56
May-August 2002

SPAIN GOURMETOUR

Food, Wine & Travel Magazine

Ibérico Ham
A Secret Unveiled

Maverick
Winemakers

Celebration
of Food

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Dear Readers,

All over the world, mankind has always been clever at adapting to his environment. The down side, of course, is that in some regards we have carried our modifications too far and brought our planet to the point of exhaustion. This is why in the 1970s Spanish aquaculture set out to produce a wide range of fish, providing turbot for French gourmets, tuna for Japanese sushi, sea bass for the U.S., and so on.

Eating and drinking environmentally friendly products is an expensive business in our day and age, but many are prepared to pay the price. Our future depends on it, after all. Free-range, acorn-fed Ibérico pork, is an excellent example. And anyway, few can resist melt-in-the-mouth Ibérico ham. Even more so when accompanied by the sort of auteur wines presented in this issue. Meanwhile, our gastro-tour takes us this time to the northern region of Asturias, whose hearty classic bean dish, *fabada,* is eaten in honor of St. Martin, marking the start of winter. Then there are Padrón peppers–a still underestimated local treasure: head for Galicia to taste them *in situ* from May on.

When summer temperatures soar, Spain has the perfect cold soups to help you cope. The best known is gazpacho–a meeting of two continents and cultures, fusion cuisine ahead of its time–but it's by no means our only one. Be daring! Give them a try!

Seattle, North Carolina, Paris, Milan and Rome also feature in this issue, with specialist shops where our readers, at least those who live nearby, will be able to buy many of the products you read about here.

Little realizing it at the time, our 21st.century Quixote was also an early exponent of fusion culture, such a modish concept today, when he suggested the then novel concept of combining jazz and flamenco in Berlin in 1967.

Now read on ...and enjoy!

Cathy Boirac
Editor-in-chief

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The following artists, archives, companies and institutions have participated in the illustration of this issue of *Spain Gourmetour:*

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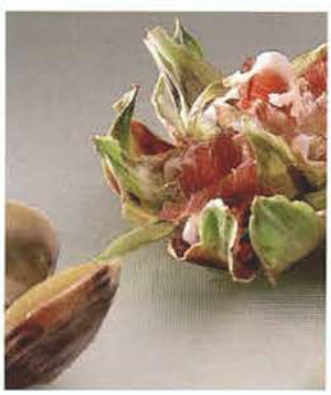

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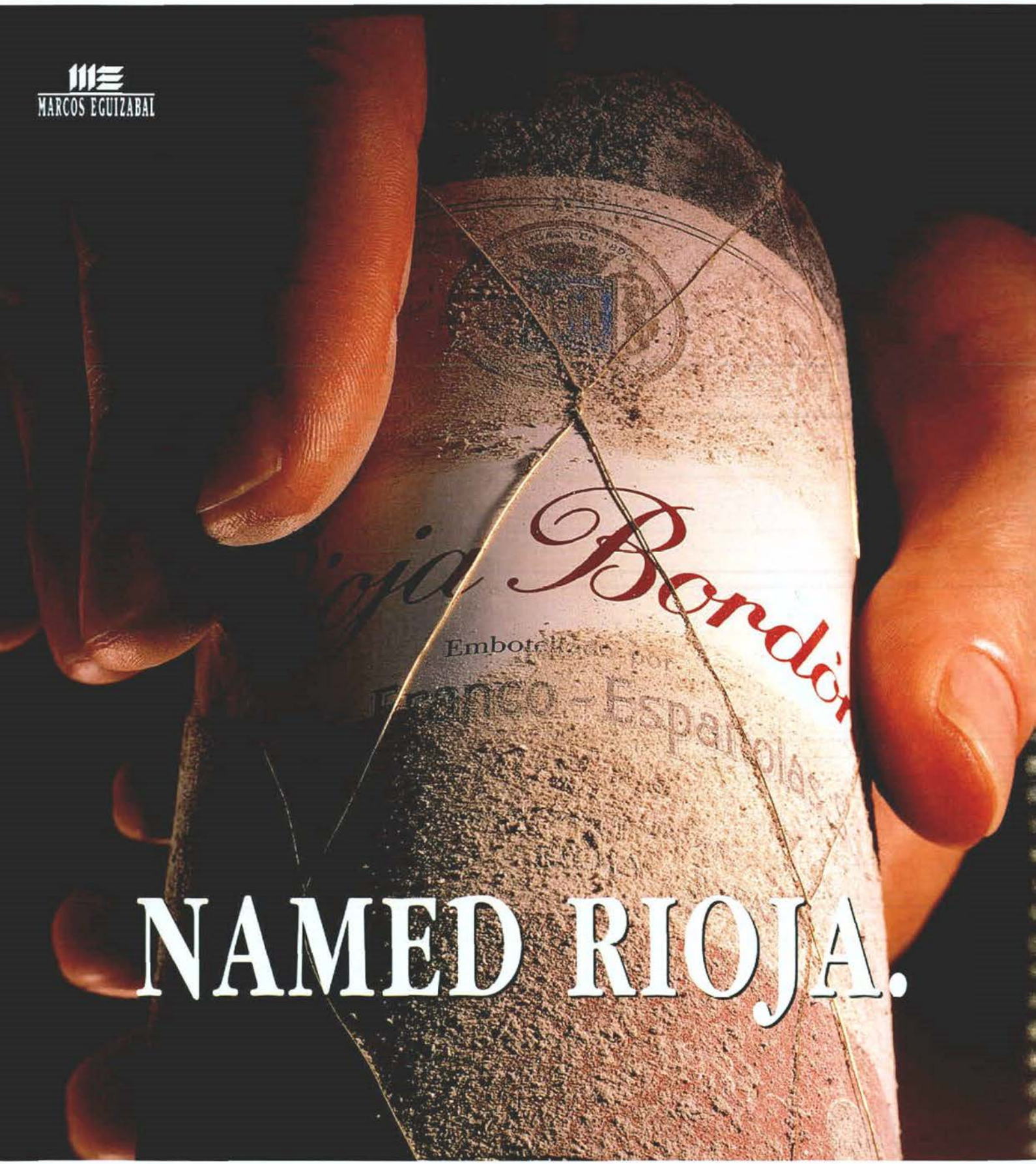

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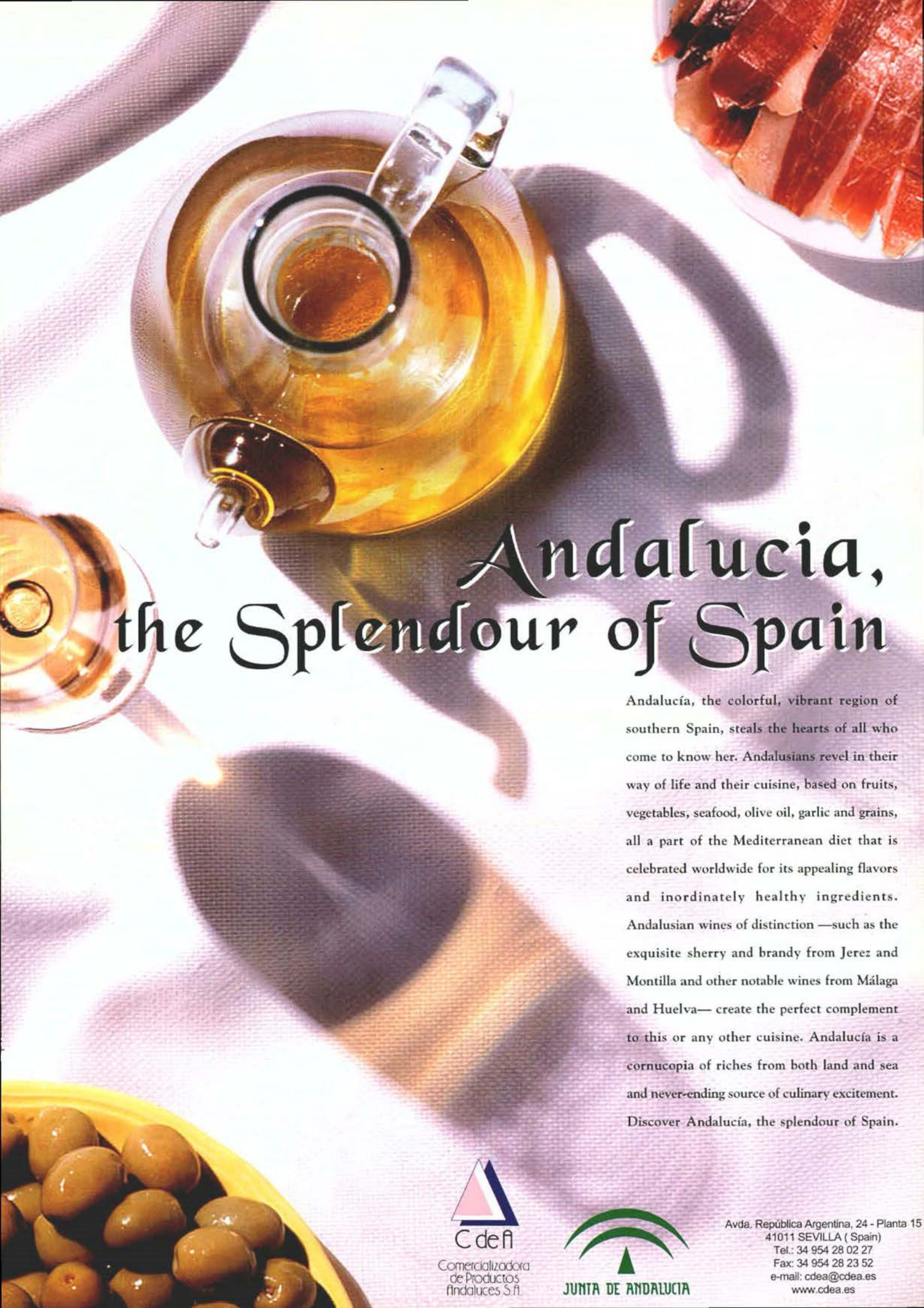

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DELICATESSEN

Part 2

SUITE

Our second Gourmet-Tour through delicatessen stores around the world will take us to the United States, Italy and France. Following decades during which U.S. eating habits progressively gained in influence throughout Europe (and the entire world), the tide is now turning. U.S. star cooks and gourmets have discovered Spanish cooking and its many specialties. Ingredients such as *piquillo* peppers, fruity or spicy native olive oil and a wide array of cheeses are finally making their way into U.S. kitchens, via the delicatessen stores. In France and Italy, the younger generation is becoming acquainted with the art of cooking Spanish style and, in the process, discovering new tastes and a different life style.

TEXT
JENNIFER STRAILEY (CALIF.)
AND ELIZABETH FAULLIN (N.C.)

Food from Spain in the U.S. Kitchen

Your parents didn't eat like this. Luscious piquillo peppers, fruity arbequina olive oil and melt-in-your-mouth Manchego. Not long ago, quality Spanish foods like these were beyond the reach of most American cooks. But now, thanks to the passion of a growing number of American retailers, we can sip and savor the best that Spain has to offer in our own kitchens.

The Spanish Table

When Seattle-based retailer Steve Winston went looking for a second location to house his Spanish food and kitchenware store, he found a community hungry for paella and thirsty for Rioja in Berkeley, California. The Spanish Table, which opened there in September of last year, is right at home in this foodie mecca just across the Bay from San Francisco. Nestled among purveyors of Sri Lankan, Indian, Pakistani, Mexican and Ecuadorian food, The Spanish Table has found a place to hang its 52-inch paella pan.

At first glance, the 25-foot ceilings, concrete flooring and neatly arranged displays give the store a clean look, bordering on austere. The simple design achieves two things: It makes it easy for customers to peruse the collection of cookbooks or select an arbequina oil. It also surprises patrons with its breadth and depth of products. From that indispensable can of *tomate frito* (fried tomato sauce) to those decidedly Basque *choricero* peppers, The Spanish Table carries everything you need to create traditional Spanish cuisine.

If you're serious about Spanish food, you'll find that almost everything in the store is something you'd use everyday. There are no frou-frou gift sets or decorative ceramics here. "I want to carry what would be in a high quality store in Spain," asserts Winston. "I want to be the place where the average good cook in Spain would shop, not a place to buy food as a gift."

With that in mind, The Spanish Table is stocked with high quality, highly useful products. For example, it boasts the largest selection of paella pans in the country, along with attachments including *butanos* and fire stands. You'll also find clay *cazuelas* for cooking, in every imaginable size and shape; mortars for crushing saffron or making *aioli*; and functional garlic holders or *ajeras* painted the colors of Talavera de la Reina.

A small refrigerated case holds the essential meats and cheeses: 18 month-aged *jamón serrano*, chorizo in mild and piquant, *morcilla de cebolla* (black pudding with onion), *butifarrita* (a type of Catalan sausage), Manchego and Idiazábal cheese.

A stellar selection of 15 to 20 olive oils, including an entire shelf devoted to arbequina oils, is the start of the grocery section. Shop for amazing grains like *calasparra* and *bomba* rice or satisfy a sweet tooth with a box of hot-chocolaty *mandarin a la taza*. Then try to resist top quality tinned *berberechos* (cockles in brine) and *calamares en su tinta* (calamari in ink sauce) as they beckon to be taken home for tapas.

Between the manzanilla olives and Spanish sea salt is the pepper selection–Winston's pride and joy. "I was a pioneer in dried peppers from Spain," says Winston. "So for a long time we watched them sit on the shelf. Then, slowly but surely, cookbook authors started writing about them." Once the public got wind of the aromatic *pimentón de la Vera* (a type of paprika from Spain) and luscious piquillo peppers, sales took off.

Before The Spanish Table, many of these items weren't available in the U.S., says Berkeley store manager Libby Connolly. "Steve wanted to create a one-stop shop for making a traditional dish from Spain or Portu-

gal–with the correct olives, paprika, rice and so on–and offer it alongside wine and cookware."

Wine is another big draw for the store, where connoisseurs and more price-conscious wine drinkers can quench their passion for Spanish wines with a selection emphasizing quality and value. When complete, 25 to 30 percent of the store's collection will be priced at under $10 a bottle. Patrons can take home a bottle of 2000 Mas Donís from Tarragona-Falset for $8.99 or splurge on a 1998 Torre Muga Rioja for $54.99. A sizable selection of whites, *rosados*, sherries, dessert wines and cava are begging also to be sipped.

Though it opened in September–a month dominated by devastating world events and a nationwide retail slump–the store was meeting sales expectations by November. And every month since, says Winston, business at the Berkeley store has increased by ten percent.

The original Spanish Table in Seattle and the new location in Berkeley are built on Winston's vision for an everyday store with extraordinary Spanish and Portuguese ingredients. "It's not about following trends. It's about what we're interested in," says Connolly of the store's deliciously Spanish inventory. "It's genuine. It's what we feel good about."

A Southern Season

A Southern Season opened shop in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 27 years ago as a tiny coffee roastery. From this humble beginning, the store has grown into a 28,000 square foot, specialty-food paradise. Their vast array of top quality Spanish food items is sure to please even the most seasoned connoisseur.

"Our store's typical Spanish foods customer has traveled to Spain, read Spanish cookbooks and enjoys authentic Spanish gourmet foods," explained Jay White, vice president of customer service. "Our selection of high quality products is a testament to our customers' appreciation for fine Spanish cuisine."

Spanish items are featured in five of the store's six departments–grocery, deli, wine, candy and housewares. All of the store's Spanish products hold one thing in common: superior quality.

"The people who make the products that we sell take pride in what they do," said Paul Saltzman, manager of the store's grocery department. "They are mostly smaller manufacturers who strive to put out the best product possible and truly care about achieving excellence."

Grocery items range from fruity, extra virgin olive oils and aromatic sherry wine vinegars to canned delicacies such as green peppercorns, marinated garlic and guava jelly.

In the deli, the array of cheeses from Spain is a feast for the senses. From the popular Denomination of Origin cheeses such as Manchego and Roncal to such other temptations as Zamorano and Torta del Casar, unique and vibrant flavors abound.

"Our customers today are more informed and more inquisitive," said Joel Blice, deli manager. "They are very receptive to trying new things in order to broaden their knowledge base." Sampling of favorites such as Murcia al Vino cheese (made from goat's milk and bathed in red wine) and D.O. Cabrales, a true king of the blue cheeses, served with honey and dried figs, is always encouraged.

More than 70 varieties of Spanish wines grace the shelves. "We're especially fond of the fresh, bright

whites as well as the classic reds from Rioja, Ribera del Duero and the up-and-coming Priorato," noted Rick Heeren, wine manager.

True to its roots, A Southern Season is chock full of friendly, warm and knowledgeable staff. The store's motto–"Taste is what we're all about"–is never more evident than during its annual week-long Festiva España promotion held in late summer.

"Spain conjures up images of romance and fun," said Deborah Miller, marketing and communications manager. "We like to use that sensuality, that romantic flair, to bring customers into the store and turn the spotlight on our Spanish products."

The promotion offers something different every day and includes an abundance of specials, samplings in every department, storewide decorations, cultural music and "Did You Know" facts about foods from Spain posted throughout the store. Spanish dishes made from products carried in the market are featured in the Weathervane Café, the store's on-site epicurean eatery. With Executive Chef Sam Poley in the kitchen, this is a treat worthy of a trip to the Old North State. Some of his spectacular Spanish creations include Jumbo Lump Crab-Stuffed Piquillo Pepper over Manzanilla Olive Tapenade Garnished with Candied Lemon Zest and Guava-Lemon Vinaigrette, and Smoked Pork and Duck Tamales with Sherry-Onion Marmalade, Caper Berries, Marinated Garlic and Mahón Cheese. Bravo for A Southern Season!

Jennifer Strailey is a freelance food and wine writer based in Marin, California. She is a former associate editor of The Gourmet Retailer *magazine. Most recently she was the managing editor of an online magazine, where she wrote about health and nutrition.*

***Elizabeth Faullin** is a freelance writer living in Winston-Salem, N.C.*

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TEXT
RAOUL FERNÁNDEZ

TRANSLATION
SYNONYME

France Invites Spain to Dinner!

In spite of their completely different eating habits (Mediterranean culture, meal times, restaurant styles, etc.), Spain and France are getting to know each other better. Certain products–olive oil, vinegar, *turrón*, canned seafoods, *ibérico* and *serrano* ham and other charcuterie–have started to appear on French tables, though some are taking a while to be fully accepted. Two experts who have followed this development consider it to be more than just a passing fad. Here are their comments.

La Grande Épicerie de Paris

"The relationship between the French and their food has changed from a dietary and health point of view. But they have also started to look for novelty, for a touch of the exotic, and the time came when they realized that certain Spanish products were not so bad after all."

This change of heart took place in the early 1990s, according to Françoise Flament, purchasing manager for La Grande Épicerie de Paris.

This period when olive oil was making its début in France is also recalled by Sylvain Gaudu, manager of Lafayette Gourmet. "We started with the French domestic market but we soon saw that volumes were limited so we turned to Italy. There, things were not clear and we eventually discovered Spanish olive oil and the enormous potential of Spain's food and agriculture products." The range was magnificent and it seemed easy to draw on it. But it was not sufficient to find the right product. It was also necessary to find the best source and method for obtaining it. "Spanish producers and artisans used to be under the impression that all they had to do was cross the Pyrenees to sell their products," says Sylvain Gaudu. "But today they understand how important it is to go with their product and explain it, or else it will not be adopted." The need for promotion is essential. Françoise Flament saw this with ibérico ham which was the second revolution for La Grande Épicerie de Paris after olive oil. "The launch was not clear even though we were absolutely convinced the product would be a success. We chose Sánchez Romero Carvajal because the name Jabugo inmediately conjures up the aroma of ibérico ham; they were involved in distribution and we felt we could trust them. Then we carried out extensive promotion and campaigns in the press. This work on information was especially necessary because we had to explain to potential customers that this top-price ham had to be cut in wafer-thin flakes rather than slices."

And much of Spanish culture is expressed through these wafers. "Spain may be our next-door neighbor," explains Sylvain Gaudu, "but Spanish products still seem exotic to most French people which is why promotion

was a must. Ibérico ham was able to find a place on the market, at least in Paris. But if we had just left things as they were, sales would have leveled off, then dropped. We had to keep the promotion going, creating life around the product. This was what we did in Lafayette Gourmet with the Byzance stand."

Lafayette Gourmet

Product buyers must be totally convinced, showing they have understood the product and where it comes from. The method used by Françoise Flament includes a period of immersion spent in the country. "Our buying teams are always traveling and, for Spain, we started out by accepting invitations to food fairs in collaboration with the Spanish Foreign Trade Institute (ICEX). To get a proper idea of the type of product available rather than just relying on what we are told about its quality, we like to see for ourselves what is on offer in the shops and in restaurants. When we find a product we like and we explain to the craftsman making it that we would like to distribute it in France and will see to all the necessary arrangements, they are usually amazed," explains Françoise Flament.
Sylvain Gaudu, on the other hand, tends to trust the product's reputation in his own country and looks to the world of gastronomy and chefs for confirmation.
"If a ham has been selected by Robuchon or Ducasse, or a specific type of rice is being used by the head cook at the Fogón (a restaurant famed for cooking the best Spanish-style rice in the French capital), this amounts to a guarantee of quality, and the chances are that the product will tie in with our own criteria for selection–quality, authenticity, a natural product..."
This opinion is shared by Françoise Flament who remembers the campaign carried out by La Grande Épicerie de Paris for the aromatic olive oils produced by Borges. "In March 2001, we set up a stand in collaboration with Ferrán Adrià from the El Bulli restaurant near Roses. This young chef has an international reputation and is widely acknowledged as one of the most creative chefs of his generation. When we offered olive oil blended with lemon zest, soya, ginger, fresh vanilla and cinnamon sticks with his name on the label, we were offering our customers the possibility of discovering new flavors, and it was a huge success."
In just a few years, Spanish products have stepped out of the catalogue of ethnic or seasonal products to almost become everyday consumer products whose quality is fully appreciated.
After all, France being a country that is concerned about the quality of its food, it is only natural that it should today enjoy inviting Spain to dinner!

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

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TEXT
GIUSEPPE LO RUSSO

TRANSLATION
SYNONYME

Italy: Hungry for Spain

There can be no doubt that first Europeanization and now globalization are changing Italian eating habits and tastes.

In Italy, as in Northern European countries and the United States, young people now consume more beer, alcoholic drinks and fast food than, for example, wine and spaghetti. Be that as it may, concerns about creeping standardization of manners and taste the world over have encouraged a growing number of consumers to rediscover and defend typical national products, the enjoyment of which contributes to a feeling of social belonging and individual identity. This has encouraged a lively interest in getting a taste of other countries through their typical products. This enthusiasm has taken root particularly among the more curious minds of the younger generation, who are ready and willing to try out new gastronomic experiences, too.

Peck

Recent data reflect the increasing commercial success of Spanish produce and delicacies in Italy, both in terms of value and volume. The spread of Spanish restaurants and novel establishments such as wine bars, which offer similar fare to Spain's tapas bars, has encouraged rising consumption of hams, charcuterie and preserved foods. Mid- to high-range establishments also add anchovies, asparagus from Navarre, sea urchin paste from Asturias, tuna and *ventresca* preserved in oil, finishing with hard turrón from Alicante, a sweet often presented as a gift.
"Italian tourism in Spain has had an effect and is a key element of the success of Spanish food in this country," says Mauro Stoppani, son of Angelo Stoppani and one of ten members of the immediate family and their husbands and wives involved in the running of Peck, Italy's most prestigious gourmet emporium.

Picture a 3,600-square meter establishment on three floors with only 1,300 square meters given over to the actual shop and the rest comprising kitchens, laboratories, cold rooms, cellars and other areas set aside for keeping and curing hams and cheeses. This extraordinary temple to quality gastronomy and wines located in the center of Milan was founded in 1883 by a *charcutier* from Prague, Francesco Peck. For over thirty years now it has been owned by the Stoppani family, who have widened its range to include food and drinks of all kinds from bread to charcuterie, cheese, fresh meat, tea, coffee, confectionary, preserved foods and wine. If you can think of anything else to add to this list, you can be sure the oversight is ours. Because you will find it in Peck.
Mauro helps his father with the selection of wines and charcuterie, although duties and responsibilities are not precisely defined. Everybody is a boss here, and a worker too, or as they like to say, "a bishop and a verger."
"Spanish products have a very strong local personality, which makes for great diversity, a very interesting factor in this market," notes Mauro. "Even so, customers who have had the opportunity to try local products in Spain and are looking for the same thing in Italy often cannot find the same quality."
This is a problem for a business like Peck, where only the best is good enough. "We may take as long as ten years in tests before we finally select a producer able to offer us constant quality," affirms Mauro.
"Over the space of one year, we sell around one hundred cured hams and about seventy *lomos* (pork loins), over seven hundred kilos (1,543 lbs) of anchovies from the Bay of Biscay, around fifty kilos (110 lbs) of Basque salt cod and some two hundred suckling pigs from Segovia," he says, "Not to mention forty-odd cases of high quality wine." Mauro is frank about other Spanish products, "We already have excellent quality tuna and ventresca products in Italy, and chorizo and Spanish *salchichón* are not really to the Italian taste."

Convivium

From Milan to Florence, the home of Convivium for over twenty years. The firm was created by various Florentine food and catering interests to run an elegant delicatessen selling Italian and foreign delicacies, as well as providing high quality kitchen and catering services.
"We have two kinds of serrano ham, and ibérico ham, cured for up to thirty-six months, as well as chorizo, pork loin and cheeses," says Massimo Maturi, joint manager of the delicatessen business together with Paolo Razzolini.
Who is the typical customer? "Mainly Italians who have visited Spain on holiday and already know

the products," says Maturi, "particularly the cured ham and pork loin. But demand is not that strong even for these products. Sometimes the curing process gives the fat too strong a flavor that is not very agreeable to the Italian palate."
Maturi also believes that the quality of the imported products is not as good as the original. "Perhaps we are not familiar enough with Spanish products," he notes, "and we could benefit from more experienced distributors."

