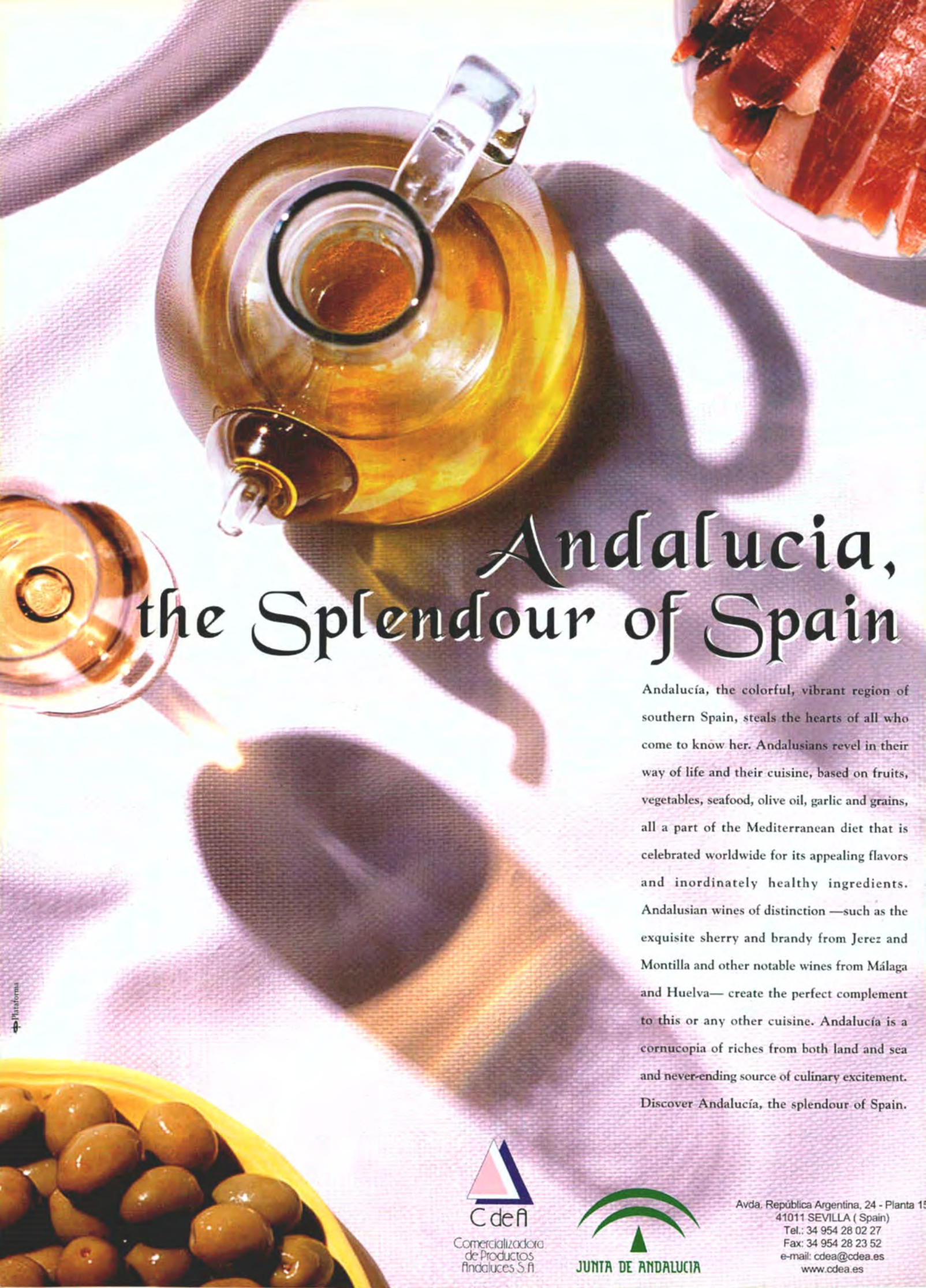
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## Wine Aging Terms

**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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