Volpetti

In Rome, the Volpetti brothers, Emilio and Claudio, have been selling a wide range of fine breads, traditional pizzas, ham, local cheeses, cold meats and gourmet delicacies from all the regions of Italy and numerous other countries, for more than thirty years.
"We started importing products from Spain ten years ago," says Emilio. And, as he notes with pride, "We were the first to introduce Rome to ibérico ham."
Volpetti is located in Testaccio, a historic part of Rome which takes its name from a hill formed in ancient times from the discarded shards of amphoras, tiles and ceramic kitchenware. Formerly a working class neighborhood, Testaccio is today a lively and busy area at any time of the day, like the Volpetti store. Volpetti offers attentive, personal and family service to all its customers. Here, you taste before you buy. Everything–from a rare French cheese to the choicest cuts.
"Our customers come from all over Rome, and many of them are tourists or foreign residents, British, American, German and so on," says Emilio.
Are Spanish products popular?
"The truth is that sales were limited until a few years ago," Emilio admits, "but Spain has become better known, awakening interest in its food."
And now? "The cured hams and pork loins are very much appreciated," he replies. "We sell around three hundred kilos (661 lbs) of pork loin a year and about thirty ibérico hams. The use of *pimentón* imparts a sweetish flavor to chorizo that is less popular." He has no such reservations about the anchovies, becoming positively enthusiastic, "We just don't have a product of the same quality in Italy. We can sell almost five hundred kilos (1,102 lbs) in a year."
The lesson to be learned from our discussions on this brief tour is clear: a knowledge of Spain helps with the appreciation of its cuisine and products. But this could also be turned around: an appreciation of Spanish cuisine helps to know Spain. As for the rest, if the only way to "make a country your own" in the words of the great Italian writer Italo Calvino is to eat it, "to put it past your lips and down your throat," why not begin your research by learning to appreciate the aromas and flavors of the Spanish kitchen and its products right here in Italy?

***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.

Photo credits on page 132

Peck
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Spain's BLUE

ZOO

New Sea-fish Farming

Look out to sea at Taliarte, a small port in the balmy Canary Islands, and you can just make out a dozen colored hoops bobbing on the waves at the edge of the bay. Take a boat ride out there, gaze down into one of the hoops and you find yourself looking at 60,000 three-pound sea bass swimming in a giant circular net. Some 2,500 km (1,500 miles) to the north, but still in Spain, the

world's largest turbot farm sits on a headland jutting out from Galicia's wild Atlantic coast close to Cape Finisterre. Here, baby turbot, fluttering like fans, take two to three years to grow into fat five-pound fish in 600 land tanks filled by seawater pumped through the farm. These are two of Spain's new sea farms, which adapt the latest marine aquaculture technology to the coast's many

different sea settings and water temperatures. The original stimulus for investment was the Spaniards' own appetite for fish, but as the farms have expanded so they are beginning to apply their expertise to export produce: turbot for French haute cuisine, tuna for Japanese sushi, live eels for Scandinavia, and sea bass for the United States.

TEXT
VICKY HAYWARD

To say that Spaniards are fond of seafood is an understatement. For thousands of years they have been expert sea harvesters. The Celts collected limpets off the rocks and 9th-century Basque fishermen reached the Faroe Islands in search of cod. Closer to home, Mediterranean fishermen have netted eel in Valencia's lagoons, trawled for sea bream in Murcia's inland sea and hunted bluefin tuna south of Cádiz, while the Cantabrian inshore fleet has been landing prime sea bass, sardines and crabs. But in ever smaller quantities. Even now, after the depletion of sea stocks, Spaniards eat 32 kilos (70.5 lbs) of fish and shellfish a year–one of the highest figures in Europe–of which two-thirds is fresh. They also pay rising prices for top quality and variety: rod-caught hake or monkfish from the Basque country, red mullet and squid from the Mediterranean, and impressive clams, cockles and scallops from Galicia, where shellfish hunters comb the shoreline in season. How, then, does farming sea fish fit into a country with such a passion for wild seafood?

The Seas, from North to South

The answer is that Spanish marine fish farmers have gone their own way, responding to the character of local demand rather than the economics of scale and overseas trade. Other European countries working with just one or two species of sea fish–for example, Scotland and Norway, the salmon experts, and Italy and Greece, which major in gilthead bream–have moved much faster in Spain in terms of volume. Just 12,500 tons of sea fish was farmed in Spain in 2000, a relatively modest figure by comparison with that of eastern Mediterranean neighbors.

But behind that figure lies huge potential in the variety of species farmed for the local market and the natural advantages of a 4,000-km-(2,500-mile-) coastline with a unique European range of water temperatures. Galician sea farmers breed turbot, red bream, sole, clams (carpet shell and Venus) and mussels in the North Atlantic's rough, cold, plankton-rich waters. Gilthead bream, sea bass and sole are farmed in mild Mediterranean waters between Catalonia and western Andalusia–and tuna and eel are fattened here too. Further south, in the Canary Islands, big sea bass and gilthead bream grow to exceptional size in the warm southern Atlantic.

"For historical and geographical reasons," explains Ricardo La Porte Ríos, director of the sea-farmers' association APROMAR, "Spain is used to a wide range of very high quality fish. That has configured our marine aquaculture and sets us apart from other countries."

The Spanish sea farms also have a spectacularly successful example of home-grown success to motivate them. In 1946 the Galician mussel industry started with a few rustic, homemade platforms (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 26). Fifty years later the region produces one of the world's largest cultured harvests, over 250,000 tons annually. Significantly, it has reached that figure through slow, sustained, quality-

THE CHEFS' VIEW

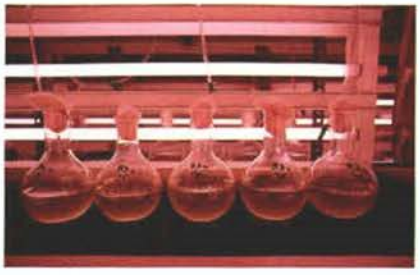
What do you need to know about cooking with farmed sea fish? Generally speaking it is younger and so it is more tender than its wild equivalent, with a milder taste, and it comes in smaller sizes than prime wild fish. From a practical point of view, it has several clear advantages for professional cooks. One is that it's useful for raw dishes like sushi, carpaccio or seviche because there's no risk of food poisoning thanks to the control of the fish's diet and environment. Farm-fed eel is also generally preferred to its scavenging wild cousin in cooked dishes since it results in a less muddy flavor. Secondly, it offers reliable year-round supplies, opening up new menu possibilities. Spanish chefs in New York, for example, can now make specialties like gilthead bream baked in salt or turbot in *salsa verde* with fish flown in from Spanish sea farms. Chefs much closer to home say they benefit too. "It guarantees freshness, which is never easy," explains Carlos Gamonal of El Dragó, the Michelin-starred restaurant on Tenerife. Both he and Pedro Larumbe, a noted fish chef in Madrid who has been working with farmed sea bass, gilthead bream and turbot for several years, recommend trying the farmed fish in dishes with sauces and additional flavors. Gamonal serves seared turbot with fresh garden herbs, sea bass stuffed with vegetables, and gilthead bream fillets with fine chorizo scales, oyster mushrooms, soy and chili sauce. (He notes that the farmed gilthead bream is more easily skinned than its wild equivalent–useful for quick filleting.) Larumbe currently has turbot in a squid ink sauce and squid garnish, sea bass with yellow pepper and licorice sauce and gilthead in a lentil and mangetout peas vinaigrette. (He points out the importance of adjusting cooking times to the smaller fish.) For more information on identifying sustainably-caught seafood, see also the guide by Peter Hoffman, chef-owner of New York City's Savoy Restaurant, published by Chefs Collaborative (www.chefnet.com/cc2000), an organization founded to promote sustainable marine cuisine.

controlled growth. Nobody in Galicia today would dispute that the big, juicy orange mussels far outstrip the quality of wild mussels gathered off the rocks.

Fish Farming to Aquaculture

Spain's second-generation marine farms began tentatively in the 1970s. They differ in two ways from those set up in the Galician and Andalusian tidal estuaries in the 1940s. Firstly, they breed fish as well as fattening them. Secondly, in order to do this, they reproduce the entire marine food chain from egg to final fish. "Generally, each species requires a ten-year research cycle," explains Tito Peleteiro of the Vigo Oceanographic Institute, which developed breeding techniques for turbot in the 1980s and red bream in the 1990s. Scientists study the egg laying, fertilization and hatching habits of each fish as well as its newborn larva's tastes in microplankton before setting to work to simulate the biological systems at play then fine tuning their methods by working with three to four generations of fish.

The experiments do not finish there. Much of the biotechnology in use today has been developed by sea farms. "Sea-fish farming is day-to-day research," comments Pilar Merino Andrade, director of a hatchery owned by the aquaculture wing of frozen-fish giant Pescanova. It is sited at Mougás, a hamlet on a wild stretch of Galician coast south of Bayonne. "Day and night you're looking at diet, water temperature and survival rates."



Five years preparatory work has already been done at Mougàs to pave the way for turbot breeding to start in a few months time. Each fish in its breeding colony is tracked via a computer chip planted under its skin. For the moment, the hatchery houses eight million baby bream looked after by twenty-two trained staff. They keep a close eye on the laboratory flasks and plastic containers where green microalgae, zooplankton and tiny red crustaceans grow in bubbling water as food for the newly-hatched larvae. Shoals of older fingerlings, given dry feed, swim in tanks of clean pumped seawater. Illnesses are prevented rather than cured: the seawater is filtered by anti-viral UV rays and all the fish are vaccinated in baths. The hatchery hopes to produce 6 million baby turbot by 2005.

Regional Specialties

Cracking these breeding processes has proved to be slow, labor-intensive, expensive work. It costs one euro, for example, to breed each juvenile turbot. But Spanish sea farms' potential rests entirely on the foundation of this work. Tinamenor, the country's first sea farm, named after the beautiful Cantabrian estuary where it is sited, is a good example of such slow, sustainable growth. When it started up in 1973, the idea was to farm the local red seaweed, Gelidium, to provide food for farmed shellfish. Now, uniquely in Europe, it hatches eight marine species–three types of clam, two kinds of oyster, gilthead bream, sea bass and turbot–and supplies them to sea farms around the Spanish coast for fattening, or on-growing as it's known in the trade.

Other sea farmers have built specialties around depleted fishing traditions. On the coast north of Valencia, at Puzol, tiny elvers are fattened into big eels in a closed system of recycled, filtered warm sea- and freshwater, using technology developed on-site in the mid-1980s. The main clients are local restaurants, who buy the eels for *all-i-pebre*, a peppery stew. Once the local catch was plentiful. But now the total European wild catch is down to only 400 tons. As a result, Spanish farmed exports are rising: already 40 percent of the 300 tons grown annually at this farm go live in water tankers to Italy, France, Denmark, Portugal and Holland.

Over sixty farms dotted around the Catalan, Valencian and Andalusian shores (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 43) breed another disappearing native fish: the wide-eyed, silvery gilthead bream–known here as *dorada* and famous for being prepared *a la sal*, that is baked in a crust of sea salt. Today, it has virtually disappeared from inshore autumn catches. Much of the harvest, nearly 13,000 tons annually, goes to restaurants. Another state-of-the-art specialty is farmed bluefin tuna, caught from the wild off the Balearics and Tunisia in floating cages and fattened off the Murcian coast for six to seven months. It is then killed and frozen to -60°C (-76°F) for export as top-quality sushi and sashimi. Nearly all 3,700 tons of annual production–equivalent to the entire wild catch off the Andalusian coast–goes to Japan.

Finally, we come to the case of Galician turbot. In 1985, just 40 tons of this flat fish, a legend for its quality, were farmed and eaten in Galicia. Sixteen years later, that figure has grown to 4,000 tons, which represents 87 percent of the world's farmed supply–and is equivalent to three-quarters of the global wild catch.

The Sedentary Turbot

"It is one of the best fishes...," wrote Diego Granada, Philip III's chef, in his *Libro de Arte de Cozina* (Book of the Art of Cookery), published in 1614. "It is long and round, in the belly very white... It is so royal, such a lord this fish that it has to be prepared with various sauces..."

The turbot's universal popularity as a gourmet luxury since classical Greek and Roman times was its downfall in the last half of the 20th century. Stocks tumbled dramatically after aggressive deep-sea fishing techniques

reached the Atlantic in the 1950s. "We hardly see wild fresh turbot," says Ana Martín, one of thirty *pescantinas,* or fish-ladies, who own their own stalls in the Mercado do Berbés, just over the road from Vigo's massive fishing port, home to half the Spanish fishing fleet. She raises her eyebrows and adds: "And when we do, it costs a fortune."

Turbot breeding arrived in Spain from France in the 1980s. The breakthrough, however, came much later, in 1993, when Stolt Sea Farm, owned by the Norwegian-founded Stolt-Nielson holding group, set up a Spanish subsidiary called Prodemar to farm turbot on the Galician coast. Now they have five farms and two hatcheries which produce 1,800 tons of fish annually, a figure due to rise to 3,400 tons as two new farms come into production over the next three years. Today other large companies, including Pescanova, also produce turbot here on a smaller scale. All the farms use circular land tanks fed by piped sea water to avoid the problems caused by rough weather and to satisfy the turbot's love of lying on the ocean floor.

Why did Prodemar come to Galicia? "The quality of the water–the seas are very clean, with the right temperature range, no mud and high oxygen levels," explains commercial director Enrique Corrales.

Their turbot is packed at the Lira farm, close to Cape Finisterre. The scale of the hydraulic system here, pumping millions of gallons of filtered fresh seawater through the farm, is impressive. It is filtered before returning to the sea with natural oxygen levels. Seagulls wheel overhead above the covered tanks. Illness is dealt with by vaccination of fry or, if adults fall sick, the entire tank in which they swim is sacrificed. The turbot, which grows from fingerling size to 2-4 kilos (4.5-9 lbs) in two sets of tanks, is caught to order every day. Scooped out by net and dropped into tanks of ice and water, they go to sleep and die quickly. Then, after a quick wash in antibacterial ozone-treated water, they are automatically sorted by size, punched with a brand label and packed into ice-lined boxes. The turbot leaves the plant by refrigerated truck just hours after it was fished. Today half the company's turbot is eaten by grateful Spaniards, 30 percent

WEB SITES

General Information Web Sites

www.elacuarista.com/ciencias/acuicul1.htm
Includes the main links on aquiculture in Spanish.

aquatic.unizar.es/LBA/LBA.htm
Web site of the University of Zaragoza with the conclusions of the White Book of Aquiculture (1999) approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. (Spanish)

Institutions

www.aquamedia.org/search/search.exe
European Federation of Aquiculture. Interesting in a general context, with mention of work done in Spain. (English, French, German, Spanish)

www.mapya.es/jacumar
Web site of the National Advisory Board of Sea Farming. Includes general information, normatives, directories, production, national plans on sea farming, publications and links. (Spanish)

www.ieo.es/
Web site of the Spanish Institute of Oceanography. Includes information on its history, centers, activities, documentation center. (English, Spanish)

neptuno.iccm.rcanaria.es/
Web site of the Canarian Institute of Marine Sciences. Includes information on its departments, projects, services and congresses. (English, Spanish)

Marine Reserves

www.mapya.es/rmarinas/
Web site of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Includes information on Spanish marine reserves: location, description, uses, ongoing projects and general information. (Spanish)

goes to France and another 20 percent is divided between Italy, Holland, Germany. A small amount is also filleted, packed and frozen to order for Japan. This, however, is only the beginning. If forecasters are right and Galicia produces 7,500 tons–nearly double its current production–by 2006, then the turbot–which keeps splendidly on ice–will be traveling much further afield.

Ocean Sea Bass

More recently the Canary Islands have come up with another specialty: sleek, silvery grey ocean-reared sea bass grown in the southern Atlantic's year-round warm waters to reach exceptional sizes close to those of wild fish.

"We're expecting to fish our first five-pounders at the end of this year," explains Juan José Ojeda, who runs the dozen sea cages bobbing in the bay at Taliarte, on Gran Canaria. They belong to the Canary Island's largest sea-farming operation, ADSA, which began the shift from land tanks to sea cages in 1994.

The challenge here is to ensure that the sea cages withstand the currents

THE FARMED SHELLFISH PLATTER

After a wet trip to Galicia to see his grandmother's homeland, Gabriel García Márquez wrote of its seafood in the early 1980s: "We walked through this rain as if through a state of grace, eating shellfish galore, the only live shellfish left in this devastated world..." There is still shellfish galore in Spain, but increasingly sea farms are giving nature a hand. Now the Galician cockle and clam hunters, men and women who wade out onto the estuary sands with their long-handled hoes in the autumn and winter, plant perfectly formed tiny 5-mm baby clam and cockle "seeds" bought from hatcheries. These take six months to grow, feeding on the rich local sea plankton, to become big mollusks ready for harvesting. Over 150 million clam seeds are planted every year to give a harvest of nearly 6,000 tons of shellfish. Researchers are also beginning to develop scallop farming, initially by gathering seeds from wild colonies in Galicia and Andalusia and putting them out to grow, like mussels, on long-line ropes. In Andalusia, where the scallops mature quickly in the warmer water, they reach full size in only 18 months. In La Coruña, work has started on breeding black and queen scallops. A new addition to the platter may come soon from the Canaries: the Atlantic abalone, or

oreja, a beautiful univalve with a greenish-tinged shell. Although research into the oreja is primarily aimed at repopulating the islands' virtually extinct colonies, sea farms are about to start growing trials in the nitrogen-rich water that flows back into the sea from land tanks. Meanwhile, the Galician mussel–which won Denomination of Origin status last year–is moving out to sea. Aquaculture technology specialists, Corelsa, have invented a new open-sea platform which would produce 200 tons of mussels a year as well as 150 tons of fish which would feed on baby mussels. The platform, currently being patented, should start producing in two years time.

which bring surfer's waves crashing into shore as well as spanking clean, super-oxygenated water in which the fish thrive. At Taliarte, 15 people care for a dozen cages ranging in diameter from 4 to 19 meters (4-20 yds). The team dives daily to repair rips in the nets and check on the fish. The risks are high: a few years ago many of the fish were lost during a freak storm. However, the advantages are clear. The fish grow better, they very rarely fall ill–less than one percent of the fish are lost during two years growing–and the currents carry away residues, making for very environment-friendly farms.

These are still early days. ASDA's production, 40 percent of which is sold in the islands and most of the rest on mainland Spain, currently stands at 700-800 tons of sea bass a year and 600-700 tons of gilthead bream. These figures will double as new cages installed at Sardina, a fishing village in north Gran Canaria, come into production. Already customers in Italy, France, the United States and the United Kingdom are lined up to buy these bigger fish as they become available. Confidence for the future also stretches into the longer term. Tinamenor, which developed the biotechnology for breeding sea bass in captivity, will open a hatchery here next year. New sea-cage technology also suggests much larger farms are on the way.

"We produced the first kilos on land and hundreds of kilos off the coast but the big quantities–hundreds of thousands of kilos–will come from open sea," says ADSA's managing director, José Luis Guersi. Already they have successfully experimented with an American submerged 25-meter (27-yd) net, like a giant box, where 400,000 fish happily ride out storms under the waves.

Others think the next generation of sea cages will be even bigger. "The future is in very large farms further out to sea," says Juan Rodríguez, managing director of Corelsa, a Galician company which exports sea-cage design around the world. "We're already making 130-meter (142-yd) diameter nets for fattening tuna and the technology can be transferred to other species."

It may be that within ten years a million fish will swim in each of these vast blue zoos.

The Big Issues: Taste, Environment, Health

At the end of the day though, there is a different make-or-break question about sea farming. Is the fish–whether turbot or sea bass, eel or gilthead bream–good to eat?

"Sea fish are naturally much more demanding than freshwater fish," explains Dr. Daniel Montero, who researches feeds at the Canarian Institute of Marine Sciences. "That is why it has taken us so much longer to learn how to breed them. Unlike freshwater fish, they cannot produce the Omega-3 oils they need to live, so their food has to provide them with it. We do too. This shows in their eating qualities."

Fernando Sanz, marketing director of Dutch company Trouw España, the largest supplier of feeds to Spanish sea farms, emphasizes the same point. "Turbot feed for example is made up of 97 percent fish meal and fish oils, which come from anchovies, sardine, mackerel and herring fished in the Pacific. Where veg-

RESTOCKING THE MEDITERRANEAN

Over the last ten years, Spain's marine biologists have been discovering that marine reserves not only protect valuable marine habitats and the fish which live in them. They can also help support traditional fishing catches in the surrounding area. Today there are a total of thirteen such areas in Spanish Mediterranean waters. The first one, Tabarca Island, south of Alicante, was created in 1988 to protect the local sea turtle and a range of rare flora and fauna. A large underwater wall was built within it to protect the area from net trawling and old wooden boat hulls were deposited on the seabed to stimulate underwater life. Only two years later fishermen's catches in the surrounding area began to show a marked improvement thanks to the protection of breeding stocks. As a result, the Islas Columbretes Reserve was created in 1990 just off Castellón, north of Valencia, in an area once famed for its spiny lobster catches. Eight years later, when a team of biologists began to study the "reserve effect," as it is called, it turned out that breeding and the colony's size had already stabilized. Not only this, but the catch of the small-scale inshore fleet allowed to fish traditionally around the reserve's edges had improved, as had that of other sedentary species like grouper. The biologists believe that in the long term 10 to 20 percent of the coastline needs to be protected from fishing in this way to optimize the ecological benefits–and the traditional, artesanal catches. In the Canaries, researchers are also hoping to use the marine reserves as starting points to build new colonies of two shellfish that are now virtually extinct: the Atlantic abalone, a baby crab used as fishing bait and balloon fish. "Here ecological viability is our first priority," explains Eladio Santaella, director of the Canarian Institute of Marine Sciences. "Later we may build another community for the shellfish gatherers. If we can make shellfish cheaper, then the black market for those hunted in the wild will fall away."

etable materials such as soya are used as a part of the feed, no GM products are allowed." Sea bass feed is also made with high levels of these marine raw materials.

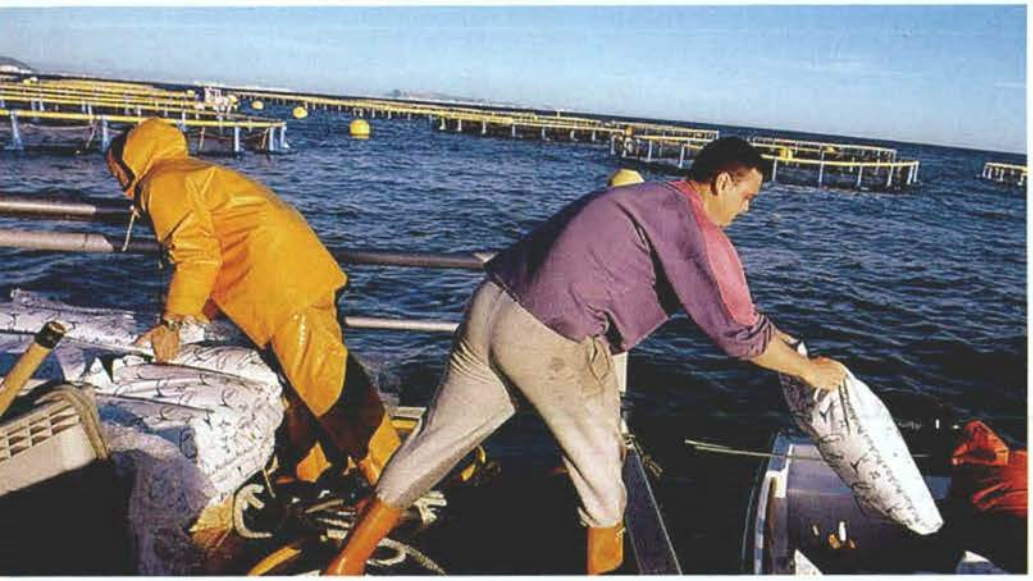
In gastronomic terms, it all comes down to a matter of personal taste. In London last year, Spanish guests tried wild and farmed turbot poached, grilled and baked by Connaught chef Jerome Ponchelle in a blind tasting session, and noticed a difference–but preferred the farmed fish to the wild. Some would say, like an eminent Spanish food writer, that this reflects "deformed current urban tastes." But it is very likely that the Romans, who kept great sea tanks of Mediterranean fish filled with water via an aqueduct from Ostia and loved their fish fatty, would have made the same choice.

"I wouldn't use the fish if it wasn't good," says Pedro Larumbe, a noted fish chef from Madrid who cooked in Santander, a northern fish port, for twelve years. He serves both wild and farmed sea fish at his restaurant. "You might notice the difference between farmed and wild fish when they are simply cooked, but I don't believe you can tell in more elaborate dishes."

There is a final but growing issue about whether or not it is good to eat. That's sustainability: around 70 percent of world fisheries are already stretched to their limit according to the New York-based Environmental Defense Fund. "It's like comparing farmed and wild game," comments Soledad Álvarez Guerra, of Tinamenor. "The farmed fish may not be such a delicacy, but there is a limit on how much we should take from the wild."

The Blue Revolution

In the last decade there has been much talk of a "blue revolution," but will it really come? Statistics suggest that it must. By 1999 60 percent of sea-fish species were under some kind of fisheries restriction in order to avoid exhausting stocks. This list grows all the time. Last year, for ex-



ample, the European Union added red bream, shark and nine other deep-sea species to their list. Hake comes up on their agenda later this year.

Reflecting a growing sense of aquaculture's importance–it already employs 22,000 people–a Spanish government white paper was published on aquaculture in 1999, launching national plans to coordinate research teams into priority species and a virtual "observatory" to make information much more widely available.

One research project, for example, is mapping appropriate farming and sea-cage areas along the coast. Meanwhile, the E.U. is drawing up a list of permitted medicines and feeds are being individualized. There's also intense research into alternative sources for proteins (for example, pulses) and Omega-3 oils (for example, linseed oil). Farmed seaweed is another possible ingredient.

Aquaculturists are also lobbying against the meat industry's rising demand for fish meal (70 percent of production), which is threatening the sustainability of Pacific fisheries.

But in such a market-led area, it's often the pioneering sea farms which set the pace. Over a hundred new sea-farm projects are in the pipeline. All are environmentally approved and monitored. The big producers are also researching new species and new rearing techniques. Pescanova, for example, is experimenting with turbot grown in cages in the sheltered Galician estuaries.

"Our knowledge is still very basic," says Soledad Álvarez Guerra. "One of the next developments will be that we learn how to breed bigger fish, like those in the wild."

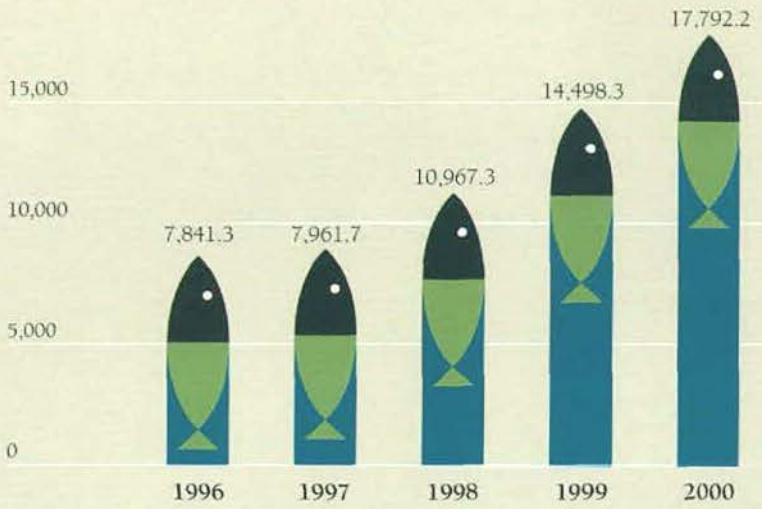
The farmers have also learned commercially. Now they are all trying to link the complete hatching and fattening cycle to sales, distribution and export. The Canarian sea farmers have shown how: they have all clubbed together to form a sales cooperative, Dylcan, to provide the volume required by large wholesale buyers and supermarkets and to promote their produce. A further natural development, as exports rise to markets less accustomed to buying whole fish, will be to offer it boned, skinned filleted and packed to order before it leaves the farm. This year, for example, Murcian tuna fatteners have begun to prepare the raw portions sold in Japan for sushi-making.

Menus and Markets

What new fish, then, are likely to appear on the menu in the next few years? Sole, fattened in Andalusia, is already for sale and production will also begin in Galicia next year. Black-spot sea bream, part of Christmas dinner for a lot of Spaniards, will be launched later this year. Eel farmers are also closely watching breeding projects elsewhere in Europe, which could allow them to breed, not just fatten, and extend into growing baby elvers, a much-loved but scarce Spanish specialty. Other possible species being researched are grouper, octopus–being researched by eight regional teams–and various members of the bream family such as dentex and sea bream as well as squid, scallops and Atlantic abalone.

And finally, what is the grassroots point of view? Sustainable fish cuisine is beginning to pick up followers among chefs, who now tend to keep wild fish only as a special item served very plainly. Meanwhile, back in the Mercado de Berbés, where the fishermen's families are used to the very best quality, the pescantinas say the new farmed fish sells well. "Of course it isn't the same as wild," says Ana Martín. "But then most sea fish from the port has been frozen at sea weeks earlier. Our customers know that. In any case, how else can they have fish for weddings? Where would I find two hundred turbot if I couldn't phone a sea farm?"

Sea-Fish Farming Production in Spain (Tons)



SPECIES	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Sea Bass	693.1	510.6	936	1,227.4	1,837
Turbot	2,189	2,125	1,969.3	849.4	3,378.2
Sea Bream	3,818.1	3,969.4	4,933.4	6,117.3	8,241.9
Grey Mullet	125	152.1	141.6	87.5	112.7
Amberjack	1	3	0.1		
Sole	23	219.1	12.3	14.4	13.1
Tuna	76.8	173	1,959.2	3,346.5	3,682.2
Eel	189.3	158.5	217.4	238.2	301.6
Salmon	726	851	798	617.6	225.5
TOTAL	**7,841.3**	**7,961.7**	**10,967.3**	**14,498.3**	**17,792.2**

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

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See Recipes on page 85, Exporters on page 109 and photo credits on page 132.

Part 2

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Celebration of Food

When foreigners visit Spain for the first time, one of the things that strikes them most forcibly–apart from the late hours we keep–is the amount of time we devote to eating and how interested we are in the whole subject. Leaning up against a bar sampling *tapas*, or seated at the table of the simplest or most sophisticated restaurant, a Spaniard is in his element. And what's more, the conversation during any meal is quite likely to be about gastronomic matters. Is this an obsession? A passion?... We'll leave that to the psychologists. What we do know is that, despite the new patterns and customs that are being absorbed inexorably at all levels–the workplace, the home, and so on–for the moment, eating is still much more than a nutritional issue in Spain.

This attitude has produced the many fiestas that punctuate the Spanish calendar in which food plays a leading role in one way or another. In some cases, the whole celebration revolves around a single product, such as the *chorizo* (star of several fiestas), or cherries; in others, the focus of the festival is a specific dish, such as *fabada* (Asturian bean stew) or *paella*. Many fiestas, while having a religious basis, culminate in the blessing of characteristic foodstuffs which are offered up to the saint whose feast-day it is.

Often related to the agricultural calendar, fiestas are held throughout Spain, but Asturias and, especially, Galicia in northwestern Spain are the regions with the most: Mariano Garcia and Fina Casalderrey catalogue over 240 in their book *Festas gastronómicas de Galicia* (Gastronomic Festivals of Galicia). Some date back many centuries, whilst others are simply traditions that people have always known, such as the annual pig slaughter carried out in rural areas at the start of the cold weather with a view to producing sausages, hams and other charcuterie to last the whole year. Every member of the family played some role, and it provided the perfect excuse for a big fiesta.

Some are of more recent vintage; the fact that a couple of new fiestas are created every year suggests that they are in no danger of extinction. The way that the public responds to them suggests much the same thing: some fiestas attract enormous crowds, while others are more local in their appeal.

This new series takes a closer look at just a few of the many fiestas–some open-air, some indoor, some hot-weather, some cold–held all over Spain in celebration of food.

In Praise of Peppers

Pimientos de Padrón are delicious little green peppers of which just the occasional one is fiery hot. They are to be found on the market only from June to September, and those in the know claim that they are only hot when eaten out of season. What the Spanish say about them, however, is that "some are hot, and so are others," so draw your own conclusions. Two major fiestas are connected with the Galician town of Padrón, the pepper mecca from which they take their name: one in the town itself on 25 July, the saint's day of Santiaguiño do Monte (the affectionate local name for Saint James of Santiago de Compostela fame), and a Fiesta del Pimiento held in nearby Herbón on the first Sunday in August, recently declared "a fiesta of touristic interest." Pimientos de Padrón, fried before your eyes in enormous frying pans, feature importantly in both these events.

Galicia has always been renowned as a source of excellent foodstuffs, and many of them are typically eaten at its patronal festivals. Two of the region's most characteristic local foods–pimientos de Padrón and lamprey eels–come from Padrón and its surrounding area. Padrón's Santiaguiño festival is also a Galician classic. It consists of three parts: parading the effigy of the eponymous saint through the streets in the morning, eating traditional fiesta food at lunchtime, and folk singing and dancing in the evening.

The procession sets off at 10:30 in the morning, carrying effigies not only of Santiaguiño himself, but also of the Virgen del Carmen, who is associated with seafaring, Santa Cecilia, patron saint of music, Santa Lucía, patron saint of sight, and the popular, and also patronal, San Juan del Rayo who carries in his hand the thunderbolt from which he takes his name. The procession's destination is a hermitage a kilometer away,

reached by means of a challenging flight of 215 steps. All this is accompanied by music played on the gaita, the bagpipes traditional to both Galicia and Asturias. Before this area was Christianized, the hill on which the hermitage stands was a site of pagan ritual and, in what is surely an echo of an ancient fertility rite, pilgrims traditionally pass through three clefts in the rocks facing the entrance. The clefts are now known as Hell, Purgatory and Heaven, and are reputed to help in achieving eternal salvation. The Apostle St. James is traditionally believed to have preached here.

High Mass takes place at midday, followed by the *romeria*–the fun part of the pilgrimage-cum-festival, when grilled local sardines from the Arosa estuary, the famous peppers (delivered fresh first thing that morning, mostly from Herbón) fried in large pans, and corn bread, are handed out to everyone free of charge. For many years, Padrón also held a lamprey festival but this has now died out. The little village of Herbón, not far away, claims to be the original fount of pimientos de Padrón, and its fiesta

FIESTA FOOD IN GALICIA

A survey of the gastronomic fiestas celebrated in Spain reveals that most of them take place in Galicia. Eating in Galicia is a festive business anyway, and constitutes an important facet of the cultural character of this verdant, rainy part of the country. There are no very elaborate recipes in traditional Galician cuisine, and some of its classic dishes lend themselves easily to preparation on a large scale as fiesta and festive pilgrimage food. Eating them is certainly easy enough.

Some of these product-specific fiestas merit special mention, such as those dedicated to particular wines: Albariño in Cambados, Condado in Salvatierra, Ribeiro in Ribadavia, Tinto de Salnés in Barrantes; and foods: seafood in El Grove, trout in Puente Caldelas, sardines in Vigo, *cocido* in Lalín, lamprey in Arbó and Tui, salmon in A Estrada, mutton in Moraña, mussels in Villagarcía de Arousa, *filloas* (crepes) in Valongo and, especially, octopus in Bueu and Carballiño. Actually, it would be true to say that octopus is a constant and favorite feature at all these fiestas. *Gallegos* are the biggest octopus eaters anywhere, and fiestas and festive pilgrimages are where it is at its best and most classic, served cut up on wooden plates, dressed with salt, oil and *pimentón* (a type of paprika from Spain), and washed down with a jug of Ribeiro wine. This way of serving octopus, first boiled in copper pots, is known eloquently as *pulpo a feira* (fiesta-style octopus) and is prepared by expert women known as *pulpeiras*. Paradoxically, the best pulpeiras are reputed to come from Orense, the only Galician province with no coastline.

Another classic fiesta food is the empanada, or pie. Gallegos are said to be able to make a pie out of anything; in fact, the usual filling is pork, but cockles, bonito, mussels and salt cod with raisins are some examples of many variants. Bandeira, Santa Margarita and Allariz hold famous empanada fiestas.

Equally classic are sardines grilled over glowing coals on the beach. At dusk, it's *queimada* time, a fiery drink in more ways than one, made in the time-honored way from *aguardiente*, lemon, sugar and coffee, and then set alight. An old joke has it that Galicia's lighthouses used to be lit by *aguardiente*-fueled lamps–until somebody tasted it!

Other fiesta foods include *caldos*, hot-pot soups to which cabbage and turnip greens are often added, and *caldeirada*, a fish version with onions, potatoes, and peppers. Pork and charcuterie feature importantly, too, in the form of *lacón* (knuckle or hock), *jamón* (cured ham), *morcilla* (blood sausage) and above all chorizo sausage eaten in various guises–boiled, fried, or just as it comes.

organized around them is known locally by the Galician name of Festa do Pemento. It is held on the first Sunday in August near the oak woods belonging to the Franciscan monastery. The Franciscans are credited with having introduced the pepper to Herbón. This year's Festa do Pemento will be the 24th in succession. The religious part of the proceedings takes the form of a service during which offerings to the saint are blessed. This is followed by a tractor parade, it being customary in little agricultural towns like this for each family to bring its own. A new feature introduced this year was the founding of the Asociación de Cabaleiros do Pemento (Association of Knights of the Pepper).

Padrón Peppers

Growing peppers is the principal occupation in Padrón and its municipality. During the season, they are sold in the Sunday market held along the Espolón de Padrón, a tree-shaded avenue beside the river Sar. This type of pepper grows on an herbaceous, many-branched plant 50-60 cm (almost 2 ft) high when grown in the open air, the fruit being about 6 cm (2.5 in) long. One interesting aspect of its cultivation is that it is carried out in small, family-run plantations: 20 families are occupied exclusively in growing and selling pimientos de Padrón. The traditionally fragmented pattern of land-tenure in this part of the country is not conducive to larger-scale cultivation, and nor are there any cooperatives. Given Galicia's wet climate and relatively few months of hot weather, a high proportion of the crop is grown under glass (remember that

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Getting there: Padrón is only 22 km (14 miles) from Santiago along the N-550 (La Coruña–Tui).
Where to stay: In Padrón itself: Hostal Scala II; Rivera; Jardín; Casa Cuco. Best of all, though, is La Casa Antiga do Monte in nearby Lestrove.
Eating out: Ches Rivera; Fogar de Breogán; Casa Ramallo; Pulpería Rial. Local specialties include the famous pimientos, lamprey, pork and charcuterie.
Sightseeing: The 18th-century sanctuary church of A Escravitude; and the Ruta Rosaliana (from Rosalía de Castro, one of Galicia's best poetesses). Convento de San Antonio (founded in the 14th century and with a late 17th-century church), near the river Ulla, and the Romanesque church of Santa María. Monte Meda, the highest hill in the area provides good walking territory, with the added bonus of being able to see the towers of Santiago de Compostela Cathedral from the top.

the pepper was introduced into Spain from tropical America). Around 16 hectares (40 acres) are grown in greenhouses, of which 12 ha (30 acres) are in Herbón, and 25 ha (62 acres) in the open air. The first pimientos de Padrón of the year appear in early May. Spain's national production is estimated at around a million kilos a year, though you actually buy them by the dozen rather than by weight.

César Justel is a journalist with a special interest in Spain's fiestas, about which he has written books and many articles.

GALICIA'S FIESTAS

Here is a small selection of Galicia's fiestas

Fiesta del Pulpo in O Carballiño, Orense
Officially declared of "national touristic interest," this is the quintessential octopus fiesta. Held around the second Sunday in August.

Fiesta Vino do Ribeiro in Ribadavia, Orense
Ribadavia is famous for its Ribeiro wine and holds a fiesta in its honor towards the end of August.

Fiesta del Carnero in Moraña, Pontevedra
Moraña's mutton festival is an institution created by returned Galician émigrés to Argentina. Over a hundred sheep are cooked over oak-wood fires in full view of the large crowd this spectacle understandably attracts. Held on the last Sunday in July.

Fiesta de la Tortilla and Fiesta de la Empanada in Bandeira-Silleda, Pontevedra
This omelette fiesta held in early August recently started using ostrich eggs. It also holds an *empanada* competition (usually for pies with a seafood or salt cod and raisin filling) for about 20 entrants from each of two categories: restaurant and home cooks. Held during the patronal festival of San Antonio on the third weekend in August. Laro, not far away, also holds a tortilla competition on 28 July.

Concurso de Mariscos y de Platos de Mejillón in O Grove, Pontevedra
This best seafood and best mussel dish competition has been officially declared "of touristic interest." Held on the second Sunday in October.

Fiesta de los Callos con Garbanzos in Carnes, A Coruña
This tripe-with-chick-peas fiesta takes place in Vimianzo. The effigy of local patron saint, San Benito is paraded through the streets, and over 1,000 kg of tripe is consumed in the course of this fiesta: it is served up in the evening, with chick peas ladled out from huge pans, and added chorizo. Held around the 21st of July, San Benito's day. A similar tripe fiesta is held in Mosteiro-Meis on the same date.

Autumn in the North

The *Fiesta de los Humanitarios,* held on St. Martin Day, 11 November, is perhaps the most characteristic of Asturias' autumn festivals and has been officially declared "of national touristic interest." The region's famous bean dish, *fabada,* plays an important role in the proceedings, being served to mark the occasion, both in restaurants and at home, accompanied by *pan de escanda* and followed by a traditional dessert known as *pachón.* This is also an occasion for wearing the elaborate regional costume of which each part of Asturias has its own specific version.

Come each 11th of November, bread fetches a higher price than cured ham in the little town of Moreda in the Aller area of Asturias in green, northern Spain. Not just any bread, mind you, but pan de escanda. Country loaves of this spelt-flour bread are auctioned at the church door after celebrating sung Mass to the music of the Asturian bagpipe, the *gaita*. The core event of the Fiesta de los Humanitarios is an auction of the contents of a spectacular basket of offerings to San Martín contributed by the congregation, predominantly knuckles of pork and spelt loaves, but with plenty of other local foodstuffs interspersed as well. The auction has been conducted for many years by José Antonio Gutiérrez, a local figure better known to all as Caneco. Caneco has the exact measure of what he is auctioning and how to get the best price for it: "These *casadielles* (walnut-filled puff pastry turnovers) are homemade," or "This little apple has been kissed by a fairy," he coaxes. He ends each round of bidding with a "No higher offers?" knocking down the item to the last bidder with the blessing: "May San Martín repay you and may you enjoy it."
Caneco knows all the bidders personally: "Sold to Vidal from the furniture shop"–"Sold to Antolín"–"Sold to Miguel"–"Sold to Roberto, the bank manager"–"Sold to Lita's brother-in-law, that tall man with glasses."
Local bigwigs and people of "standing" have little option but to set an example by bidding generously, or they run the risk of seeming tightfisted. The pan de escanda loaves are the most desirable items, unsurprisingly in an upland area where everyone has plenty of pork and charcuterie, but where this type of bread–made with spelt flour and lard–is a rare treat, and unique to this little area. It is not unusual for a loaf to fetch as much as 60 euros at auction, so every mouthful is precious. The money raised goes to charity.
The auction is held in the morning, after which everyone has lunch, either at home or in local restaurants, which concentrate that day almost exclusively on fabada, a hearty stew of dried large white beans cooked slowly with pork and charcuterie such as smoked chorizos, *morcilla* blood sausages and cured ham (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 50). This is followed by a street parade of floats depicting Asturian themes accompanied by bagpipers and people in regional costume. This lasts a couple of hours, during which everyone takes advantage of the free cider supply. Asturias is an apple-growing area, and Asturians drink a lot of cider. Their traditional way of serving it is to pour it from a great height into wide-mouthed tumbler so that it bounces off the inside of the glass. This is said to bring out all the flavor, and also provides a certain element of drama. The event is rounded off by what is known as the *xianda*, when groups made up of hundreds of people of all ages, dressed in their regional costumes, perform traditional leaps, songs, and dances. Almost every neighborhood in Moreda has its own xianda group which collects money and makes preparations for this event for months in advance.
The eleventh of November provides a good opportunity to see the regional costumes of localities all over Asturias: the center (Avilés, Gijón, Oviedo), the east (Llanes is particularly interesting in this regard), and the west (such as those worn by the *vaqueiros*, a group of people who traditionally lived in

isolation up in the mountains with their cows, and still retain traditional utensils such as the *payetsa*, a sort of long-handled frying pan). The women's costumes are made up of many garments: several skirts, a shift or chemise, an apron, a bodice, a pouch (which unmarried women wear on the left, and married women on the right), a headscarf (for attending Mass), a little triangular fichu ...and even more. The men's costume is simpler, consisting of a jerkin, shirt, trousers, pumps, and a *montera picona*, the classic Asturian cloth cap.

A Humanitarian Saint

The Humanitarians who give the fiesta its name are members of the Humanitarios de San Martín Society, founded in Moreda in 1914 in an attempt to resolve grazing disputes between the local councils of Aller and Lena. The custom developed of distributing assistance to the poor on 11 November, San Martín's day, mainly in the form of food to help them through the winter. San Martín (otherwise known as Saint Martin of Tours) is traditionally associated with helping the poor. Born a pagan in 316 A.D., he was forced into the Roman army as a youth but obtained his release on the grounds of his conversion to Christianity, eventually becoming bishop of Tours. Legend describes how, leaving the French city of Amiens one freezing morning, Martín encountered a poor wretch begging for alms at the city gates. Having none to give him, the future saint took off his own cloak, cut it in two with his sword, and gave half to the beggar. Martín's half was later prized as a relic by the kings of France; the beggar's half disappeared without trace. His defense of the right to practice Priscillianism, an ascetic doctrine preached widely in northern Spain, made San Martín a revered figure throughout Galicia and Asturias. Many traditional anecdotes attach to him, one being his determined destruction of the megaliths and menhirs which marked former sites of pagan ritual. Many places whose names once incorporated elements such as "*piedra larga*" (long stone) or "*piedra grande*" (big stone) in reference to these prehistoric monuments thereafter took on the name "San Martín de..." of which there are about seventy examples in Spain.

The Chestnut Connection

Though November is the least festive month in the Spanish calendar, it is also chestnut time. Chestnut-related fiestas are held around St. Martin's Day all over Spain, but especially in the north, where such an event is called a *magosto*.
The tradition in Béjar, Salamanca is to head for the countryside and eat roast chestnuts, which they call *calvotes*.

WEB SITES

Moreda: Festival of the Humanitarians
Web site of the Guild of the Humanitarians. Includes its history, members, head office, xanas, posters, awards and contact information. (Spanish)
www.humanitariossanmartin.org/indice.html

Padrón Peppers
Web site of the municipality of Padrón. Includes information on location, history, monuments, festivals and a directory. (Galician, Spanish)
www.dicoruna.es/municipios/Padron/

At the big magosto held in Camponarraya, León, chestnuts, chorizo and El Bierzo wine are traditionally consumed. In Perafita, Barcelona they celebrate a fiesta called La Castanyada with a big bonfire in the main square on which herrings and chestnuts are roasted, and eaten washed down with wine. In Galicia, Folgoso de Caurel, Lugo marks its Festa da Castaña with free chestnuts and wine for all and a chestnut exhibition, while in Moaña, Pontevedra and Orense, they hold a celebratory pilgrimage and light huge bonfires in which chestnuts are roasted.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Getting there: Moreda de Aller is 4 km (2.5 miles) off the A-66 motorway and 24 km (15 miles) from Oviedo.
Where to stay: Hotel Collainos in Moreda itself; Hotel Cenera in Mieres (10 km/6 miles away).
Eating out: Fabada is the classic dish of Asturias, particularly at this time of year, but other local specialties include *pote de berzas* (a hot-pot of meats, beans and other vegetables, including cabbage), trout from the nearby river Aller, game, and cakes and pastries such as casadielles (walnut-filled turnovers), *frixuelos* (crepes) and pachón (a sort of sponge cake). Suggested eating places: Mesón Celso, Casa Pando, Restaurante Colleiro and Restaurante Teyka. Esperanza, Ambra and Villaviciosa are good *sidrerías* (cider bars).
Sightseeing: The megaliths at El Padrún, dating from 4000 B.C., 3 km (2 miles) out of Moreda, just outside the village of Boo. The area's most dramatic view is at Las Foces de Río an impressive, 0.5 km deep gorge near the village of Casomera (29 km/18 miles from Moreda). The Pre-Romanesque church of Santa Cristina de Lena, 12 km (8 miles) away along the A-66 motorway, is a must: built in the 7th and 9th centuries, it contains an important iconostasis (screen separating the sanctuary from the nave) bearing Visigothic decoration and an inscription of the date when the church was consecrated. Open to visitors from 11 a.m. till 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. till 6:30 p.m. every day except Monday. A lecture hall adjoining the church contains an exhibition on the pre-Romanesque in Asturias.

Spain is blessed with a number of cavalier winemakers who seek to make fine wines by working without the restrictions of having to cultivate their grapes only in the D.O.-registered vineyards. They focus on the *terroir* by making precise studies of soil properties, climatic conditions and aspects to the sun of the potential sites, so as to find the ideal conditions in which to grow grapes and make great wines. The French often use terroir as a marketing indicator implying quality but it just describes the properties in the vineyard. Evaluating them determines whether the site is suitable for vines, and if it is, which varieties. Anyone going to this amount of trouble is clearly determined to make fine wines, so terroir can be taken to mean quality, but the grapes still have to be cultivated and the wine made.

Determined to do these things in their own ways, rather than within the protection accorded by a demarcated region and its regulations, the nonconformists have encouraged others to follow. Several have achieved prominence in other professions with no background in wine beyond its appreciation, and engage renowned experts to provide

MAVERICK

Text
Jeremy Watson

Photos
Rosa Muñoz/ICEX

Winemakers

the necessary experience and skills. Others come from families steeped in the traditions of wine but want to break loose from some of the traditional ways by a change in direction. In both cases their objective is to make new-style fine wines.

What was a trickle is becoming a torrent, and the wines these mavericks are producing are helping to lead Spain's response to the wines from the New World. While it is true to say significant numbers of producers within the denominations of origin have achieved better, more concentrated and structured wines than before, in most cases they would welcome more freedom so they could do even better. But it is those working their own way who have stimulated the new style, so to find out more we decided to visit a number of them and learn more about their philosophy and wines.

In simple terms, the traditional structure of Spain's wine industry was that the farmers grew the grapes, the cooperatives fermented them into wine and the so-called producers aged, bottled and marketed them. Of course there were exceptions who were very much in the minority. Change began about thirty years ago when the importance of the vineyard and vine variety started to assume more importance in the winemaking process, but not many took up the cudgels until the late eighties.

The European Quality Wine Regime and its appellation system is blamed by many for the regulations that constrain those aiming to make the best wines possible within the existing conditions. Limitations as to vine varieties, planting density, pruning, canopy management and production levels all restrict the winemakers' art. In the bodegas, techniques and aging periods are also regulated in an attempt to establish typicity for the said wine region. Unfortunately when vineyard owners and winemakers are constrained, they do not think enough for themselves, and the end result is often not as good as it could be.

Despite opting to work without the benefit of geographical identities, vintages, vine varieties and aging techniques on their labels, the nonconformists have defied convention and proved top quality wines will be and are recognized and enjoyed simply for their fine quality, often establishing iconic reputations they have not sought. It is the determination of these single-minded artists that encourages one to believe that the standardization sought by many new generation brand owners will not destroy this romantic industry.

In Europe, wine is divided into two categories. The first is Quality Wines with D.O. (denomination of origin), and the second, Table Wines which can be divided into two or more classifications. The latter term was chosen to describe non-appellation wines when most were very basic. Quality Wines enjoy the privileges of regional identity and qualitative terms denied to the others, thus having the benefit of a prominent marketing profile if the Regulatory Council is doing its job by promoting the D.O. Table Wines are subject to less regulation but cannot enjoy the same awareness and support, though recent changes in wine law is altering the situation.

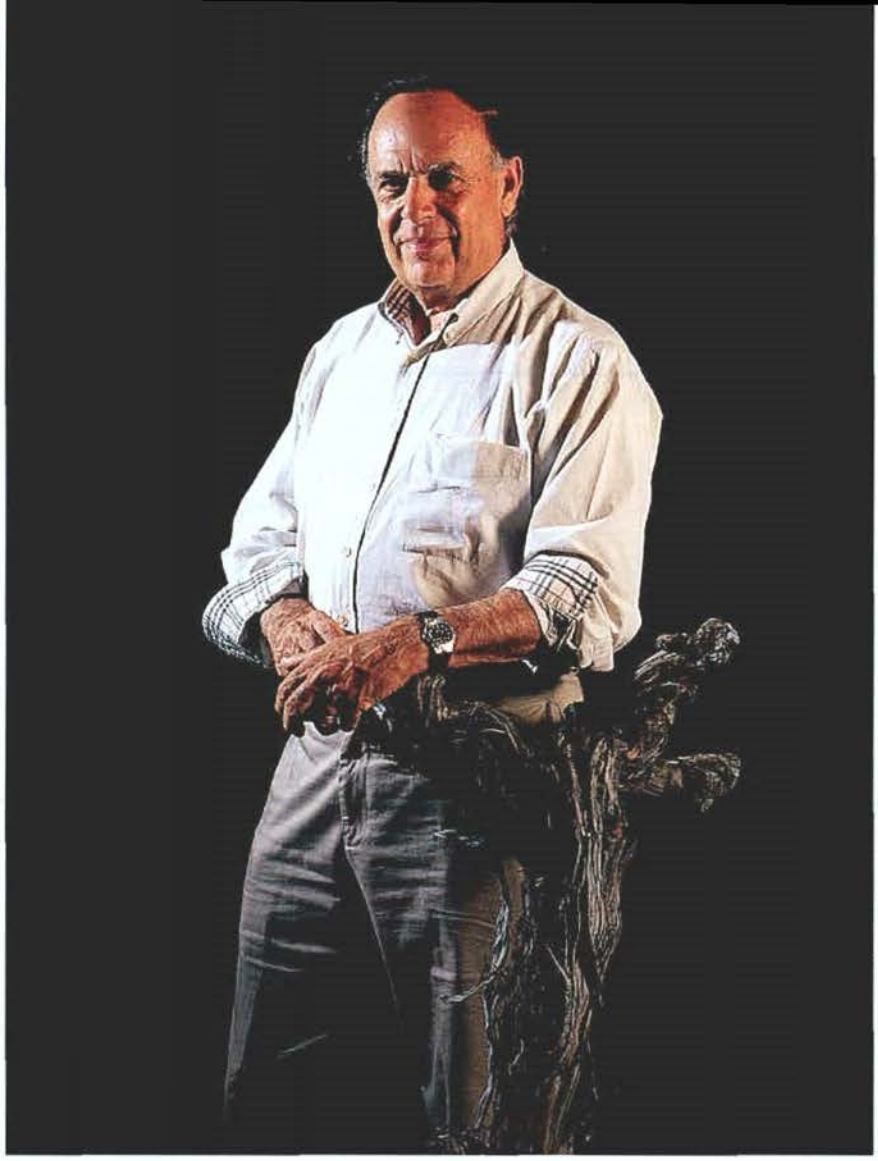
The impact of new and larger *Vino de la Tierra* areas is opening up competition with better wines encouraged by many of the qualitative terms being available to the category. For the subjects of this article this will be superceded by a new category called D.O. Pago, for which legislation is now being introduced. To their credit, the authorities have recognized that some laws were overly restrictive and are modifying regulations of the revision of the wine regime. In future a wider range of products will be entitled to proper recognition and a quality image.

D.O. Pago

The emergence of this new category allows single-estate wine producers to establish a unique denomination, writing their own regulations so they have all the freedom they seek. A Pago D.O. is to be a single vineyard estate where the vines are grown and the wine made and bottled on the same property. They will be subjected to severe monitoring by the autonomous government, first having to justify their accreditation by establishing and maintaining recognition for particularly good quality over a number of years. It is expected that two or maybe three will be declared within a few months.

The repercussions could be enormous, since bodegas that are now within D.O.s could break away. The president of Rioja has already said he thinks any D.O. Pago in Rioja should also remain within the D.O.Ca. That is a possibility if the relevant Pago has the extra freedom it seeks, but could be self-defeating as far as the region's typicity is concerned.

A group of like-minded radical winemakers formed a club called the Grandes Pagos de Castilla that presently includes eight bodegas on the *meseta* both north and south of Madrid. Each has or is well on the way to fulfilling the conditions. The president is Carlos Falcó, marqués de Griñón, who was the first of these protagonists when he planted vines on his estate at Malpica de Tajo (Toledo Province) in 1974. Certainly he encouraged the autonomous government of Castile-La Mancha not only to introduce the Pago legislation, but also to implement a program for restructuring over 100,000 hectares (247,000 acres) of vineyards in the region and create the Vino de la Tierra de Castilla.



Society Man

There is no greater protagonist for great wines in Spain than than the delightful and animated Carlos Falcó (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 22). When he launched his Cabernet Sauvignon onto an unsuspecting Madrid in the early 1980s, it was not taken too seriously because he was better known for his appearances in society magazine pages than as an entrepreneur. Of course, the variety was unknown to most Spaniards, so he was pushing water uphill anyway. But it was probably his notoriety that helped him gain attention for the wine, plus his communication skills in several languages. Apart from Cabernet he has planted Merlot, Syrah and Petit Verdot and more recently Graciano for which he has great hopes. Bordeaux guru Emile Peynaud advised Falcó at the beginning, and on his retirement was succeeded by his pupil Michel Rolland (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 47).

Dr. Richard Smart, the Australian vine doctor has been consulted concerning canopy management and introduced the Smart-Dyson system that is ideally suited to the climatic conditions in that it allows plenty of sunlight to reach the grapes but very few direct rays. Together he and Julio López, the estate's enologist, have developed a control system for drip irrigation. In each parcel of the vineyard they have put equipment that measures the amount of water vines are receiving both naturally and from drip. This measures the swelling at the base of the vine's stem and using the computer it can be decided whether or not to irrigate. When the vine receives no water the stem's width is fairly constant, but when it rains or is irrigated the measurement increases noticeably and they must ensure the expansion is not excessive. Rainfall is about 400 mm (16 inches) a year but none falls from May to September, so the system comes into its own during early summer.

To produce good fruit, vines need a degree of stress, and one method is keeping water scarce. How that is achieved is a matter of debate even amongst club members, because some believe in drip to assist even ripening, while others prefer to work without it. Other factors form the equation and one can also introduce stress by allowing grass to grow between the rows of vines and compete for the nutrients, or by planting vines closer together to compete with each other. With old vines the stress is inbuilt because advancing years normally mean they are less vigorous, but the fruit has great concentration.

The bodega brand is Dominio de Valdepusa and the top wine is Emeritus, a blend of Cabernet, Syrah and Petit Verdot that has a gorgeous concentration of the fruits and oak tannins with great structure and balance. It has recently won two gold medals in international competitions, the International Wine Challenge in London and Bacchus in Madrid. The Petit Verdot and Syrah varietals were both introduced to Spain by Falcó and have been revelations confirmed by their rapidly increased plantings elsewhere. Meanwhile the Cabernet's lovely aromas and flavors of wild fruits with a splendid marriage of acidity and tannins ensures its continued greatness.

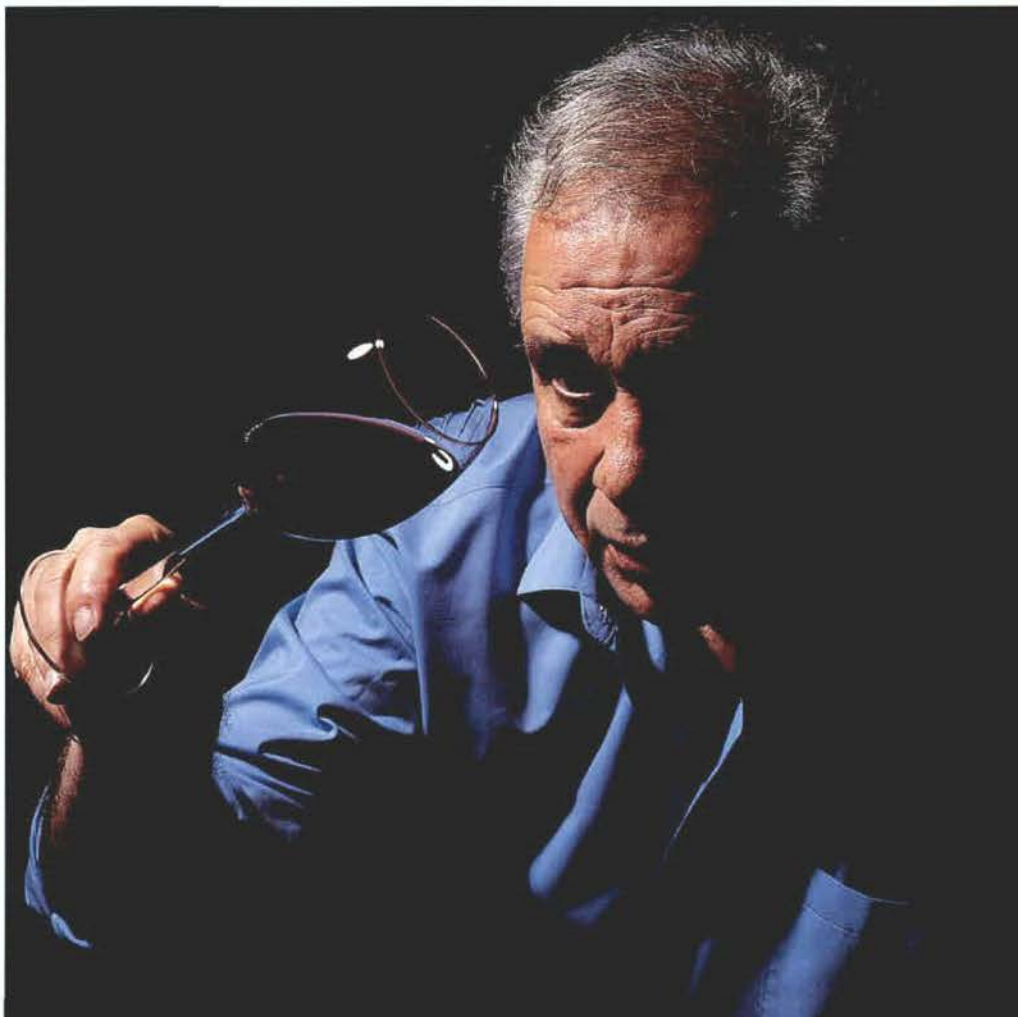
Stage and Screen

"Wine is like the theater, it is a culture and a pleasure." Thus says Manuel Manzaneque, a member of Grandes Pagos and an award winning filmmaker and theater director who is totally captivated with his wines. Born in La Mancha, he found great tranquillity in the countryside and determined to make wine part of his life. A lovely valley leads to El Bonillo in the Sierra de Alcaraz in Albacete Province and his Finca Elez estate that he bought in 1987. He planted vines and built a Mancha-style rustic farmhouse for the bodega, where the temperature of the aging cellar never varies more than half a degree. His philosophy is to make wines by treating grapes in the same way as he does scripts, through developing their subtleties.

The 35 hectares (86 acres) of vines are planted with Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Tempranillo, Merlot, and now Syrah all in parcels scattered across the estate at one thousand meters (3,281 ft) altitude. Rainfall of 400 mm (15.7 in) is reasonably good, the chalk and stone soil drains well, while temperatures range from 15°C (59°F) below in winter to upwards of 40°C (104°F) in high summer. Placing great emphasis on grape selection and the use of the best traditional methods of production, his wines bring out the best characteristics of the different varieties superbly.

There are five wines including the new Escena that will be released later in 2002. All are aged in oak barrels and bottle. Chardonnay flowers early, but despite, or perhaps because of the high risk of frost in spring, he makes an outstanding wine with lovely buttery aromas and a splendid combination of crisp, fruit and oak flavors. "It is good, but how can you charge so much for a La Mancha wine?" he is asked. It is such attitudes with which these nonconformists have to contend. Even though it has won second prize two years running at the Chardonnay du Monde competition in Burgundy, too many people still think if a wine, red or white, is not Rioja then it is unlikely to be worth what, in this case is the modest price of 9 euros a bottle.

The Finca Elez wine is a Tempranillo, Cabernet and Merlot blend and will become the icon brand because this is the name he has chosen for the D.O. Pago status he hopes to receive in the near future. The Reserva is a similar blend and both wines reverberate with soft wild fruits touched by oak tannins. The Syrah, a variety that was too long in coming to Spain is delightfully soft yet rich, dark, quite complex, again with lovely wild fruits. The Escena wine has gorgeous aromas and flavors. Michel Rolland had a hand in this one.



Architect and Pharmacist

To the north, in the province of Cuenca outside the village of Huete, is the vineyard of Uribes Madero, better known by its brand name Calzadilla and also a member of the Grandes Pagos. It was founded in 1979 by Francisco Uribes, an architect, who designed bodegas like Paternina and Castellblanch, and his wife Celia Madero, a pharmacist and Master of Enology, both of whom are consumed with making great wines. They set out to restore the lost wine making traditions of this remote area of La Alcarria 900 meters (2,952 ft) above sea level by establishing an estate at the junction of two valleys where the bodega, house and partridge tower are on top of a small hill surrounded by vines.

There are 15 hectares (37 acres) of Cabernet, Syrah and Merlot plus Garnacha in clay soil on top of chalk kept cool and dry by a constant breeze from the valleys. "We began this pago (single vineyard) as a vocation without the idea of expanding," said Uribes, and no room remains for growth. "This will always be small but perfected to the highest standards," he added. "Seventy thousand bottles will cover costs with a modest profit, but for quality the sky's the limit." As elsewhere on the meseta, summers are hot during the day and cool at night, which allows the grapes to recover from the intense heat. They are using underground drip irrigation between the rows to make the vines' roots spread and compete with each other.

The grapes are selected from the vineyards before being transported in small plastic cases to chill

overnight at the bodega before further selection and being crushed under their own weight in the fermentation vats. Yields are low at two kilos (4.4 lbs) per vine, which many consider to be the optimum for making fine wines in these conditions. The yeasts are natural, there is no use of sulphur in the vineyards or bodega where all the processes are gravity fed, nor any filtration, not even at bottling. Because there are no pumps, the cap is broken by pushing it down in the vat with a paddle twice a day for the duration of the alcoholic fermentation. Malolactic fermentation takes place in wooden vats and all wines are aged in oak barrels that are replaced every three years.

Don Francisco is the secretary of the Grandes Pagos Club and is awaiting his estate's own accreditation of D.O. Pago status. "Spain is creating a pyramid of wines with D.O. Pago at the top," he explained. Amongst them is Calzadilla. Two wines are blends of Tempranillo, Cabernet and Merlot and aged in French and American oak. They both have vibrant soft fruit aromas and flavors with hints of spices, tobacco and oak tannins and a good long finish, while the Syrah is a lovely rounded combination of plumy fruits.

WEB SITES

Wines without D.O.

www.marquesdegrinon.com/home.htm
The Web site of the wineries belonging to the Marquis of Griñón. It includes the bodega history, awards received, the locations of its vineyards (Rioja, Alto Duero, Montes de Toledo and Argentina), a selection of its best wines and a news page. (English, Spanish)

www.barnews.com/barwines/flash.htm
Manuel Manzaneque's Web site has no text, just images relating to his wines and his love for the theater.

www.finewinesfromeurope.com/sierra.html
The Fine Wines from Europe Web site gives the details of three wines produced by Manuel Manzaneque including grape variety, maturity, tasting details, awards and other information of interest. (English)

www.gauntley-wine.co.uk/latestoffers/SpainUndiscovered/mancha.html
The Gauntley Web site. It includes an article on Bodegas Uribes Madero. (English)

www.villacezan.com
The Villacezán Web site offers information on its location, its vineyards and grape varieties, the bodegas, the wine production process, tasting notes on the most important wines, a virtual shop and information bulletins. (English, Spanish)

www.bodegas-mauro.com
This site offers information on the bodega history, its location, its vineyards and grape varieties, the production process, tasting notes on the most important wines, production and sales data and distributors in different countries. (English, Spanish)

www.sonbordils.es
This site offers information on the history of the Son Bordils bodegas, their location, vineyards, visiting arrangements, wines on sale, tasting notes quoted from the main wine guides and news.
(Catalan, English, Spanish)

An Entrepreneur of Medicine

In the Montes de Toledo area (Toledo Province) between the rivers Tajo and Guadiana, is a glorious green valley of hunting estates where Don Marcial Gómez Sequeira owns Dehesa del Carrizal. This is yet another member of the Grandes Pagos. The picturesque winery nestles at 800 meters (2,625 ft) at the foot of the escarpment amongst 22 hectares (54 acres) of Cabernet, Tempranillo, Merlot, Syrah and Chardonnay, all trained on posts and wires trellising like the other estates.

The Montes de Toledo area was sold in 1246 by King Fernando III to the city fathers of Toledo who were to ensure they remained out of the hands of the Moors whom he had fought for their recovery. Not until 1855 did they return to private ownership and much of the land is given over to hunting. Don Marcial is an enthusiastic hunter whose background is medicine. He created Sanitas, a private Spanish medical insurance company, which was sold some years ago when he wished to indulge in a number of different entrepreneurial activities, with wines taking precedence. The first wines were produced in 1996, and together with the enthusiastic Ignacio de Miguel, who trained under Carlos Falcó and Michel Rolland, they are gaining a prestigious reputation very quickly.

Ignacio de Miguel has an obsession with cleanliness, which is one of the keys of good winemaking, and is also preoccupied with the excessive influence of oak. "Yet the wine must be rounded, so we like to keep some barrels longer than others so the

wine can evolve without more oak taste," he said. This is refreshing to hear at a time when too many wines are over aged in oak, mainly caused by more and more use of new wood without considering the consequences. The use of oak is a science in itself and a subject all its own. Tasting showed how Ignacio's preoccupation is paying off. The fruit continued to dominate even after fifteen months in barrels. The Colección Privada, a new wine made from all four red varieties, was stimulated by Michel Rolland's tenet of aging each type separately and blending afterwards. The wine was thought better when aged after blending rather than before, so they have tried a third option where the wine is aged by a combination of the two processes. This might be the solution with the fruits and tannins competing delightfully on the nose and in the mouth.

There is no history of vines in the zone, yet opposite is the Vallegarcía estate of the president of Repsol, Alfonso Cortina, who made his first wines from the 2001 vintage at the winery of Dehesa del Carrizal, including a stunning Viognier. Is this variety going to follow Syrah to Spain from the Rhône? It should do so. There are also Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Further along the valley the president of the Spanair and Marsans Group, Don Gonzalo Pascual, is planning a similar operation.

1 **BARRANCO OSCURO.** Cádiar, Granada
2 **VIÑEDOS PRÍNCIPE ALFONSO DE HOHENLOHE S.A.** Ronda, Málaga
3 **AGROSOL.** Lucainena de las Torres, Almería
4 **FINCA SON BORDILS.** Inca, Baleares
5 **VALONGA S.A.** Binéfar, Huesca
6 **VENTA D'AUBERT S.L.** Valderobres,Teruel

MORE MAVERICKS

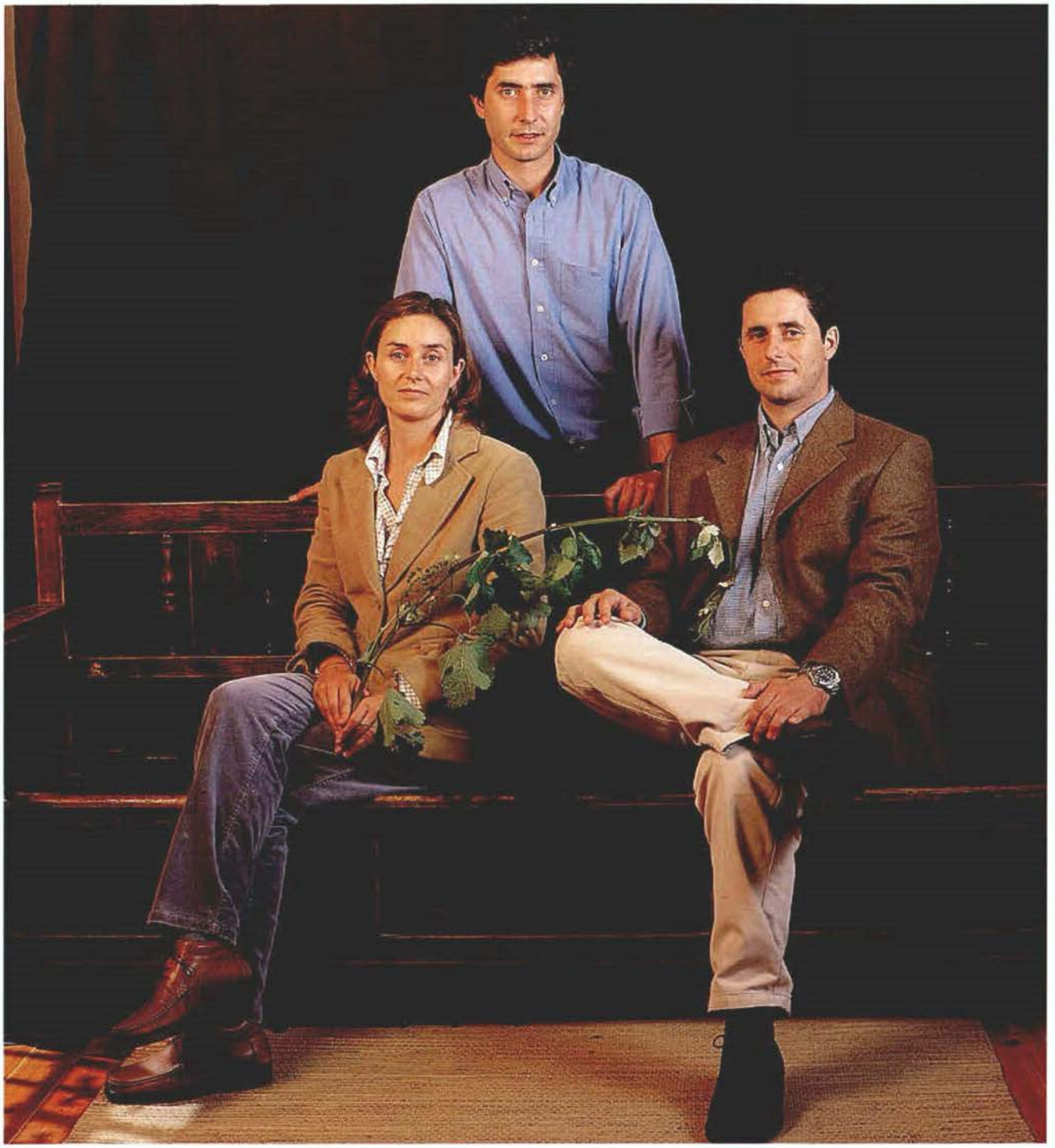
Interestingly, these bodegas are by no means the only ones. Stars or potential stars without D.O. would include at least a dozen more amongst which, almost surprisingly, are three in Andalusia. There is Barranco Oscuro in the Alpujarras south of Granada with impressive wines made using several of the Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Garnacha Tinta, Merlot, Syrah and Pinot Noir varieties. To the east in the mountains of Almería, the Pers family of Barcelona have invested in 90 hectares (222 acres) of vines and a bodega on their Finca Los Rubiales at Lucainena de las Torres, while to the west at Ronda there is Viñedos y Bodega del Principe Alfonso de Hohenlohe (Las Monjas) established by the founder of the Marbella Club and now heavily backed by Arco Bodegas Unidas. Two more potential stars can be found in Aragon, namely Valonga with single varietals of Chardonnay and Tempranillo at Binefar in Huesca, and Venta d'Aubert at Valderobes in Teruel with the widely acclaimed Dionus Cabernet Merlot Garnacha Syrah. Meanwhile, in Mallorca there is the 25-hectare (62-acre) vineyard of Finca Son Bordils whose Chardonnay has been well received in the U.S., where the Cabernet and Syrah wines will surely follow. These single vineyard estates represent the thin end of the wedge that is changing the wine culture in Spain, and many more single vineyard estates will emerge during the coming years, both in the islands and all over the Peninsula, as more mavericks seek to stamp their personalities on the new wave of this country's wines.

Traditional Roots

The García Luengos have been growing grapes and making wine for more than 80 years. Presently producing under the Vino de la Tierra de León classification, this family bodega, Villacezán at Gordoncillo, in the south of the León province, is run by two brothers, Gabriel and Carlos and their charming sister Ofelia. She tells the history of the family's wine business. Founded in 1920 by her grandfather Don Germán who employed the whole village in his various enterprises, he made pink wine (*clarete* in those days) from the Prieto Pecudo variety, employing an unusual method of elaboration and selling only in bulk. However, when her brothers wanted to develop the business and make other wines, Don Germán's son Gabriel, now a youthful 70, sold it to his children.

The family-owned estate, Dehesa de Villacezán occupies 500 hectares (1,235 acres) by the River Cea with cereals, sheep and vines; the cattle have gone. Gabriel thought the venerable age of the Prieto vines was a good reason to make and bottle red wines and their first vintage was 1994 aged in new oak barrels. The bodega is in the old family house in the village, but they plan to build a new one in the vineyards. In 1996 they planted 30 hectares (74 acres) of Mencía, Tempranillo and Verdejo, to go with the Prieto Pecudo, and all are now in production.

The 2001 Prieto Pecudo has an impressive tannic structure, a good omen for the aged wines. It is a comparatively unknown variety, though a number of experts have great confidence in its future, not least wine writer John Radford, who has long eulogized about its properties. It is soft with good forest fruits aromas and flavors, a firm structure and sound balance. The Prieto vines are up to ninety years old and some Tempranillo seventy. These grapes give a lot of extract and concentration with superb color. "They are fundamental to the characteristics of our wines," said Carlos. This area is a bit remote to Spain's mainstream winemaking and they need to break away from some of their roots in order to become the D.O. Pago they could soon deserve.



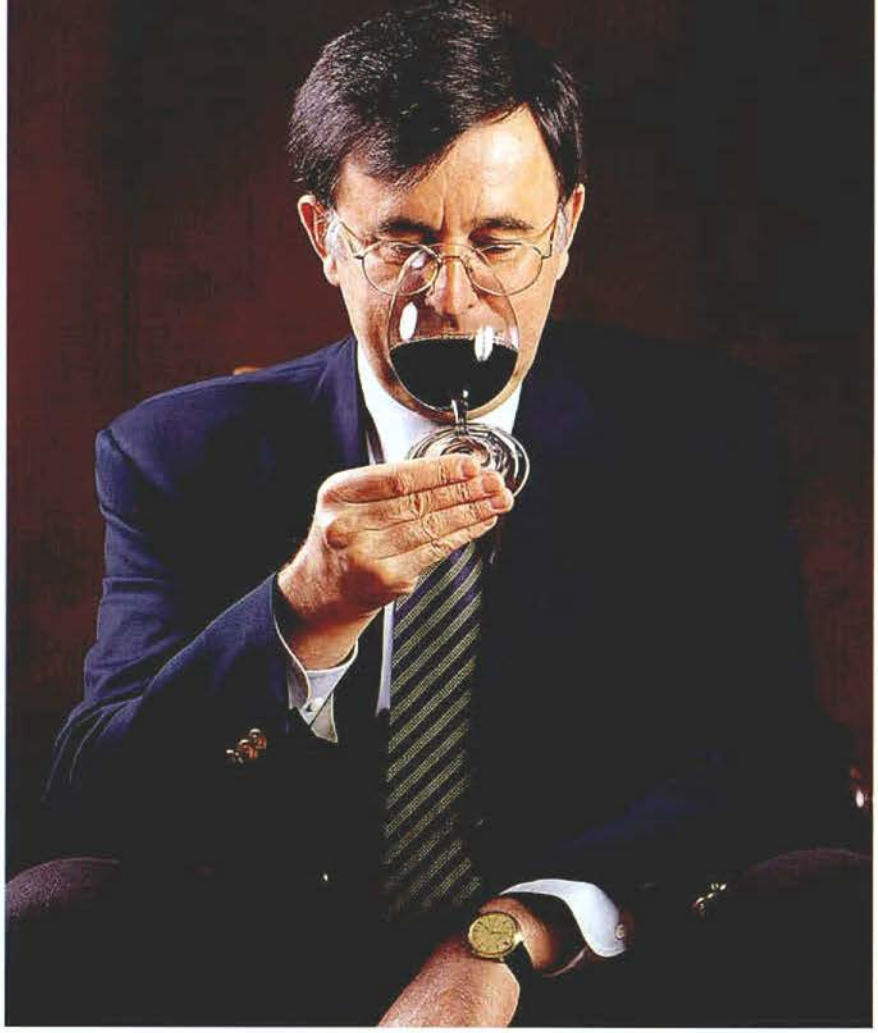
The Winemaking Icon of Castile

One of Spain's most prestigious winemakers is the enchanting Mariano García of Bodegas Mauro, which was founded by the family in 1980 at Tudela de Duero in the Valladolid province. He was winemaker at Vega Sicilia for thirty years and is also a member of the Grandes Pagos. Mauro's reputation is well established, and the Vendimia Seleccionada is undoubtedly one of Spain's best wines. Mariano now makes wines in Rioja, León and the D.O.s of Toro at Viña San Román, and Ribera del Duero at Bodegas Aalto, a new project with Javier Zaccagnini, ex-manager of the Regulatory Council of the Ribera del Duero D.O. So, if proof were needed, these mavericks also believe in the D.O. system; witness also Falcó in Rioja.

The bodega is in a classic 14th-century townhouse, which is over crowded with barrels in all the rooms. They plan to build a new one amongst the vines of which there are 35 hectares (86 acres) of Tempranillo, Petit Verdot, Garnacha and Syrah. Mariano propagates his own

plants for better continuity, and uses no drip irrigation as a matter of policy. The vintage and ferment is by parcels, with some malolactic in barrels, while they age both single variety and blended wines in French and American oak. Production is 180,000 bottles. Mauro 1999 is a blend of all varieties with a lovely balance of concentrated fruits and oak tannins and good length. The widely acclaimed Terreus is 100 percent Tempranillo from 70-year-old vines, which forty years ago were known locally as Tinto Aragonés. Tasted from the barrel, it is an enormous wine with huge concentrations of tannins and fruits in the aromas and flavors.

Mariano's sons, the zealous Alberto and Eduardo García, no doubt with a little help from father, started a bodega called Leda also in the town in conjunction with a friend Luciano Suárez, and have gained top ratings with their first Viñas Viejas wine made from 60-year-old or more Tempranillo vines. Some vines are more than 100 years old on *pie franco*, which is to say their own roots and not grafted onto Phylloxera resistant rootstock, because the very sandy soil prevents the bug surviving. Some of these vines are so vigorous they produce as much as four kilograms (8.8 lbs) of grapes each. Young winemakers have come to the forefront in Spain's wine revolution, and being less bound with historical practices, they are developing new-style wines that combine the best of tradition and new thinking. Nowhere will you witness their influence better than at Leda. They buy grapes from family friends in the area, renting the vineyards whenever possible so they can have absolute control. They select around fifty thousand kilos (110,000 lbs) from an average production three times that amount and sell the rest. "Quality, not quantity is our tenet, and the aim of all members is to create the best possible wine, nothing else," said one of them, César Muñoz. Scrupulous selection of the fruit is followed by a gravity-fed operation with vinifying taking fifteen days, using a large paddle for batonage. Some malolactic is in vat and the rest in mostly French oak barrels, which are at least one year old before use. "Wines age better when the oak tannins are softer," said Muñoz. They are also testing 500-liter (132-gallon) bocoyes that give less oak influence during the 15-month aging process. The first wine was 1998, which has superb dark ruby color with well-balanced, exotic aromas and flavors, but no way is it ready. The tasting demonstrated the value of decanting when a wine is still closed, which also applies to the 1999 that needs a lot of time to breathe. The barrel samples of 2000 with 14 months, and 2001 with 4 months aging both showed even greater concentration of fruits and a firmer structure.



Multinational Investment

Next to the boundary of D.O. Ribera del Duero, is the impressive and exciting Abadia Retuerta. It is the brainchild of Javier Brugué and Juan José Abo of the Novartis Pharmaceuticals Group. The property includes 210 hectares (519 acres) planted with Tempranillo and Cabernet plus a little Syrah and Petit Verdot. They cover the northfacing slope of mainly sandy soil with a little chalk, though some is so sandy it is like a beach and not planted. The slope reaches down to the restored and imposing abbey of Santa Maria de Retuerta on the river's southern bank. The first vines were planted in 1990 at between 700 and 800 meters (2,296-2,625 ft) on posts and wires trellising with drip irrigation. Frost is a big risk here and they have installed small modern windmills that operate automatically once the temperature drops below a certain level.

On the upper slope is the revolutionary winery that is gravity operated and designed by Pascal Delbeck of Château Belair in Bordeaux. Grapes are tested regularly to decide the precise timing of the harvest, and then selected on the vines and in the bodega. The estate is made up of a number of pago sites and the policy is to vinify each variety and parcel it individually into 78 vats with some aged before blending and others afterwards in both French and American oak barrels. The very knowledgeable vineyard technician, Álvaro Diez, confirmed they hope to be a D.O. Pago once the legislation is in place in Castile and León.

The most striking aspect of the visit was the distinct improvement in the wines since a previous visit three years ago. The lower-priced wines were especially notable, though the Primicia 2001 was recently bottled and rather closed but showing good potential. Rivola 2000 is a very good wine for its price point at 4 to 5 euros, with a rich color, good extract and a lovely balance of concentrated fruit in the aromas and flavors. All the '98s, the Selección Especial and the Cuvées El Palomar and El Campanario and Pago Valdebellón, confirmed the assessment from what is a very good vintage. Most of all it was delightful to taste wines where the fruit dominated with a more subtle presence of oak than is so often the case.

Last But By No Means Least

Bodegas y Viñedos Ribera del Duratón is at Valtiendas on a wind blasted plain 1,000 meters (3,281 ft) up in the foothills of the Sierra Guadarrama of Segovia Province. Here two sisters of the Magaña family of Navarre have also progressed significantly since their first wine in 1996. Natalia, who trained in Bordeaux and Madrid and divides her time between the two cities, is the winemaker, while Sofia handles the commercial side in Madrid when not helping at the bodega, which is another potential D.O. Pago.

Apart from the quality of the wine, the most striking feature is the 22 hectares (54 acres) of vineyards with potato size stones such as one sees at Châteuneuf du Pape in the Rhône. These stones attract moisture and help to conserve some of the warmth of the day when temperatures plunge at night. Planted in 1980 with Tempranillo and Syrah, they prune late to help avert late spring frosts and a harvest in October. The wine is made in an old cooperative where they work assisted by one man who, by installing a clever system of pulleys, racks the 400 barrels on his own. Having seen this job done manually, normally by two or three men, this was something of a surprise. The ladies like to focus on shorter barrel aging times and aim to make 50,000 bottles each year. There are three wines, one a blend and two single varietals. They now have far more concentration and balance showing hints of herbs and spices with rich aromas and lingering flavors. The 1999 blend with seven months in barrel is particularly good. Again the wood was not intrusive.

The overriding conclusion of these visits is that the nonconformists have demonstrated Spain can produce great wines of rich color, good extract and concentrated aromas and flavors with a touch of oak without overpowering the fruit. Though some clearly are, many of these wines are not expensive, which makes them very accessible to consumers. There are some larger bodegas, often in the D.O.s now making more concentrated and structured wines, though in most cases, not to the same extent as these Pagos. The D.O.s need not be left behind. If legislation is modified to allow winemakers creative freedom in the vineyards, more variations with oak aging, similar results can be achieved, not necessarily to the detriment of typicity and certainly not the quality.

Jeremy Watson *has specialized in Spanish wines for more than 30 years. He now lives in La Rioja and works as a wine writer and author.*

See Exporters on page 109.

A Secret Unveiled

Ham IBÉRICO

JUAN MANUEL SANZ/ICEX

Text
Anke van Wijck

A ham, is a ham, is a ham, or is it? Indeed it is not, particularly in Spain where since time immemorial one of the world's finest hams is produced. Now finally science has unveiled its well-kept secret: the exquisite *jamón ibérico* or ibérico ham is not only a blessing to our palate, but also to our health.

"This ham is truly one of the world's gastronomic jewels," Alain Ducasse recently conceded to his colleague Toño Perez, chef owner of Atrio Restaurant in Cáceres. Ducasse, like Robuchon, is among an increasing number of master chefs abroad who, following their peers in Spain, pledge worship to the ibérico ham. Recently, and not only in countries with a ham tradition, like France, Italy or Belgium, but in many other places, the jamón ibérico is causing a furor. "It is such a noble product, you have to eat it as it comes," says Elena Arzak. Her father Juan Mari Arzak, wholeheartedly acquiesces. This is the way they serve it at their famous restaurant in San Sebastián. Toño Perez couldn't agree more. "You can rack your brains, but nothing can improve just eating it fresh." At most, in his restaurant, he serves some young vegetables slightly sautéed and just topped with a few thin slices of ibérico ham. With the higher temperature, the ham slightly melts, just enough to give that special touch of flavor. The idea of course is that for culinary purposes the ham should undergo as little transformation as possible. Yet the scrumptious little bits and scraps that wouldn't look good on a plate have inspired Elena Arzak to prepare a powder that she uses to impart flavor to one of her signature dishes, hake with ibérico ham powder and hibiscus.

This "bite worthy of the chosen" as the Spanish nobel prize winner Camilo José Cela once praised the ibérico ham, is in fact the result of a natural process steeped in tradition, much along the lines of select wines. In no other product can we so clearly draw a parallel with wines, especially in regard to the deeper meaning of *terroir*, described by Sotheby's wine guru, Tom Stevenson from Sotheby's, as a "complete growing environment, which also includes altitude, aspect, climate and other significant factors that may affect the life of a vine."

La Dehesa: A Pig's Terroir

Just as a grape varietal thrives under specific unique conditions, here it is the Iberian pig that lends its name and all its outstanding qualities to the famous ham. The breed is the result of a long natural adaptation and selection process that derived from its domestication several millennia B.C. A descendant of the *sus mediterraneus*, a wild boar that once roamed the far more extended Mediterranean forests, the present-day Iberian pig still lives in an unequaled oneness with its habitat, the *dehesa*, a melange of woodlands and meadows in the southwestern part of Spain. It is this very oneness that constitutes the premise that makes the ibérico ham so unique. Thus altitude and climate play an important role and contribute to the fact that both the raising of the pigs and the processing of its products remain largely unaltered. Tradition is still paramount. The greater part of the dehesa is situated between 500 and 1,000 meters (1,640-3,280 ft) above sea level. It features soft springs and summers, and cold winters. With an extension of some 2.5 million hectares (6,177,500 acres) spread mainly over the provinces of Córdoba, Huelva, Badajoz, Cáceres, Ciudad Real, Seville, Toledo and Salamanca and spilling into Portugal, the dehesa makes up about half of the world's oak forests still in existence. And it is precisely the acorn or *bellota*, the fruit of several types of the *Quercus* family, particularly the holm and the cork oak, but also some gall oak and chestnut tree, that constitutes the Iberian pig's core nourishment and thereby converts it into what some years ago was coined by the famous Spanish nutrition scientist, Francisco Grande Covian, as the "four-footed olive tree."

While the full life cycle of the Iberian pig takes place in the fields, it is during the last three to four months that it profits from what is called the *montanera*. Coinciding with the natural cycle of its habitat, from October onwards when the first acorns start to fall, yearlings are taken deep into the dehesa where they feed exclusively on acorns, grass, aromatic plants and whatever else they may root up, such as tubers, mushrooms, small insects, even snakes. "These pigs are able to survive and thrive just on what they browse together in the fields, other breeds wouldn't make it," affirms Nicolas Vicente, the caretaker at the reproduction facility the firm Sánchez Romero Carvajal runs near Aracena, Huelva. Not only its prototypical physiognomy with its mostly dark skin, long legs, droopy ears and protruded snout makes the Iberian pig especially fit for this regimen. As funny as it may seem this breed has developed the ability to crack open

each and every acorn, spit out the shell and only savor its content. Ivan Llanza, from the company's PR department, volunteered some inside information: Apparently the picky pigs also have a clear preference for the fruit of the holm oak. As it is, each pig tends to devour between six and ten kilos (13-22 pounds) of acorns a day, the condition *sine qua non* for the unchallenged quality of the ibérico ham. In a good year (and not all are, as acorn crops fully depend on climate and weather), according to Abdom Cabeza de Vaca, who surveys the livestock at the family's dehesa in Salvatierra de los Barros, Extremadura, this allows them to gain a daily weight of up to 700 grams (1.5 pounds).

The Four-Footed Olive Tree

As a result of the pig's adaptation to the natural conditions of its environment, including a considerable amount of exercise, characteristic of this autochthonous breed are both a rapid accumulation of highly aromatic fat and a considerable level of intramuscular infiltration of such fat. The good news is that it has been scientifically proven that thanks to the diet predominantly consisting of acorns, 50-60 percent of total fat content comes in the form of oleic acid, the same monounsaturated fatty acid we find in olive oil and which has the by now more than well-known property of reducing bad cholesterol (LDL) and maintaining or improving good cholesterol (HDL) levels. Here it is not the olive but the acorn, not the man-made extraction process but this very pig's metabolism that makes it happen. But this is not all. "While generally very low in meats, in recent studies, we have also observed a percentage of Omega-3 fatty acids at three or four times the level one would normally find," explains Jesús Ventanas who heads a team of twenty scientists exclusively researching the sensorial proprieties of ibérico ham at the University of Extremadura in Cáceres.

"But did you know," he asks, "that a clear link exists between the ibérico ham's health-promoting properties and its gastronomic qualities?" So the even better news is that precisely what is good for our health is also extraordinary for our palate. Each new analytical study confirms that the very special conditions in which the Iberian pigs are freely raised, their distinct metabolism and the natural dry-curing process of its products, also account for the outstanding organoleptic features of its hams. Its smooth texture, appealing shine, bright red and marbled aspect, intense bouquet and lingering taste clearly set the ibérico-acorn ham apart from others. If Spaniards used to cringe at foreigners despising or removing the prized fat, it can now be scientifically sustained that most of its preeminent properties precisely reside there.

Yet the fact that science and technology have opened a whole new world of sensorial and salutary interconnections only adds to the mystique of this product that in itself embodies a deep and ancient bond between men and nature. "It concerns a system so perfect," revels Ventanas, making no effort to conceal his respect and fascination, "that it seems almost impossible that it was achieved empirically." So, as in wine where a perfect end product is only achieved when terroir and optimal viticulture set the proper stage for

REAL IBÉRICO

Real Ibérico
www.realiberico.com

Individual export pioneers understood that in order to optimize their efforts to create a market for their first-rate specialty products beyond Spain, it was important to present a coherent image and to bolster it with training and information sessions. Thus in 1996, under the auspices of ICEX, the Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade, a small group of them, that since has expanded to 26 and now represents 90 percent of total exports, founded a consortium that under the name of its quality seal, Real Ibérico, offers full guarantee for the export products carrying its seal and provides promotional and educational support at many different levels. While individual producers maintain their identity, the idea is to unify criteria concerning quality and image. Additionally the Real Ibérico consortium is a joint effort to galvanize scientific and technological research to remain at the forefront of both quality procedures and presentation.

What to look for ...

According to Real Ibérico, the color of ibérico ham should be pink to purple red with streaks of infiltrated adipose tissue and slices should be shiny. Fat should be white to very pale yellow. It should feature the characteristic V-cut in hind-leg hams and a half moon in shoulder hams (*paletas*). The hoof should be in place. The weight of the former should remain between 5.5 and 9 kilos (12-20 lbs) and of the latter between 3.5 and 6 kilos (7.5-13 lbs).

Real Ibérico endorses two qualities:

Jamón and paleta ibérica de bellota. This is the top quality and ensures that pigs have fed on acorns in montanera until immediately prior to slaughtering. The hams carry a dark green inviolable security seal with white text, a dark green band with the logo Real Ibérico and Ibérico acorn ham/shoulder ham in white, as well as a dark green tag with the Real Ibérico logo.

Jamón and paleta ibérica. In this case, the pigs, not having reached the proper weight because of acorn scarcity, have received a supplementary diet of all natural feed. Seal, band and tag come in white with green text and of course state Jamón/paleta ibérica.

Additionally each piece carries the identification mark of the individual manufacturer.

... and what not

There are three somewhat confusing terms in circulation concerning Spanish ham that require clarification.

Jamón Serrano refers to cured ham but exclusively concerns white pig breeds and the term should therefore not be used in regard to ibérico ham.

Jamón de pata negra has long been used as an indicator of good quality ham, as the black hoof was widely associated with the Iberian pig. Yet the term is equivocal as not all Iberian pigs feature black hoofs and some other breeds occasionally do.

Jamón de Jabugo also became a generic term for excellent quality, as it was associated with the village in Huelva that had gained considerable fame as a center of ibérico ham production. With the participation of Jabugo's town hall, the indication has now been claimed for exclusive use by a small group of industries in and around the town.

Further information can be found at Real Ibérico's Web site: www.realiberico.com

vinification and maturation, so here, natural circumstances and adequate husbandry of the pigs lead to a natural but nonetheless highly sophisticated curing process.

Air, Wisdom and Technology

Although most Iberian livestock is raised in Extremadura, the central part of the dehesa area, almost 80 percent of production of both ham and other fabulous cured Ibérico pork products like *lomo* ibérico (loin), sausage and chorizo ibérico, takes place to the north and to the south where local microclimates produce the appropriate mountain air and temperatures. Yet the fact that Extremadura has a somewhat warmer climate does not imply that it doesn't also produce prime hams that rival the best and that some people, like Toño Pérez, swear by. Ham curing in this area is increasingly benefitting from the helping hand of technology, especially where temperature control is concerned. Carried out in invariably impeccable facilities, and although slight differences may exist among manufacturers, procedures are roughly the same. They are aimed at gradually subtracting moisture and slowly concentrat-

ing the specific properties that characterize ibérico ham. The initial phases of salting and stabilizing last about three months and increasingly take place in a controlled atmosphere comparable to the use of temperature-controlled stainless steel vats in wine fermentation. It rationalizes nature's fickleness and barely–if at all–alters the products' positive properties. "At times," explains Florencio Ordoñéz from Jamones La Joya in Jabugo, "temperatures fluctuate as much as 20°C (68°F) in a single day." From now on nature and experience take over as hams are hung in *secaderos* or curing halls. While spring goes into summer, temperatures gradually rise and humidity lessens. Air currents and temperatures are now controlled solely by regulating the slatted windows. This rests of course on experience gathered over generations and fine tuning is key. Hams remain in these secaderos between three and seven months depending on overall temperatures, i.e. the colder, the longer. During this phase, taste and aroma will be defined. Externally autochthonous microflora, similar to the one found on blue cheese, will begin to develop and during the next and final phase will be partly responsible for the ibérico ham's quintessential bouquet.

Hereon after, like prime wines, the hams are transferred to cool and dark cellars for a period ranging from nine months to up to two years. They will have lost around 40 percent of their original weight. In the course of this final stage, nothing will disturb them in their long maturation process during which they will continue to fully develop the properties that so distinctly characterize the ibérico ham.

Quality Means Future

Its comes as no surprise that Spain, and especially the areas where the Iberian pig is raised and its products are made to perfection, would want to protect this treasure. Parties involved are certainly not only aware of the ibérico ham's commercial relevance tightly linked to regional sustainable development, but are also deeply conscious of the fundamental role the Iberian pig plays in the conservation of this peculiar ecosystem. Its disappearance would have ulterior consequences far beyond Spain. Additionally there is no doubt that the raising of the pigs in the open dehesa is both animal and environment friendly. Pigs not only dig over and thus aerate the soil, but also fertilize it. Here we will certainly not find the dramatic waste problems produced by intensive pig farming. It is obvious that the sheer perfection of the whole system implies an inherent control sequence, any of which steps is vital to obtain an optimal end product. Yet standardization is key. Therefore producers, breeders, professional associations, research institutions and the different autonomous and central administrations alike are keenly working and collaborating to consolidate and guarantee optimal quality. And quality does not only mean an exquisite product; it means rigorous control from "farm to fork," the ubiquitous sentence now used as a metaphor for full traceability. And it means being in line with European Union standards. One such institution is Aeceriber. The association closely controls and protects the Iberian pig's racial purity by keeping a strict genealogical register. It furthermore aims at improving productivity, yet with the clear premise of upholding the Iberian pig's unique properties. "Quality is our future," affirms Elena Dieguez, Aeceriber's dynamic technical director, and here she certainly speaks for the whole sector. Integral quality control is on everybody's mind, especially in the case of the three Regulatory Councils of the Denomination of Origin. With the D.O. Jamón de Guijuelo as the oldest (1986), there are also the D.O. Jamón de Huelva and the D.O. Dehesa de Extremadura, and a fourth, the D.O. Valle de los Pedroches is still in a preliminary phase. While many individual producers and breeders had already achieved top quality standards, it has been the main role of the D.O. to ensure that such standards be adopted and rigorously complied with throughout the sector, by means of a certification system based on

2nd World Ham Congress

As a reflection of the relevance ibérico ham is taking on both a gastronomic and technological and scientific level, in March 2003 the 2nd World Ham Congress will be held in Cáceres in the heart of the dehesa area. The congress will deal with such varied topics as emerging technologies, safety, new market opportunities, regulations, ham and health, on-line methods, and of course gastronomy. Parallel programs will be organized to explore the region's rich cultural and gastronomic heritage, including the "ham route." Further information and inscription forms in different languages can be found at www.conjamon.com

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How to cut an Ibérico ham:

1. The whole ham is fastened to the special board with the trotter pointing downwards so that the this part is used first, as it dries out faster.
2. Start by slicing away the natural rind and the outer layer of fat.
3. The angle of the cut should always be straight and long.
4. Using a short knife, make a deep round cut around the kneecap. This will ensure you get even, clean slices.
5. Turn the ham over so that the trotter is now pointing upwards and again slice away the rind and a part of the fat.

strict controls of breed, handling and feeding procedures, slaughtering and quartering, and of course processing. As difficult as it has been at times to change habits steeped in centuries of traditional craft, success is palpable. "Since the D.O. of Extremadura is functioning," says Pérez, "I have a hundred percent guarantee. It really fascinates me that since then I haven't rejected one single piece and would all give them a 9.5-10."

A Little More than Word-of-mouth

Another role the different Denominations of Origin are taking on increasingly is that of divulgation and promotion. Even in Spain sometimes there is still confusion as to what an authentic ibérico ham should offer. José Antonio Pavón from the D.O. Jamón de Huelva concurs that providing clear information is important, "but above all," he says, "we need to educate the palate, in gastronomy everything is empirical." This is exactly what the firm Hédiard in Paris discovered. "Amateurs really don't know much about it. Rather than informing, the best thing is to let them try it. From the moment they taste the ham, they will like it and like it strongly," explains Nadège Marini from Hédiard's export department. This is

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also the reason why word-of-mouth, especially abroad, is still a powerful tool, particularly where the end-consumer is concerned. That professionals require a higher level of expertise becomes clear when Marini adds, "we are acutely aware that this is a special product and that the ham requires special care."
This becomes especially relevant in the context of handling a ham. Traditionally an ibérico ham is presented as a whole piece, which then is carefully sliced by hand upon need. This obviously requires skill. "Each ham is unique," says Juan Francisco Hernández who just won the IX National Ibérico Ham Cutters Award where besides speed and cleanliness, such skills as the thinness and uniformity of the slices or the ability to cut a portion of exactly 100 g (3.5 oz), are rated. The ham has to be systematically cut along the length of the muscle and around the bone, and of course each side is different. Real Ibérico, the consortium that endorses 90 percent of all ibérico pork product exports, has issued a leaflet in different languages with complete instructions for cutting and handling, and regularly imparts courses, like those planned for the German gourmet shop association Corpus Culinario. While it is difficult to equal the quality of hand-sliced ibérico ham, in the understanding that in some cases consump-

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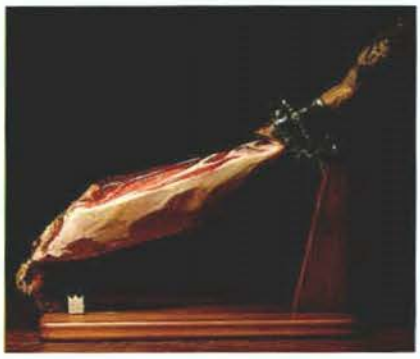

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6. Make another deep, round cut, this time around the top of the thighbone, allowing you to remove the slices.
7. A good quality Ibérico ham has fat infiltrations running through the flesh, which give it its extraordinary flavor.
8. With a flexible knife and a lot of practice, you get perfect, wafer-thin slices.
9. Guide the blade in straight cuts without hollowing out in order to obtain the maximum number of long, even slices
10. When you can no longer cut long slices, you will find the smaller pieces closer to the bone to be intensely flavored surprises.

tion may not justify the purchase of a whole piece or hand slicing is not feasible, Real Ibérico has commissioned the technological and creative development of alternative presentations like vacuum-packed boned ham that can easily be machine sliced, as well as smaller individually packed presliced portions. "The high quality standards we commit ourselves to, not only concern the product but also its presentation," explains the consortium's manager Miguel Ullibarri. "I am all for it," says José Gómez, "but indeed, packaging needs to be technologically perfect so that none of the product's characteristics gets lost." Gómez who is the fifth generation running, perfecting and expanding his family's firm Joselito, certainly knows what he is talking about. This year, his hams are rated number one by the respected food critic Rafael García Santos in his guide *Lo Mejor de la Gastronomia 2002*.

Due to the restrictions imposed by both nature and high quality standards, the number of hams produced is forcibly limited. Selected buyers are granted quotas and hams are sold on future. Yet export is seen as an exciting challenge. "Export is more a question of image than of need, but it certainly is part of our future," says Jesús García, export manager of the beverage firm Osborne that owns Sánchez Romero Carvajal. For Gómez so

TRACING SYSTEM

ASICI, the inter-professional association of Iberian pig raisers and breeders from Zafra, Extremadura is especially keen on creating a comprehensive tracing system. At the initiative of its manager, Gregorio Hernández, and though still in an experimental phase, a chip is being perfected that, placed in all four hocks of the pig, will eventually allow each individual piece of ham to be fully computer identified. For the time being 50,000 chips have been inserted as a trial. Thus the idea is that sometime in the future, if you buy an authentic ibérico acorn ham at–let's say–Harrod's in London, by means of a handheld radio frequency reader connected to an ADSL line, you will be able to trace back your ham's full history from birth to buyer. Further information can be found on their Web site: www.trazabilidad.org

much is clear: "More important than selling quantity, is to see our product referenced on menus at the most prestigious restaurants abroad."

An Ancient Gourmet's Delight

Yet the prestige of the ibérico acorn ham is not new. It goes far back into history. As early as the first century B.C., the Greek geographer and historian Strabo extolled the excellence of ibérico ham. And when the poet Marcial wrote, "from the country of the mountain people (Iberians), bring me a ham and let the greedy eat steaks," he set a trend that now is in vogue. While it is a true pleasure to share a portion of ibérico ham, accompanied with a good glass of red wine, dry sherry, or *cava*, increasingly it is ordered as an alternative main course. "Sometimes people complain about the price of ibérico ham," says Paco de Gea, who owns Pan, Pan y Jamón, Jamón, a gourmet shop in Moraira, Alicante and sells ibérico de bellota at 110 euros per kilo, "but just compare it with the menu price of a filet mignon. And you know," he concludes, "satisfaction is always guaranteed." Additionally–and this may seem an oxymoron–de Gea points to the fact that at the same weight a portion of ibérico ham has more volume than any other ham. That its ratio, small quantity versus great satisfaction, is optimal has been clearly understood in Japan where ibérico ham is the talk of the town. "In Japan people have a deep interest in gastronomy, they bother to learn about things and have an educated palate," says Aurelio Castro, a fourth-generation producer in Guijuelo, Salamanca, who will soon be visiting Japan and South Korea. What Castro may or may not know is that recently scientists have detected in ibérico ham the natural components of what the Japanese define as a fifth modality of taste, namely *umami*. Apparently umami defies description, but has been defined as "savory" or "delicious." Emmet Watson, a staff columnist at the Seattle Times suggested, "you will only know it once you have tasted it." So if umami is only one of its outstanding sensory elements, it is easily understood why even experts utterly fail at attempts to define ibérico ham. The closest they come to a definition is "bliss." So wherever you are, pick up the challenge. Just picture a whole ham, glistening and bright red with little streaks of white. Then close your eyes and let the complex bouquet reminiscing toasted nuts, fruity oils, perhaps some wood, initiate you to what is yet to come. Now open your eyes and quietly watch how piece-by-piece the ham is skillfully cut into wafer-thin bite-size slices. Then pick one up between thumb and index finger and let it slide into your mouth where it will melt on your tongue. Now savor it slowly and notice the soft lingering before you take the next one.

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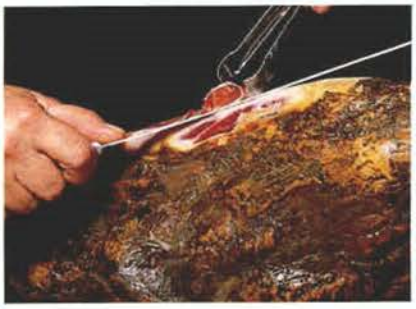
See Recipes on page 85, Exporters on page 109 and Photo Credits on page 132.



WEB SITES

www.uco.es/dptos/prod-animal/p-animales/cerdo-iberico/
This Web site has been produced by the Animal Production Department of the Higher Technical School for Agronomists and Forestry Specialists in the University of Córdoba with the aim of offering a forum for information on the Iberian pig: rearing methods, meat quality, genetics, quality of pork products, assessment and sale of products. It also includes a bibliography and links. (English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish)

Hams with Denominations of Origin:

www.mapya.es/aliment/pags/denominacion/jamon/introduc.htm
This is the Web site produced by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture and Fishing on D.O. Ibérico hams. It describes the products and offers information on control structures, labeling, legislation and addresses. (Spanish)

D. O. Jamón de Guijuelo

www.ceresnet.com/guijuelol
The Web site produced by the Regulatory Council of the D.O. Jamón de Guijuelo. It offers information on the towns where Iberian pigs are bred, the keys to ham quality, companies involved in production and news. (Spanish)

www.mapya.es/indices/pags/aliment/index.htm
The Web site produced by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fishing on D.O. Guijuelo ham. It gives a description of the product, the geographical areas where it is produced, the process involved and the environmental aspects. (Spanish)

D.O. Jamón de Huelva

www.jamondehuelva.com
This is the Web site of the Regulatory Council of the D.O. Jamón de Huelva. It includes information on Huelva ham, quality control, a guide to the best years, the special characteristics of the product, a guide to slicing, nutritional details, news and new projects. The site offers a news service by mail. Of note on this site are the photographs, the page with recipes including ham given by top Spanish cooks, a series of photos showing the slicing ritual and a sequence of ten texts and photographs illustrating the ham production process. (English, Spanish)

www.mapya.es/aliment/pags/denominacion/jamon/huelva.htm
The Web site produced by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture and Fishing giving details of D.O. Huelva ham, with a description of the product, the geographical area for production, the process involved and environmental aspects. (Spanish)

D.O. Dehesa de Extremadura

www.mapya.es/indices/pags/aliment/index.htm
The Web site produced by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture and Fishing for D.O. Dehesa de Extremadura ham, with a product description, information on the area of production, the process involved and environmental aspects. (Spanish)

Companies

www.jamoniberico.com
This Web site has been produced by Lo Mejor de la Dehesa S.L. It includes information on the company, general information on the D.O.s Dehesa de Extremadura, Jamón de Huelva and Jamón de Guijuelo, as well as recommendations for eating and slicing the ham, a catalogue for purchases and reservations and contacts.
(English, French, German, Italian, Spanish)

Institutions

www.realiberico.com
This is the Web site of the Consorcio Real Ibérico whose aim is to promote Spanish ibérico ham.
(English, French, German, Spanish)



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Spain's COLD SOUPS

Gazpacho is known the world over as Spanish cuisine's cold soup. It has become somehow symbolic of our *savoir-vivre*, our light and color. But it's by no means the only one we have. There's *salmorejo*, *porra* and *ajoblanco*, too, not to mention versions made with chopped vegetables and aromatic herbs. They are Spanish gastronomy's time-honored–and delicious–response to long, hot summers.

Soup is, and always has been, a very common and universal food resource. The fact that it is eaten cold, however, singles it out and defines its origins and uses. Countries whose climate is typified by long hot summers are, unsurprisingly, the ones which have capitalized most on cold soups. Spain is one of these, embracing as it does the pros and cons of a continental climate in the center of the Peninsula and the more benign temperatures along its varied coastline. Such contrasts of climate always generate inspired ways of making their extremes tolerable, creating antidotes such as refreshing foods that are a pleasure to eat: cold soups *a la española* are a prime example.

We Spanish have evolved a long tradition of coping with the heat, skillfully deploying shade, slatted blinds, fans, straw hats, spouted earthenware jars which keep water very cold and, when cleverly wielded, emit a fine jet of it into your mouth. But what we really look forward to as a heat beater are our cold soups–imaginative and efficacious, they never let us down. They actually make soaring temperatures something to be pleased about!

Historical Origins

Since as far back as Antiquity, cold soups have fulfilled an important role in Spanish territories during the hot seasons as a food which not only rehydrates the body by providing it with saline solution but also incorporates antiseptic elements such as garlic, wine vinegar, and, of course, salt itself.

In Roman Hispania, a great deal of *"leche de almendras"* (almond milk) was consumed. This was made by crushing the nuts in a mortar with garlic and salt and mixing them with water to which virgin olive oil and chunks of bread would then be added. This was the ancestor of the cold soup known as *ajoblanco* that we still eat today.

Another early precedent was the Jewish contribution of what one might call "green gazpachos." In their contemporary variations, these belong to the category of cold soups that incorporates kitchen garden vegetables such as lettuce and escarole and other wild herbs such as wild asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis L.*) with their stimulating hint of bitterness. These vivid, rural, green gazpachos survive in the mountain chains of Málaga which extend from the foothills of the Sierra Nevada to the Mediterranean. Their ingredients include bladder campion which grows abundantly under olive trees in spring, brookweed (*Samolus Valerandi*) collected from streams, common sow-thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus L.*), wild rocket (*Eruca vesicaria Cavanilles ssp*), members of the chicory family such as dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale Weber*) and rush skelton weed (*Chondrilla juncea L.*), and fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare Miller*). This list is by no means exhaustive.

In green gazpachos, all these vegetables, which can be gathered on country walks (reviving ancient pastoral and nomadic traditions) are presented, fresh and vivid, submerged in a "miniature pool" in the form of an earthenware bowl of cold water, perhaps drawn from the patio well, and dressed and seasoned like any other gazpacho with varietal olive oils such as Picual or Verdial (local to Vélez Málaga), sherry vinegar and sea salt. These Judaic relics of ancient times are eloquent examples of clever adaptation to one's physical environment, even in the adverse circumstances of itinerancy.

The Arabs' presence on Spanish soil lasted eight centuries, from their initial invasion in 711 to the ousting of Boabdil the last Moorish king, in

Andalusian Gazpacho

Serves 4:

- 1 kg (2 lb 3 oz) ripe tomatoes, peeled
- 1 green bell pepper cut into 8 pieces
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- 100 g (4 oz.) white breadcrumbs, using day-old bread and with the crusts removed
- 150 ml (10 tbs/5 fl oz) extra virgin olive oil
- 2 soup spoons of sherry vinegar
- 2 tsp salt

Garnish:

- 1 small onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 ripe but firm tomato, peeled and finely chopped
- 50 g (2 oz) green pepper, finely chopped
- 50 g (2 oz) cucumber, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 diced boiled egg
- 100 g (4 oz) day-old bread, diced

Soak the breadcrumbs in water. Squeeze off any excess water until the bread has a spongy texture.
Pound the garlic with the salt in the mortar and liquefy it with a little water. If you are making it by hand, continue using a round bowl. If you are using a blender, tip the garlic mixture in, add the other ingredients and patiently blend them together. Add the oil slowly so that it emulsifies and the mixture thickens and becomes creamy. Check the seasoning and add more salt or vinegar if needed.
Pour the mixture into a serving bowl or pitcher. Cover it and leave it in the fridge. Just before serving, add ice-cold water until you obtain the desired consistency. Place the gazpacho in the center of the table with the garnishes in individual small bowls around it.

1492, which marked the end of a cycle of inestimable importance for the gastronomic arts in Spain. During this long period, the occupiers of Damascus, Toledo, Córdoba and other Moorish-Christian kingdoms introduced highly refined techniques of food preparation and cooking. One example was intensive use of the *almirez*, the artistically decorated bronze pestle and mortar: it was responsible for improving the texture of ancient Rome's cold almond soup and setting in train its evolution into its final, modern-day, version as satin textured, aromatic ajoblanco. Present-day contributions come in the form of a wide variety of surprising little additions: fresh green grapes, tiny chunks of apple, even fried fresh anchovies, adding more and more textures and increasing its nutritious value to the extent that this white gazpacho can become a meal in itself.

Historic events and feats of exploration made the Spanish pioneers of trade with the recently discovered American continent, whence they introduced the vermilion tomato–the ingredient that was to provide cold soups with their most characteristic color element. Tomatoes are the ideal basic ingredient for cold soups in that they contain a lot of water, acidity with a hint of sweetness, and that special grown-outdoors fragrance which is almost integral to its evocative color.

The Story of Soup

Specific documentary references illustrating the evolution of our modern day cold soups abound in Greco-Latin treatises of classical Antiquity. Apicius and Columella, both writing in the 1st century A.D., left recipes which are typically Roman in the practicality of their approach. By contrast, the books of Andalusian Arabic learning produced in the kingdom of Al-Andalus between the 8th and 16th centuries A.D. are far more given to poetic descriptions while still providing "standard" recipes. Diego Granado, Philip III's chef, published his *Libro del Arte de Cozina* (Book of the Art of Cooking) in Madrid in 1614; even as late as this it includes a recipe "To make dishes of spelt wheat and groats with goat's or cow's milk" that is clearly a Roman recipe for cold soup.

People are generally loath to change food habits and accept new flavors and foodstuffs. Even in the enlightened, open-minded 17th and 18th centuries, tomatoes were considered too risky to include in cold soups–*solanaceae* had not yet become an accepted food. The natural larder was still being used as a resource for making light, nourishing food during the heat of summer, however, with the original, refreshing gazpachos still being made, green or white as in days of yore. We know this from examples provided by great writers on food such as Antonio Salsete, whose book for monastic kitchens *El Cocinero Religioso* (The Religious Cook), published in the late 17th century, includes two recipes entitled Gazpacho and Ajoblanco. Writing in Barcelona in 1758, Juan Altamira exemplifies the wild food element in his *Nuevo Arte de Cocina* with a recipe for *caldo de borrajas* (borage soup). In his *Arte de Cocina, Pastelería, Vizcochería y Repostería* (Art of Cooking, Pastry and Cake Making and Preserving) published in 1763, Francisco

Green Gazpacho from La Axarquía Málaga

Serves 4

- 6 bunches herbs to be chosen from among the following: watercress, arugula, dandelion, fennel leaves, mint, river chickweed. Mix them to your taste
- 1 kg (2.2 lb) lettuce
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- 100 ml (7 tbs/3 1/2 fl oz) of extra virgin olive oil
- 2 soup spoons Jerez vinegar
- Sea salt
- Cold water

This gazpacho should be eaten immediately after it is made, so that it is crunchy and refreshing.

Remove the stalks and any dry or withered leaves from the herbs and wash them. Drain. Finely chop them and place them in the large bowl. Choose the tender leaves and heart from the lettuce. Wash and finely chop them. Add them to the bowl and mix them with the herbs so that you get a uniform mixture of flavors, textures and colors.

Place the garlic and salt in the mortar. Pound them together until you have a smooth paste. Slowly add the oil so that it emulsifies and then the vinegar and a little cold water. When it is clear, continue liquefying for a few more seconds and then pour it over the vegetables and immediately add the remaining cold water. Serve immediately.

It is like a perfumed pool with hints of the Andalusian countryside. If you are feeling adventurous, you can scatter petals from wild edible flowers over the surface. Choose the flowers from the herbs themselves or any others.

Salmorejo

Serves 4

- 4 ripe tomatoes, peeled and roughly chopped
- 3 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and sliced
- 1 red pepper, roasted, peeled and cut into 6 strips
- 4 slices of serrano ham, cut into fine strips
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 strand saffron
- 1 tsp ground pepper
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 100 ml (7 tbs/3 1/2 fl oz) of extra virgin olive oil
- 1 soup spoon sherry vinegar
- 1 l (2 pt) ice-cold water

Put the salt, peeled garlic, cumin, pepper and saffron into the mortar and pound until you get a fine paste. Slowly add the oil so that it emulsifies and then the vinegar and a little cold water. Blend the tomatoes in a mortar or large bowl. When the tomato mixture is smooth, add the contents of the mortar and mix well.

Once the base for the dish has been made, there are two ways of finishing it: one involves beating the remaining ingredients into the tomato mixture, once you have seasoned it. The peppers and hard-boiled eggs are beaten in to form a paste, which is then liquefied to the desired consistency. The color may seem a little strange, but it is very tasty.

The alternative is to leave a thicker tomato mixture, which will be bright red in color and silky smooth with the dressing, and decorate it with strips of pepper and slices of hardboiled egg and then drizzle extra virgin olive oil over the dish.

Both alternatives are very traditional. If you want to turn it into a main-course dish, just add slices of boiled potatoes, chicken breast, etc. It is half way between a cold soup and a refreshing salad.

Martínez Montiño includes an innovative category of cold fish dishes with a gazpacho dressing, thereby usefully establishing a precedent for dishes such as *salpicón de atún* (tuna dressed with chopped onion, tomato, parsley, vinegar and oil dressing), a hugely popular dish today. Juan de la Mata's *Arte de Repostería* (The Art of Confectionery), published in Madrid in 1786, includes the first recipes for cold dishes including tomatoes and sweet and acid dressings, liberally sprinkled with virgin olive oil. But as for gazpachos proper–oh dear! Although they feature as *"gazpachos de todos generos"* ("gazpachos of all kinds"), they are still of the Greco-Latin type with almonds, anchovies and air-cured or brine-preserved products from the coast–the salted products for which we are famous, so delicious and exclusive to us, and so redolent of their ancient origin.

By 1894, however, the immensely modern food writer Ángel Muro (a sort of Ferrán Adriá of his time) was able to publish many different recipes for Spanish gazpachos and cold soups of all kinds and colors. From then on, the increasingly frenchified style of the Spanish court at the table and the growing fashion for rural life and "ordinary folk" as subjects for literature helped popularize both cold, clear meat or fish consommés, and cold dishes typical of the countryside and rural villages which were adopted by inns and restaurants and by the domestic tables of the working class and bourgeoisie, both urban and rural.

TO READ & WEB SITES

Diego Granado, *Libro del Arte de Cozina,* Madrid, 1614
(Dishes of spelt and semolina with goat's or cow's milk)

Antonio Salsete, *El Cocinero Religioso,* Pamplona, late 17th century
(Recipes for gazpacho and ajoblanco)

Juan Altamiras, *Nuevo Arte de Cocina,* Barcelona, 1758
(Recipes for *caldo helado* and caldo de borrajas)

Francisco Martínez Montiño, *Arte de Cocina, Pastelería, Vizcochería y Repostería,* Barcelona, 1763
(Recipe for salpicón de atún)

Juan de la Mata, *Arte de Repostería,* Madrid, 1786
(Recipes for all types of gazpachos)

Ángel Muro, *El Practicón,* Madrid, 1894
(Recipe for *Sopa Fría Española* and caldo helado)

WEB SITES

General Information

www.nutricionyrecetas.com/recetas/sopasfrias/
This nutrition and recipes Web site gives the ingredients and preparation method for 48 cold soups. (Spanish)

www.dietamediterranea.com
This is the Web site of the Foundation for Developing the Mediterranean Diet and gives information about products and recipes typical thereof. (English, Spanish)

Products

Cured Ham
See links referred to after ibérico ham article (page 62)

Olive Oil

www.mapya.es/indices/pags/aliment/index.htm
The Web site of the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food includes information about olive oils covered by Denomination of Origin (Spanish)

www.asoliva.com
The Web site of the Spanish Association of the Olive Oil Industry and Export includes information provided by the association, exporters and brands and about the history, extraction process, classification, quality and tasting of olive oil. (English, Spanish)

Sherry Vinegar

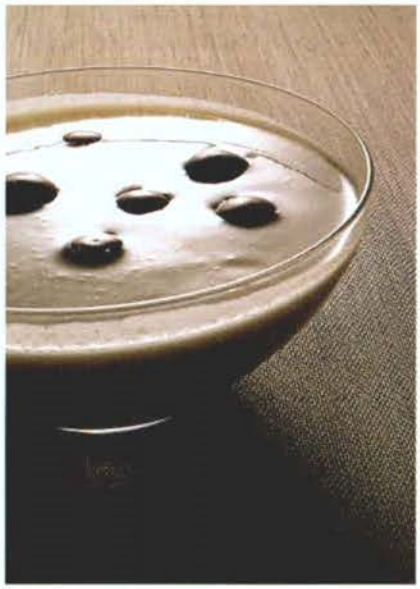
www.geocities.com/thalaric1/foodnwine/vinegar/vinegar.html
This site contains an article about sherry vinegar and several recipes. (English)

Ajoblanco with Grapes

Serves 4

- 250 g (9 oz) raw almonds, peeled
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- 150 g (4 oz) breadcrumbs
- 150 ml (10 tbs/5 fl oz) extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbs sherry vinegar
- 1 l (2 pt) ice-cold water
- Coarse salt
- 250 g (9 oz) muscatel grapes, peeled and seeded

Soak the breadcrumbs in water. Pound the peeled garlic cloves and salt together in a mortar. Add the breadcrumbs, after having squeezed off any excess water. If you are making it by hand, continue using a mortar or a round bowl. Otherwise, only use a blender from this point onwards. Add the almonds and blend to a smooth paste. Slowly add the oil so that it emulsifies. Now add the vinegar and continue blending until the paste is spongy. Finally, stir in the ice-cold water until you achieve the desired consistency.
Chill until serving time. Before serving, check the seasoning and add more salt or vinegar if needed. Pour into the serving dish and garnish with the muscatel grapes.



MISTAKES TO AVOID

We've noticed certain mistakes that some non-Spanish cooks and food writers make when interpreting our cold soups. Motivated by the best of intentions, their recommendations for "improvements" actually change things for the worse. Where do they go wrong? Usually by adding aromatics and colorants, and even thickeners, which do the end result no good at all. And why? Probably because they do not know enough about our culinary traditions and are unfamiliar with our foodstuffs which, in that they are characterized by their intensity of flavor and color, need no "correcting."

Adding tinned tomato concentrate to gazpachos to intensify color and taste
Gazpacho is a traditional, classic dish, natural in character in that it is made only with fresh, raw ingredients. The tomatoes used should be ripe, namely red and full of flavor. Having said that, even paler, blander fresh tomatoes are always preferable to trying to intensify things with unnecessary concentrates.

Adding paprika, pepper and other spices to perk it up
This always undermines the intrinsic excellence of a cold soup whose flavor, smell and freshness depend on its traditional ingredients alone. Spanish cuisine is understated and uses very few additions and appreciation of its quintessence–its internal harmony and balance–should not be altered by enhancers. Interpreters of our dishes should stick to the traditional recipe if they are after authenticity. Dressings for gazpachos need only olive oil (preferably Spanish and extra virgin), a top quality wine vinegar (ideally sherry), good quality garlic, sea salt and, for some regional specialties, perhaps ground cumin. No more–and no less–than that.

Adding ice cubes to chill cold soups, either when putting them in the fridge or just before serving
We've got used to wanting everything icy cold and, furthermore, we want it now. From the point of view of orthodoxy in cooking and its sensory effect, you should not disturb the inner structure of a dish. When you mix a liquid fat such as Spanish virgin olive oil with two types of liquid, namely the juice from the vegetables pounded in the mortar or blender, and cold water, you are making an emulsion which incorporates both types of very different ingredients into a succulent texture. Beating, either manually or mechanically, achieves the miracle of unrivaled sensory richness that is a homogeneous, silky cold soup in all its varieties. If you add ice cubes, when they melt they are going to leave suspicious pools of water on the surface and not become part of the perfect emulsion. If you really need to improvise or are in a hurry, the thing to do is to add the ice, broken or crushed, right from the start, instead of water, so that the ice serves as the provider of liquid and coldness rather than being an unattractive addition in cube form at the end, which will only liquefy and spoil the gazpacho's sensory complexity.

Adding density to a cold soup with starch or other thickening agents
This is another very bad move. It has been the Mediterranean tradition since the most ancient times to use oil-rich foods such as certain nuts, particularly almonds, but also walnuts and hazelnuts, as thickening elements to adjust the texture of sauces and other dishes. Garlic and olive oil, as well as other seed-derived oils such as sesame, possess this lipid factor which has emulsifying properties when beaten up with some type of liquid. Bread and its derivatives have also been alternatives for adding density. With all this in mind, respect the fundamental principles of the classic cuisines of the Mediterranean. Use our ingredients, which are both functional and nourishing, and forget the flours and starches–they destroy the pleasure that only an authentic dish, with all the ancestral know-how it incorporates, can offer.

Gazpachos for All Tastes

"Soup," both as a word and concept, represents a food that provides instant comfort and restorative effect, but which tends also to be associated with warmth, with wintry foods. This is why we rarely call cold soups "soups" in Spain, but give them other names. These names have two semantic characteristics: on the one hand they refer to a food's "type"–the texture and color derived from its components; on the other they are also toponymic, denoting local adaptations of a more widespread version. This is illustrated most clearly in the case of the gazpacho family. Consider the following examples and how their names denote...:

Density: porra. Porra is a gazpacho made in a *dornillo,* or earthenware mortar, in quantities appropriate to the number of people it is to feed, of which it is said poetically that it incorporates "the ear of wheat and the olive." In practical terms this means that bread soaked in water with salt, vinegar and good olive oil predominate, and that garlic, tomato and green pepper are added. As such, this is a very dense, almost solid version. It is a classic Málaga dish, but is also made throughout Andalusia.

Texture: salmorejo. Salmorejo, like porra, is made in the dornillo but in some localities and some family homes the soaked bread is replaced by boiled potatoes and grilled chicken breast, cured ham, hard boiled eggs or tinned tuna or sardines in oil can also be included with the rest of the usual vegetables and classic gazpacho condiments. The vegetable ingredients are pounded, as for porra, but the meat or fish ingredients are cut up very finely and then mixed with the pounded vegetables. Finishing touches are usually provided by a generous slosh of extra virgin olive oil and hard boiled egg, cut into triangles, artistically arranged on top.

Other names: "standard" gazpachos, universally known as such, are also known by these local names in Andalusia: *ajo migado* and *migadilla* in Córdoba; *ajo sopeado, cascoporro* and *pachocha* in Jaén, *gazpacho de pastor* in Huelva. There are many more local variants on the name.

The Last Word

Let me take this opportunity to stress the vast difference between international tomato soup and gazpacho, originally Andalusian but now spread worldwide. Tomato soups, even cold ones, have undergone a cooking process, while gazpacho is the epitome of freshness. Tomato juices, meanwhile, obviously lack the other fresh elements that gazpacho incorporates.

When it comes to making gazpacho, people of course use electric food processors and blenders, but mortars are still alive and well, known in Andalusia as dornillos if they are earthenware, and *almireces* if metal. They also come in olivewood and other materials, such as marble. The function of these instruments is to obtain the essential base of any cold soup. Salt and garlic go into the mortar's bowl where the action of the wooden or metal pestle first chews them up and then processes, or "digests" them into a creamy balsamic paste whose purpose is to flavor and disappear. Oil and vinegar are then added to the amalgam and then, after another bout of grinding, the water. The quintessence is now ready, and it remains only to dilute it with the remaining ingredients. However, *gestalt*-like, a cold soup is more than the sum of its parts, which explains why the sound of pestle-and-mortar in action is regularly to be heard in the kitchens of Spain. That's Spain's cold soups for you. Enjoy!

Alicia Ríos *is a gastronomic consultant, author of several books about Spanish food, and panel-member for olive oil tastings.*

THE SPANISH PANTRY I

Spanish Virgin Olive Oil

The high quality and abundance of Spanish olive oil explain the many and varied uses to which it has been put during a long history that stretches back many thousands of years.

Spain is by far the world's biggest producer of virgin olive oil. Its success in the international marketplace is unchallenged, a fact reflected in constantly increasing export figures.

In 1999, Spain's virgin olive oil exports were worth nearly 486 million euros. This figure increased to over 674 million euros in 2000, and to 741 million euros in 2001.

The main export destinations in 2001 were, in descending order of importance: Italy, France, Portugal, the United States and the United Kingdom.

Sensory properties of Spanish virgin olive oil

Its outstanding qualities as a foodstuff have always been recognized. What make it unique are its subtle, intense, sensory attributes and its versatility, both raw as a condiment and as an ingredient in cooked food. No other kind of oil or fat possesses as many positive qualities–both sensory and health giving–and uses. It barely needs explaining that Spanish virgin olive oil is the juice of a healthy fruit–the olive–harvested at just the right degree of ripeness, which has been subjected to no treatment or rectification during the extraction process.

Organoleptic variables

Variations of color and aroma among virgin oils depend on the ripeness of the olives when picked. Less ripe olives give oils that are greener, bitterer and have a slight zing of piquancy. Olives harvested when riper and darker give sweeter, less piquant oils. The distinctive flavor of each botanical variety of olive is also a differentiating factor among the various Spanish oils on the market.

Commercial categories of Spanish olive oil

Extra virgin olive oil

This tastes exactly like the juice of the variety of olive from which it is derived, in the case of a varietal oil, or of the "bouquet" of the varieties selected for a blend (just like a bunch of flowers, an oil can be all of one fragrance and color or a combination of several). This category of oil is made to rigorous standards from perfectly sound olives.

The "extra virgin" category is accorded by a panel of tasters who, applying the International Olive Oil Council's scientific method, reach agreement that the oil under consideration could not be bettered. Preferences are a personal matter, and enduring sensory impressions are often the deciding factor.

Virgin olive oil

This is slightly inferior to the top category, but its flavor and health-giving properties are still excellent. It is suitable for using both raw and in cooking.

Olive oil

It would be a shame to waste the residual oil left in the olive paste after the first pressing. The paste is therefore pressed and centrifuged again, producing a second quality, any defects in which are rectified by a refining process. Once rectified and before bottling, sensory qualities are restored by "topping up"–a process that consists in adding a certain proportion of virgin or extra virgin oil.

Varieties and types of Spanish extra virgin olive oil

There are many botanical varieties of olive tree, and the fruits of each all have their own characteristic size, shape, flavor and oil content. Varieties with the least oily flesh are used as eating, or table olives. Spain's most extensively cultivated oil varieties include Arbequina, Cornicabra, Hojiblanca and Picual, among many, many others (see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 54).

When virgin olive oil is extracted from olives of one single variety, such as Arbequina, it is known as "Arbequina varietal." Labels provide full information about variety, provenance, date of production and, when appropriate, Denomination of Origin.

THE SPANISH PANTRY II

Spanish Cured Ham

The process of curing ham in Spain dates back to the Roman period, and the product itself has been lauded by countless writers, painters, historians and food enthusiasts down the centuries. It now enjoys an increasingly prestigious international reputation. Producing 200,000 tons a year, Spain is the world's biggest producer and consumer of cured ham. In 1999, exports were worth 79 million euros, in 2000 over 90 million euros, and in 2001 some 86 million euros, representing around 12,000 tons–approximately six percent of national production. The main importers are France, Germany, Portugal, Argentina, Belgium and the United States, in that order.

Sensory properties of Spanish cured ham

Cured ham, of the types derived from both native *ibérico* pigs and from white pigs (this latter type is known as *serrano* ham), possesses unique organoleptic characteristics which derive from factors inherent to the raw material and to the production process, both of which are unique and specific to mainland Spain.

White pig cured hams come from breeds highly selected for lean meat which responds best to curing. The outstanding organoleptic qualities of a cured ibérico ham (leg or shoulder) are discernible in the fat, color, smell and flavor (see article on p. 62). Stages of the curing process common to both types are: pre-salting, salting, post-salting or resting, and drying. In the course of these, processes, such as fusion of fat, lipolysis, proteolysis and oxidation, take place within the ham that are responsible for its flavor, aroma and texture. The eight most significant variables are: flavor, color, quantity of fat, level of salt, degree of curing, place of origin, and price.

Spanish cured ham has a very intense flavor which is highly aromatic, and balanced between sweetness and saltiness. It is dense in appearance, pink to purply red in color, contains a certain amount of fat in the form of marbling through the lean meat, and a certain degree of saltiness. All these are indicators of excellent genetic quality and proper processing.

How it is sold

Ibérico ham is usually offered for sale with the trotter still attached. A V-shaped notch is cut into it, from which slices are then carved diagonally by expert hands. Skilled, specialist carving is essential to display its sensory properties to the fullest: it must be as thin and transparent as possible. It is also sold already sliced in vacuum packs. Serrano-type (white pig) cured ham is sometimes sold on the bone and is sliced either in the V-shape described above, or in a boat-shaped indentation. However, it is more usually supplied boned, which facilitates slicing by machine and allows each customer to specify how thickly it should be sliced.

Sherry Vinegar

Abundant production of superb wines within the area of Cádiz Province covered by D.O. Jerez's Regulatory Council, and centuries–if not millennia–of fine vinegar production explain why sherry vinegars are of such unbeatable quality. They are made from pure musts extracted from white Palomino grapes which, once turned into vinegar, are aged in oak casks in Jerez's famous traditional *solera* system (see Glossary on p. 131) for 25 years or more. Exports of this accredited product are growing exponentially each year. The following figures, provided by the Regulatory Council, reveal to what degree: 1,140,222 liters were exported in 1999, increasing to 1,533,597 liters in 2000, and reaching 1,859,417 liters in 2001. The main importing countries were, in descending order, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Belgium and Switzerland.

There are two quality categories: Sherry Vinegar (aged in American oak casks for at least six months), and Reserve Sherry Vinegar (aged for at least two years). These excellent vinegars are perfect for dressing cold soups, salads and cooked vegetables, for use in marinades and rubs, various sauces, souses and pickles, and for adding a little "bite" to pulse dishes.

Spanish Tomatoes

Spain's reliable year-round sunshine and varied soil types provide ideal conditions for the uninterrupted production of top-quality tomatoes. Botanical research has developed varieties with which it is possible to satisfy growing international demand with freshly harvested, vine-ripened tomatoes.

Export figures provided by the Fruit and Vegetable Exporters' Federation demonstrate that 945,473 tons of tomatoes were exported in 1999; 888,137 tons in 2000; and 1,030,778 tons in 2001. In 2001, the main importers were Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France and Portugal.

Tomatoes come in many, and very different, varieties, varying in size, shape, skin type, flavor, and provenance. Round, smooth varieties include Daniela, Boludo, Jamile and Habana. These are very good for salads when just ripe, and for gazpachos and sauces when that bit riper.

Pear-shaped Canary Island varieties, Doroty and Thomas, are also excellent for bottling and making preserves.

Other varieties include Monica and Silver from Alicante, and Eldiez and Brillante from Almería.

Red, fragrant varieties sold on the branch include Pitenza, Ikran, Durinda and Atlético. And the buying public has fallen in love with tiny cherry tomatoes.

Tomatoes offer so much–pleasure for nearly all the senses with their color, shape, aroma, flavor, texture, and unique blend of sweet and sharp, and versatility, too!





10 RECIPES





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Recipe Photos and Styling
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Translation
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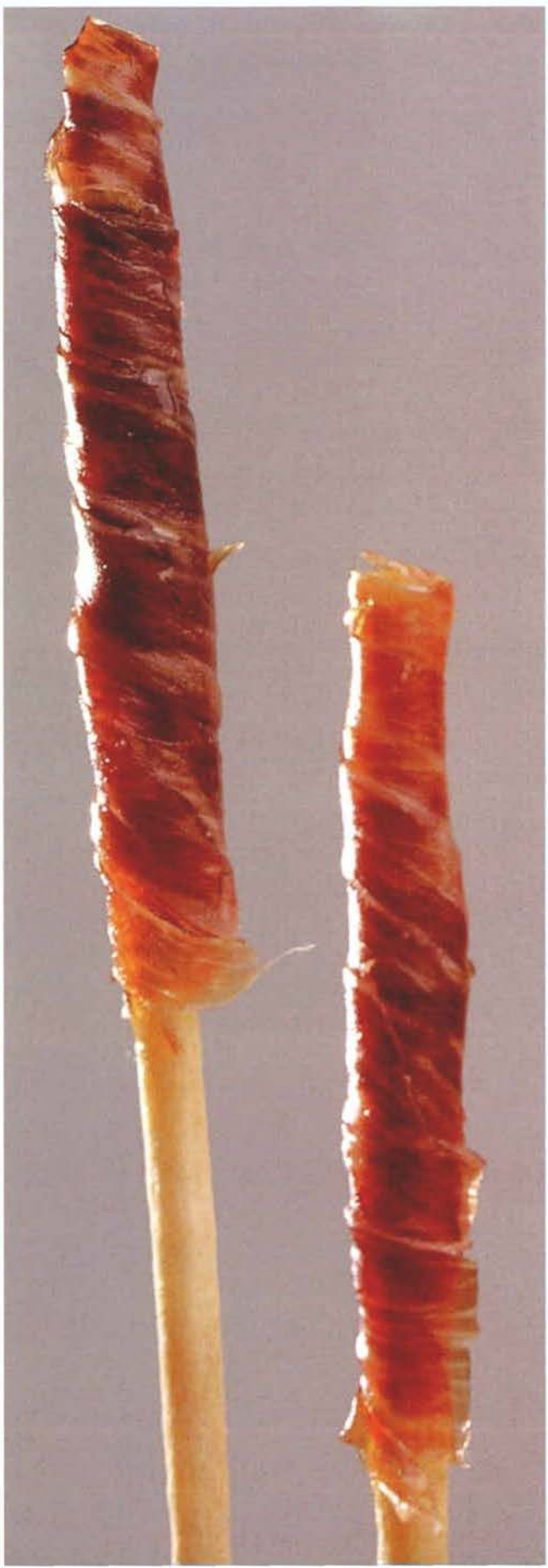
Sticks of Ham with Honey



Serves 4:
1 packet of bread sticks
80 g (3 oz) orange-blossom honey
100 g (3 1/2 oz) Ibérico ham in thin slices

Cut the ham slices into strips about 3 cm (1 in) wide. Dip the tips of the bread sticks into the honey (about 5 cm/2 in) and drain. Wrap the ham around the sticks beginning at the tip, overlapping it like a bandage. Serve as a starter with drinks.

Recommended wine:
A white fino sherry or a Manzanilla made of Palomino grapes, either from the D.O. Condado de Huelva or the D.O. Jerez-Xérès-Sherry y Manzanilla de Sanlúcar de Barrameda. The wine's aroma and intense flavor of green olives with floral and herbal notes–the Manzanilla will be a little more salty and nutty–will blend to perfection with the sweetened ham and crisp bread stick.

Artichoke Flower Stuffed with Ibérico Ham in Clam Sauce

Serves 4:
100 g (3 1/2 oz) Ibérico ham in small wafers
1 kg (2.2 lb) artichokes
Olive oil for frying

Clam sauce:
500 g (1 lb 2 oz) clams
1 onion
1 dl (6 tbs 4 fl oz) olive oil
Parsley, the tip of a bay leaf
1 tsp *pimentón*, half sweet, half hot
1 dl (6 tbs 4 fl oz) white wine
1 level tbs flour
2 dl (12 tbs 8 fl oz) water
Salt

Clam sauce:
Heat the oil in a pan and gently fry the chopped onion and parsley. When the onion is beginning to turn brown, add the flour and stir without letting it darken. Remove from the heat, add the *pimentón* (type of paprika from Spain) and bay leaf. Sprinkle with the wine and water, season and cook for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Wash and drain the clams, add to the sauce, cover the pan and leave over the heat for the clams to open. Check the seasoning.

Artichokes:
Wash the artichokes, remove the hard outside leaves and cut off the tips. Deep fry in oil that is not too hot so that they cook inside and open up into a flower shape. Fill the inside with the wafers of ham and serve with the clams and the sauce.

Recommended wine:
To balance out the powerful flavors of the artichokes–always difficult to partner–try a white, oak-fermented D.O. Rueda made from Verdejo grapes. The aromas acquired from the oak (butter, toast, nuts) should help do the trick. The citric freshness and slightly bitter aftertaste of this grape variety should combine well with the sweetness of the artichokes and the clams.

10RECIPES

Sweet-sour Ibérico Ham Salad

Serves 4:

250 g (9 oz) Ibérico ham in very fine slices
1 mango
1 pink grapefruit
2 limes
4-5 peeled walnuts
Endives
Lollo rosso

Dressing:

1 dl (6 tbs 4 fl oz) virgin olive oil
2 tbs sherry vinegar
Half a red onion
1 tbs sugar or honey
1 tbs grain mustard
Salt and pepper

Wash and drain the leaves and cut but not too small. Scrub the outside of the limes with a brush under running water and slice thinly. Peel the mango and cut into segments. Peel the grapefruit, divide into segments and peel. Arrange the ham slices to one side of the serving dish, with the mixed salads, fruits and nuts on the other. Dress with the sweet-sour mixture.

Dressing:

Dissolve the mustard, sugar and salt in the vinegar then add the oil. Beat until an emulsion forms, then add the very finely-chopped or sliced onion.

Recommended wine:

The personality of the vinegar and mustard make the choice of a wine difficult but not impossible. We recommend a sweet, white Muscatel made from Moscatel de Alejandría and produced in the D.O. Alicante, or one made from small-fruit Muscatel from the D.O. Navarra. Both have exotic, citric aromas that would blend well with this sharp salad. If a less daring choice is preferred, try a D.O. Penedés made from a majority of Muscatel but with some Gewürztraminer. This has similar aromas but is less sweet.

East Wind, West Wind Spaghetti

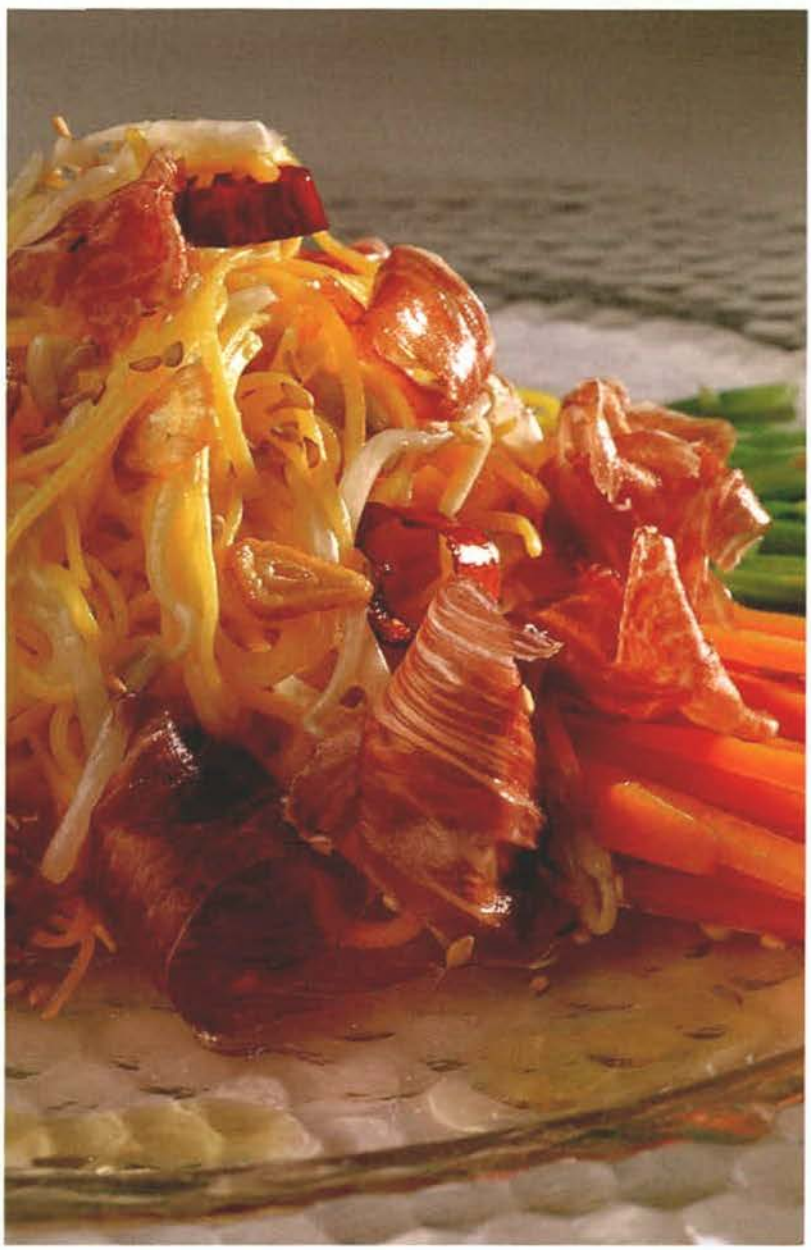
Serves 4:

100 g (3 1/2 oz) Ibérico ham in small wafers
250 g (9 oz) thin spaghetti
150 g (5 oz) can soybean sprouts
150 g (5 oz) green beans
150 g (5 oz) carrots
2 cloves garlic
1 chili pepper
1.5 dl (9 tbs 6 fl oz) virgin olive oil
Salt

Remove the strings from the green beans, then wash them and cut into thin strips. Cook in plenty of boiling salted water for 6-7 minutes then drain. Peel or scrape the carrots, slice into julienne strips and cook for 5 minutes in boiling salted water. Drain. Cook the spaghetti in plenty of boiling salted water following the instructions on the packet (7-8 minutes) and drain. Peel the garlic cloves, slice thinly and fry in hot oil until golden. Soak the chili pepper in water for half an hour or place in the microwave covered with water for half a minute at the maximum temperature to soften it. Carefully cut into rings. Fry the rings on top of the garlic taking care they do not burn, then add the soybean sprouts and fry gently for a few minutes. Add the spaghetti, the beans and the carrots, then serve and top with the ham wafers.

Recommended wine:

A rosé from the D.O. Navarra made from Garnacha grapes will give the freshness and aromas of berries that are characteristic of this variety. These should lighten the strong flavors of the garlic and chili while bringing out the taste of the ham.



Baked Leeks with Ibérico Ham Wafers

Serves 4:

1.5 kg (3 lb 5 oz) large leeks
0.5 l (17 fl oz) milk
0.5 dl (3 tbs 2 fl oz) oil
50 g (2 oz) flour
Salt, pepper and nutmeg
50 g (2 oz) butter
50 g (2 oz) cheese
150 g (5 oz) Ibérico ham in wafers

Cut off the roots and the green part of the leeks. Cut the leeks downwards in a cross shape from the top, remove the outside leaves and wash in plenty of water to remove any soil from between the layers. Cut into regular pieces and cook in boiling salted water for 10 minutes. Drain. Heat the oil, add the flour and fry gently. Boil the milk and pour over, stirring all the time to make a smooth bechamel sauce. Season with salt, pepper and a little nutmeg. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring all the time. Remove from the heat and add half the butter. Arrange the leeks on an oven-proof dish leaving spaces between them, pour over the bechamel and top with the rest of the butter in small pieces and the grated cheese. Brown under the grill then place the ham wafers between the leeks so that the fat melts with the heat of the dish, bringing out the taste of the ham. Serve immediately.

Recommended wine:

A white D.O. La Mancha made of Airén grapes. The fruity aroma that characterizes this variety, sometimes reminiscent of banana, emphasizes the smoothness of the dish and contrasts with the ham. Another possibility would be a white, cask-aged D.O. Rioja. The green fruit aromas of the Macabeo variety combined with those gained from the wood would marry well with the leeks.

Sole Stuffed with Fried Vegetables

Serves 4:
4 soles
2 eggs
Flour for coating

Stuffing:
1 potato
1 large carrot
1 large leek
1 green pepper

Garnish:
150 g (5 oz) boletus edulis mushrooms
Juice of half a lemon
1 tbs butter
1 dl (6 tbs 4 fl oz) stock
Olive oil for frying the fish and the vegetables
Salt, pepper

Soles:
Gut and wash the fish, leaving the skin on, drain and make a cut along the center of the white side as far as the backbone. Dip in flour and beaten egg to coat, then fry in oil that is not too hot to ensure they cook through.

Filling:
Wash the vegetables and cut into julienne strips. Do the same with the potatoes. Soak the potatoes in salted water for half an hour, drain then dry on a cloth and fry until golden. Lightly fry the other vegetables until crisp but not brown. Mix the vegetables and potatoes, season and place inside the cut on the fish.

Garnish:
Wash the mushrooms, slice and fry lightly in the same oil that was used for the fish (after first straining it). Remove and place the lemon juice, butter and stock in the frying pan. Stir to deglaze. Serve the fish with the mushrooms and the sauce.

Recommended wine:
A white D.O. Bierzo with a large percentage of Palomino grapes and a little Malvasia and Godello or a D.O. Ribeiro in which the Palomino is combined with other local varieties such as Treixadura or Torrontés. Both these possibilities offer a fresh, sharp flavor with the slight bitterness of almonds that is characteristic of Palomino grapes. This should lighten the greasiness of the fried foods without smothering the delicate flavors of the fish and the mushrooms.

Steamed Loin Fillets of Turbot in a White Wine Sauce

Serves 4:
2 turbots weighing about 800 g (1.8 lb) each

Filling:
100 g (3 1/2 oz) white breadcrumbs
Grated rind of 1/2 lemon and 1/2 orange
25 g (1 oz) sugar
0.5 dl (3 tbs 2 fl oz) olive oil

Garnish:
16 green asparagus spears
A few drops of oil
Maldon salt

White wine sauce:
2 egg yolks
1 dl (6 tbs 4 fl oz) white wine
Salt, pepper, sugar

Filling:
Dissolve the sugar in a glass of water, add the grated lemon and orange rind and cook for about 10 minutes. Drain and spread out to dry. Mix with the breadcrumbs, season with salt and a little pepper. Fry in the hot oil then drain on kitchen paper.

Turbots:
Gut the fish, wash, drain and season. Steam for about 5 minutes, remove the fillets and arrange on a serving dish with one fillet on top of the other and most of the fried breadcrumb and rind mixture in between. Sprinkle with the remaining breadcrumb mixture.

Wine sauce:
Beat the egg yolks with the wine, salt, pepper and a little sugar to taste. Heat while beating in a bain-marie or a thick-based saucepan to thicken.

Recommended wine:
A good partner would be a white D.O. Alella made from Xarel-lo grapes or from a combination of these with the classic Catalan varieties, Parellada and Macabeo. The harmonious personality of the Xarel-lo balances out both the oiliness of the fish and the sharpness of the citrus-flavored garnish.

Fillets of Sea Bass with Cauliflower Puree and Salmon Roe

Serves 4:
2 sea bass weighing 800 g (1.8 lb) each
Oil to grease the frying pan

Cauliflower puree:
250 g (9 oz) very white cauliflower
0.5 dl (3 tbs 2 fl oz) cream

Orange sauce:
Juice of 2 oranges
20 g (1 oz) butter
40 ml (2 oz) olive oil
Salt, pepper, chopped parsley
Salmon or trout roe

Cauliflower puree:
Wash the cauliflower and cook in boiling salted water. Drain and blend with the cream. Reheat and season.

Orange sauce:
Boil the orange juice until reduced to half then add the butter and beat briskly off the heat until thickened, then add the oil. Season and add the chopped parsley.

Sea bass:
Fillet the fish and lift off any bones with tweezers. Season and griddle on a slightly-greased non-stick pan, skin side down first and turning quickly to prevent overcooking. Serve with the cauliflower puree, the roe and the sauce.

Recommended wine:
Try a wine made from the most noble of Spanish varieties, Tempranillo, in the form of a young, aromatic D.O. Rioja, with a fruity flavor and an appealing ruby color.

Sea Bream on Its Back

Serves 4:

2 sea bream, weighing 800 g (1.8 lb) each
3 cloves garlic
1 chili pepper cut in rings
2 dl (12 tbs 8 fl oz) olive oil
0.5 dl (3 tbs 2 fl oz) red wine vinegar
Salt

Scale, gut and wash the fish, season in and out with salt and brush with oil. Place on a rack over hot coals or in the oven at 250°C (482°F) or under the grill for 20 minutes, turning after 10 minutes. Place on a dish, open up into a fan shape and remove the backbone and side bones. Finely slice the garlic and fry in oil until golden then add the rings of chili pepper. Add the vinegar off the heat to prevent it from splashing. Pour the mixture over the fish and serve immediately.

Recommended wine:

Our choice here should be a wine with a good tannic structure to neutralize the oil in the garlic dressing. One possibility would be a white D.O. Ribeiro made from Treixadura with its characteristic aroma of ripe apples or, if a more refined, subtler wine is preferred, a white D.O. Rías Baixas made from Albariño or from a blend of the two varieties would be good.

Gilthead Bream in Salt

Serves 4:

2 gilthead breams, weighing 800 g (1.8 lb) each
2 kg (4.4 lb) rock salt

Dill sauce:

1 tbs mustard
2 tbs sherry vinegar
1 tbs sugar
1 egg
1.5 dl (9 tbs 6 fl oz) virgin olive oil
150 g (5 oz) dill
Salt and pepper

Cover the base of an oven-proof pan with a thick layer of salt. Arrange the clean but unscaled bream on top then cover them separately and completely with the rock salt. Sprinkle a little water over the salt to moisten and press with your hands to form a block. Cook in the oven at 200°C (392°F) for 40-45 minutes (or 12 minutes in the microwave at 100 percent). Remove from the oven and cut the salt by hitting around the edge to open up the crust as if it were a plaster cast. Fillet the fish and serve with the sauce.

Dill sauce:

Place the egg, mustard, vinegar, sugar, salt and pepper in the blender and beat at medium speed. Gradually add the olive oil through the hole in the top. When a thick sauce similar to a mayonnaise has formed, check the seasoning, remove from the beater and add the chopped dill.

Recommended wine:

A rosé with a large percentage of Bobal and a little Tempranillo from the D.O. Utiel Requena would offer an aroma of berries and a fresh flavor to bring out the mild flavor of the fish. Another good option would be a white D.O. Valencia made of Merseguera and Macabeo grapes with their slightly herbal reminiscences and a touch of almond.

Music

In this issue, we talk with Pedro Iturralde Ochoa, one of the first jazz musicians in Spain and the creator, 35 years ago, of flamenco jazz. This musical fusion has now become consolidated as a style in itself and is known internationally thanks to artists such as Paco de Lucía, Chano Domínguez and Tomatito.

21st-Century Quixotes. Part 4

from the ROOTS

Pedro Iturralde

TEXT
CARLOS TEJERO

TRANSLATION
JENNIFER MCDONALD

PHOTOS
MATIAS COSTA/ICEX

The northern Spanish region of Navarre is famous for the quality of its vegetables and wine. But it also boasts a great musical tradition. Also from Navarre were the famous tenor, Julián Gayarre (1844-1890), the violinist and composer, Pablo Sarasate (1844-1908) and the flamenco guitarist, Agustín Castellón "Sabicas" (1912-1990).

Pedro Iturralde was also from Navarre, where he was born in a small town on the banks of the Ebro in 1929. "My father worked as a miller but he was a talented musician and played clarinet, saxophone and guitar. He was a member of the local band and, as a child, I used to enjoy sitting in on rehearsals." At the age of 9, Pedro decided he was missing out on part of the fun so began lessons with the conductor and, with music in his blood, he was soon able to join in on the clarinet and tenor saxophone.

His Early Jazz Encounters

In the backward, solemn Spain of 1940, few people–not even musicians–had even heard of jazz. But Pedro Iturralde was in luck and was introduced to it, in the aftermath of the Civil War, in a small town of three thousand inhabitants. "In the band, we mostly used to play classic-style pieces but there were also two small dance bands in the town and I played in one of them." It was called Allo y Sus Boys and was led by pianist Francisco Allo who had lived in Argentina and had brought with him not only a collection of jazz records but also a lot of printed music by American artists such as Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, etc. "I grew up listening to and studying the great names of jazz, as well as saxophonists such as Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young."

Pedro started to excel musically and, while still very young, was in demand with the bands of other towns. He already played two wind instruments but soon felt the need to learn the piano. "The only one I could learn on belonged to the convent but the nuns let me tune it, and I started practicing." But he practiced alone, with no teacher, a pattern he was to follow for the rest of his life.

At the age of fifteen, he signed up with the orchestra of the Café Comercio in Logroño and what had previously been just a hobby started to be a profession, but one that displeased his father. "He was a great lover of music and played with great taste. He should have been a professional himself, but he didn't approve of music as a means of earning a living." But Pedro had made up his mind. Not only did he continue honing his skills as a clarinetist and saxophonist but he continued studying theory, practicing the piano and the guitar, and even started taking violin lessons (with the only music teacher he ever had).

At the age of 16, Pedro had his own band and was traveling all over Navarre with it. "At that time, we were expected to play dance music in the local celebrations but there was also often an after-lunch "concert session" when people wanted to hear selections from zarzuelas–the Spanish light operas–or czardas, or popular pieces such as the Flight of the Bumble Bee." Since I loved jazz, we started to play pieces by Gershwin, a classical composer whose work was very much influenced by jazz."

Pedro's opportunity to spread his wings came in a small town celebration when Mario Rossi, a popular singer at the time, offered him a place in his orchestra. Though only 18, Pedro accepted. "Rossi had a lot of work in Lisbon, so off we went. Then we were offered a 3-year tour including Tangier, Casablanca, Algiers, Oran and Tunisia." Pedro then learned French. After the tour, Rossi left the orchestra and Pedro took it on but soon had to give it up to return to Spain and do his military service. "After that, I had to start all over again, so I decided to try my luck in Madrid." In the mid-1950s, most night clubs and large hotels in

the capital had up to two bands so it was not difficult to find work, though it tended to be unstable. "Nobody in Madrid had heard of me and I had no official studies so couldn't register as a professional musician. I went along to the conservatory to find out what I needed to do to get qualified as a saxophonist." Whilst playing with his own band in the Plaza Hotel during evening and late-night sessions, Pedro started studying. In just one year, he passed the equivalent of five years' exams, with just one left to complete the whole course.

In 1955, he left Spain and, with his own orchestra once again, worked first in Beirut then in Athens during which time he had to learn English to communicate with his international musicians. He was then taken on to perform on the U.S. military bases in France and Germany. When he returned to Spain in 1961, he took the final saxophone exam at the conservatory and gained the official qualification he needed. Meanwhile, the famous Whisky Jazz Club had opened in Madrid, where some of the world's greatest jazz musicians were to perform–Gerry Mulligan, Stéphane Grapelli, Lee Koenitz, Stan Getz, Don Byas, Donald Byrd and singers such as Carmen McCrae, Ann Richards and Donna Hightower. Pedro played with all of them. "It was in fashion at the time. When Ava Gardner lived in Madrid, she used to go there. And it was famous amongst jazz circles in Europe and the United States because of the high level of the musicians performing there and because the owners had connections in *Down Beat* (the leading jazz magazine). Pedro was also invited regularly to play on the American air force base in Torrejón just outside Madrid where very important musicians were taken on to perform for the American troops. "There was a very good big band on the base. Some of its members were later to leave the military and become professional jazz musicians." One of these was the saxophonist Larry Monroe who was to meet up with Pedro years later at the Berklee College of Music in Boston (a sort of Oxford University for jazz).

The Birth of Flamenco Jazz

Pedro Iturralde forms part of the musical history of Spain. As a performer, he was taken on by all sorts of artists and his sax can be heard on a multitude of recordings from the sixties, seventies and eighties. Spanish singers Raphael, Joan Manuel Serrat and Alberto Cortez and even rock music groups used his services. The writer and film director, Fernando Fernán-Gómez, asked him to compose the sound track of one of his most important films–*El Viaje a Ninguna Parte* (The Journey to Nowhere). And as a classical musician, he has played with the Spanish National Orchestra and the Spanish Radio and Television Orchestra under conductors such as Igor Markevitch, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Jesús López Cobos, Sergiu Celibidache and Enrique García Asensio.

But one of Pedro Iturralde's most important contributions was the fusion between jazz and flamenco. If we had to place a date on this creation, it would be the winter of 1967, when the Pedro Iturralde Quintet performed in the Berlin jazz festival (alongside the Miles Davis and Thelonious Monk groups, amongst

others). "I've always loved Andalusian music. During the fifties when I spent long periods outside Spain, I enjoyed improvising on Andalusian themes, perhaps out of nostalgia. But my first experiments with flamenco were in the Whisky Jazz, and my first recording was in 1967 with my Jazz Flamenco record. I also performed on a Spanish National Radio program called Club de Jazz." These recordings were heard by Joaquim Berendt, a German critic and producer who was the organizer of the Berlin festival. He had the idea of devoting one of the days during the 1967 festival to fusions of jazz with national musical styles (the terms "ethnic" or "world" music had not yet been coined), and this session was called Jazz Meets the World.

In addition to Pedro Iturralde and his quintet, other invitations went to none other than the clarinetist Tony Scott (accompanied by an Indonesian group), the pianist George Gruntz (with a Swiss folk group), the flautist Herbie Mann and his band (an African group) and the Brazilian guitarist Baden Powell. Iturralde's group included a young Andalusian guitarist called Paco de Lucía. "I wasn't planning on including a guitarist in the group. It was Berendt's idea. At the start, I wanted a jazz guitarist who, like the rest of the group, would be able to improvise in a flamenco style, but I couldn't find anyone suitable. Someone told me about Paco and, when I heard him, I decided to try him out." But, at the time, Paco de Lucía was an orthodox flamenco guitarist who had no experience with jazz. "I did some arrangements so that Paco could do the flamenco part (generally after the double bass solo), playing *soleares*, *seguiriyas* or any of the various typical flamenco rhythms." Years later, Paco de Lucía was to work with some of the world's most important jazz guitarists such as Al Dimeola, John McLaughlin or Larry Coryell. Today, he is a world-famous artist whose music could be defined as a very personal flamenco with a great influence from jazz. He actually includes jazz musicians in his group. His discovery of jazz as a new musical form through which he could develop his creativity arose out of his contacts with Pedro Iturralde.

Pedro recorded four flamenco jazz records, the last of them in 1973. "I stopped because I didn't want to get into a rut. My friend Stan Getz had warned me against doing what he had done with the Bossa Nova. He was never able to get rid of the Bossa-Jazz label. I love flamenco and I've always included it in my concerts but now I see it as just another stage in my musical career."

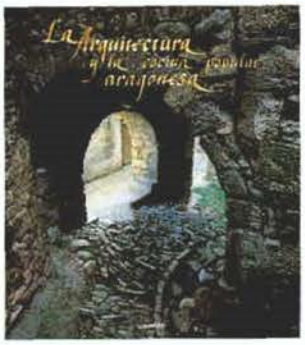
In 1994 at the age of 65, Pedro Iturralde retired from his position as professor of saxophone at the Madrid conservatory. Not bad for a self-taught musician with a total of 200 compositions including Like Coltrane, Toys (both awarded the Monaco prize in 1972 and 1978 respectively) and Suite de Jazz. He also composed music in a more popular or ethnic style–Memorias (Tríptico: Lisbon-Casablanca-Algiers), Pequeña Czarda and Suite Helénica. But he is still very active as an instrumentalist and creator. He plays all over Spain, with either his jazz quartet (bass, piano, drums and sax) or his saxophone quartet–a group of former students, now teachers themselves, with which he plays his own compositions. "Next year I have a number of performances in France and a masterclass in Moscow."

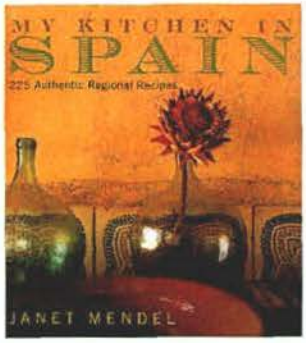
Pedro is a jazz musician but, above all, he is a person with a passion for knowledge. His self-discipline has led him to master the art of music which was what marked his childhood but he could have become skilled in just about anything–mechanics, linguistics, whatever. "I was always good at languages. The other day I bought a course in Greek. I learnt some Greek when I was in Athens but I don't have time to study. I just don't have the time."

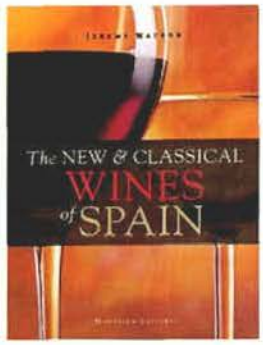
Carlos Tejero is a journalist, jazz fan and coordinator for *Spain Gourmetour* since May of this year.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Text
Vicky Hayward







Although regional food is often looked at in a wider landscape, it is rarely twinned just with architecture–and, more precisely, the architecture of the home.

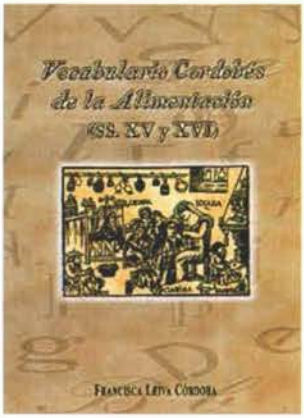
A new, slow-building series of photographic books focuses on this approach "to reveal the soul of the autonomous communities and regions of Spain," as Rafael Ansón, president of the Spanish Academy of Gastronomy, explains in the series' fourth book, **La Arquitectura y la Cocina Popular Aragonesa** (Popular Aragonese Architecture and Cooking). The three previous lavish volumes of buildings and recipes focussed first on Galician manor-houses (pazos, see *Spain Gourmetour* No.50), then on Basque farmsteads *(caserios)*–both of these published in 2000 and finally on Catalonia's *masías*, or country homes with farmland. All have a complete English text at the back of the book as well as a Spanish one running alongside the photographs.

The books' formula may sound predictably coffee-table, but there are a couple of things which make these books deeply satisfying. Although they are sponsored, they are sober and serious studies of architecture and food, which allow us to look closely at buildings we would otherwise rarely see. The building materials and forms –the stone, the wood, the arches–speak tellingly of different vernacular traditions in the same way that local produce defines regional cuisine. Here are the soft, weather-beaten, plainly decorated Galician pazos emblazoned with family shields; bold, decorative, solidly bourgeois Catalan masías; humble black, dry-stone Aragonese houses closely packed in mountain villages; and imposing Basque farmhouses wedged into steep hillsides. Alongside this are recipes–very simply presented with large, clear photos of each dish, always from Sacha Hormaechea–which are seriously researched from each town or area, often gloriously plain-sounding titles like potato with cod, borage with potatoes and clams, and potatoes with courgettes– just a few of the Aragonese recipes. It goes without saying that behind their apparent simplicity there is often art.

Short essays on architectural and food topics round off each book. For example, the Basque book opens with a piece on the influence of climate and contours on rural architecture and the Aragonese one with a jurist's essay on the house as a sign of regional identity. For me, personally, the text could have gone much further. It would be fascinating, for example, to know how the farming and cookery year ran in these houses, where people's lives revolved around producing food. Certainly, the series is one to watch. (Lunwerg Editores S.A.; lunwerg.mad@retemail.es)

Janet Mendel's new book **My Kitchen in Spain** has grown out of thirty five years of living in Andalusia, where the author learned to cook the Spanish way–from friends and neighbors, as the ingredients became available, and as the occasion or need arose. This is the backdrop to the book, which is peopled by characters connected with recipes usefully filtered through Janet's own kitchen. Although the dishes come from right around Spain–the sources aren't always entirely clear–Southern cooking is undoubtedly the strongest suit, and there are lots of good Andalusian recipes such as pumpkin puree with breadcrumbs and five gazpacho soups. Beyond this, Janet's own cooking style and tastes also come through clearly, giving the book great personal character. (Harper Collins; www.harpercollins.com)

The New and Classical Wines of Spain by Jeremy Watson is a big book combining Anglo-Saxon wine writing with sleek Catalan design. It's a good combination. Bland the writing is not. Jeremy spent more than three decades working with Spanish wines and there's not only great depth of knowledge here but also forthright but well-informed opinion–on "fruit driven wines," the new D.O.s, Web sites, up-and-coming vineyard areas, and a lot more. History gets short shrift, but this is made up for by his sharp analytical eye on today's scene. Despite the fact that the book is nearly 450 pages long, with excellent maps, charts, photos and graphics explaining everything from pruning systems to geology, the thesis that Spain is enjoying "a wine revolution without precedent in Europe" is not really fully explained for outsiders and the text could have carried more detail in some areas such as



the D.O.s' histories and native grape varieties. One only hopes that in time this book will be updated on a rolling basis, fine-tuned and kept in print at an accessible price. (Montagud Editores S.A.; libreria@montagud.com)

Francisca Leiva Córdoba's **Vocabulario Cordobés de la Alimentación (SS. XV y XVI)** (Cordoban Food Vocabulary, XV and XVI Centuries) is one of those fascinating arcane books that is doubly revealing because it touches on an area of food history where little rigorous research has been done. In one short section of the book, for example, a nine-page listing of kitchen vocabulary includes references to walnut flowers, Mallorcan cheese, Murcian cabbage and saffron from Peñafiel. Each of these sets you thinking. And, perhaps more important, there is an overwhelming sense of the legacy of medieval Muslim kitchens, not just in terms of the ingredients used but also techniques and utensils. It may sound like an obscure subject, but it makes great dip-reading. *(Servicio de Publicaciones Universidad de Cordoba; publicaciones@uco.es)*

In Brief

WINE

El Vino en la Alimentación y la Salud (Wine in Food and Health) Thirty-two papers given at a conference at the University of Cádiz track new research areas such as wine's varying histamine and resveratrol levels, integrated agricultural methods in vineyards and bodegas, and the relative health values of red and white wine. Along the way wider areas are explored: for example, the medicinal use of wine in ancient Greece and Rome, and the realities of wine drinking in the Mediterranean diet. (Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Cádiz; www.uca.es)

RESTAURANT GUIDES

De Pintxos por Bilbao y Alrededores (A Guide to Pinchos In and Around Bilbao) A simple pocket paperback with seven tapas-grazing routes in a city that's finding a new self-confidence and culinary zip. What you notice here, as in San Sebastián, is the mix of popular cooking and elegance–foie, tortilla and masterly old and new salt-cod tapas are all served at the same bar. *(El País Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es)*

De Tapas por Barcelona (A Guide to Tapas in Barcelona) No food photos, but this book makes you want to dive straight into a Catalan bar for wood-grilled vegetables, sardines and even new-wave "minimalist tapas." They may sound forbiddingly arty, but they are quite appealing really–as in one bar's Catalan *escudella*, which turns out to be a baby cup of pot-au-feu with a mini-meatball. *(El País Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es)*

Gourmetapa...de Tapas por Madrid (A Guide to Tapas in Madrid) A condensed over view of 150 tapas bars–you won't go wrong in any of them, but in all truth a lot of the best places are missing. *(Editorial Paladar; S.L.; gourmets@gourmets.net)*

TRAVEL

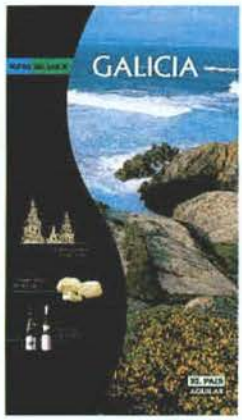
Guía de Alojamiento en Casas Rurales de España (Guide to Accommodation in Country Houses in Spain) Once again this guidebook has grown–this year from 3,800 to 5,000 places dotted around Spain. Each has a brief rundown with useful details–but probably, once you've drawn up your shortlist, you would need to see a photo. *(El País Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es)*

Guía de Espacios Naturales –Galicia (Guide to Natural Spaces–Galicia) Following on from the guide to Catalonia which launched this new series (see review in *Spain Gourmetour* No. 53) this book usefully maps out areas of outstanding beauty in Spain's northwestern corner. Many lie along the long indented coastline where birds, fish and animals breed in islands, marshes, estuaries and dunes. Extraordinarily, few of the fifty areas covered in the book are formally protected. Good photos, maps and backup listings info. *(El País Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es)*

Guía de Turismo Activo (Guide to Active Tourism) Where can you go gold panning, learn to build an igloo, take a ride on a camel, drive a combine harvester or travel in a submarine? The second edition of this guide opens up imaginative alternatives to surfing, rock climbing and bungee jumping and comes with a complete map of Spain. Used in combination with the guide to rural tourism, you could dream up a wild holiday. *(El País Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es)*

Hoteles con Encanto (Hotels with Charm) These aren't cheap hotels, but they are virtually everything else you could ask for: historic or modern, super-deluxe or sunbleached minimalist, buried in the green countryside or perched on a cliff. None has more than fifty bedrooms. The photographs are vital for showing what you can expect to find when you arrive. *(El País Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es)*

Las Rutas del Sabor: Galicia, La Rioja, Navarra (Journeys with Flavor: Galicia, La Rioja, Navarra) These are not the first Spanish foodie travel books–these have been around since the 1960s–but they are the first practical guidebooks with all the information you need to turn up in a region and mix culture with eating, drinking and shopping for food and wine. The most original and interesting material is the listing of local specialties–although one could have done with



more detail here–and of producers who sell direct to the public. The book on Galicia is particularly well researched. *(El País Aguilar; www.elpais-aguilar.es)*

ALSO RECEIVED

Gourmetabaco (Gourmetobacco) This guide to the best 69 cigars worldwide includes fifteen from the Canary Islands. *(Editorial Paladar,S.L.; gourmets@gourmets.net)*

Impulso, Desarrollo y Potenciacion de la Ostricultura en Espana (The Momentum, Development and Potential of Oyster Farming in Spain) A complete professional's guide to oyster growing, covering everything from methods, installations and illnesses to marketing strategies. *(Ediciones Mundi-Prensa; suscripciones@mundiprensa.es)*

Spanish Wine Guides

In a country where winemaking is developing at an almost hectic speed, consumer guides play a useful role. They don't just give buying guidelines; they also fill you in on the previous year's developments. The classic Spanish guide is the **Guía de Vinos Gourmets** (Gourmets' Wine Guide), now in its seventeenth year, which opens with the tasting panel's pick of the year (some 250 wines) and covers 3,379 wines, organized by D.O. as well as wine shops. An advantage here is that you have the smallest, newest D.O.s listed–so it tends to be the universal work of reference. (It carries advertising.) A spin-off is the compact "greatest hits" version, **Las Mejores Compras de Vino** (Best Wine Buys). The choices are interesting, with a lot of new names, and at the end there are lists for both budget-buyers–fifty interesting wines for under ten euros–and reckless spenders–twenty wines picked regardless of the price. The **Guía Campsa de los Mejores Vinos de España** was launched in 1999 to accompany the restaurant guide of the same name and includes details of just 450 wines, with 250 of them given a special mention for their quality. There are less detailed tasting notes than in the Gourmets guide, but interesting background facts on the chosen bodegas. It has no advertising. Then there are two notable guides. The **Guía Peñín de los Vinos de España** by José Peñín, now in its twelfth year, is easy to find your way around and takes a broad approach, with an introduction on understanding wines as well as tasting notes on 4,600 wines. He picks out just sixteen of the best with explanations of why for each wine. Finally we come to Andres Proensa's book **La Guía de Oro de los Vinos de España 2001** (The Gold Guide to Spanish Wines 2001), which gains through its simplicity of approach: 500 chosen wines are described in some detail together with the bodega that makes them. In fact, there are 607 wines this year thanks to the general pace of developments. This guide's strongest point is Proensa's writing, which is always interesting and very readable, together with the fact that there is not too much to digest here. Of course, if you are a real wine lover, then it's fascinating to get more than one guide and compare their comments and opinions–one realizes how much comes down to personal taste.

Guía de Vinos Gourmets and **Las Mejores Compras de Vino** *(Editorial Paladar; S.L.; gourmets@gourmets.net)*
Guía Campsa de los mejores vinos de España *(Salvat Editores, S.A.; www.salvat.com)*
Guía Peñín de los Vinos de España *(Pi & Erre Comunicación Itegral S.A.; ediciones@pi-erre.com)*
La Guía de Oro de los Vinos de España *(Naturaleza & Ambiente S.L.; mundonatura@mundivia.es)*

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

Vinoble, the biennial exhibition of noble, dessert, sweet and fortified wines took place this year from 29 May to 1 June in Jerez de la Frontera, in the province of Cádiz in the south of Spain. Wineries from 17 countries were represented on 80 stands (21 more than in the previous edition), with wines from Chile, Uruguay and Canada being presented for the first time and with top-ranking buyers in attendance, such as Harrods, Vins de Monde, Europvin, etc. The program included tasting sessions for sherries and for wines from Málaga, Oporto, Sauternes, Tokaj, etc. Taste Laboratories offered visitors some unusual partnerships–chocolates with muscatel wine, blue cheese with sweet reds, and ham with dry whites.
www.vinoble.com

Riberexpo, the trade fair for wines from the D.O. Ribera del Duero, took place in Peñafiel (Valladolid, in the center of Spain) in the month of May. Eighty-nine bodegas participated (in comparison with 66 last year), and 270 wines were presented to 12,000 visitors. 2002 marks the 20th anniversary of the D.O. Ribera del Duero. During this period, its wines have become renowned the world over.
www.riberexpo.org

Text
Carlos Tejero

Wine

Rioja wines are making a comeback. After two years of sharply dropping sales, both in Spain and abroad, the D.O.C. Rioja closed 2001 with good results. Total sales amounted to 220 million liters, an increase of 37.8 percent over the year before. Total exports reached 60 million liters, an increase of 51.5 percent. The main consumers of Rioja wines were the United Kingdom, followed by Germany, Switzerland, Sweden and the United States. But last year was not only good for sales. The grape harvest reached 310,000 tons , one of the highest levels ever. And the "Excellent" rating the D.O. Regulating Council awarded it had only been granted nine times in the previous hundred years.
www.riojawine.es

In April, the influential *Decanter* magazine named **Miguel Torres** (Bodegas Torres) Man of the Year. This distinction came in recognition of his work to encourage modernization, his constant focus on quality and his promotion of Spanish wines with the launch of original, daring brands that have won international renown. In an interview in *Decanter*, Torres states, "We have to keep improving the production process for Spanish wines to make sure we can continue competing on the world scene, and I think this award recognizes our efforts." The name of Miguel Torres now stands alongside other outstanding figures from the world of wine such as the Californian Robert Mondavi, the Frenchman Émile Peynaud and the Austrian Georg Riedel. The *Decanter* list of honors included another Spaniard in 1991, José Ignacio Domecq.
www.torres.es

Bodegas Julián Chivite has opened its new bodega, Señorío de Arínzano. The inauguration took place in March in the presence of **King Juan Carlos** and **Queen Sofía of Spain.** Señorío de Arínzano has been a long-coveted project for the Chivite family. The 160-hectare (395-acre) property was once a feudal domain (hence the name Señorío) and is located in an area of outstanding natural beauty. The internationally-renowned Spanish architect, **Rafael Moneo**, drew up the project, adding new constructions to the existing group of buildings which comprise a 14th-century mansion, a small chapel and a large country house. The Chivite family was especially concerned about limiting the project's environmental impact so it sought advice from the **World Wildlife Fund** to ensure that the expanding winemaking activities would not affect the natural charm of this part of Navarre.
www.chivite.com

Madrid, capital of Spain, is known worldwide but not precisely for its wines. At least not yet. This young Denomination of Origin includes about 4,000 growers and 32 bodegas producing about 3.5 million bottles a year. Although most of this wine is consumed in Spain, Madrid

Vinos de MADRID

CONSEJO • REGULADOR
DENOMINACIÓN • DE • ORIGEN
VINOS • DE • MADRID

wines are now being exported to such demanding markets as the United Kingdom, Germany, Holland and Belgium, and some of the bodegas have won prizes in Vinitaly (Verona) and Vinovita (Poland). Recently, 18 of the D.O. producers joined up to form an **Association for the Promotion of Madrid Wines** to boost their brands and consolidate sales on the domestic and international markets. "Strangely enough," says their spokesperson, **Almudena Martín**, "it seems easier to promote Madrid wines in foreign countries than in Spain because Spanish consumers are still reluctant to purchase wines from an area that does not have a longstanding tradition for winemaking."
www.vinosdemadrid.es

Gastronomy

Alejandro García Urrutia, 25 years old, chef and owner of the Paladares restaurant in Gijón, Asturias in northern Spain, was the winner of the **8th Spanish Chefs Championship** held in Madrid in April during the International Gourmet Club Fair. This award means he will be the Spanish candidate in the Bocuse d'Or World Cooking Championship to be held in Lyon in January 2003. The dishes presented by Alejandro that the jury, headed by **Juan Mari Arzak**, distinguished with the top marks were "Trout wrap with vegetables, cava sauce and ham crisp" and "Medallion of sirloin and tail with green cab bage and potato crisp." The championship was also the occasion for the 9th Dehesa de Extremadura competition for Ham Slicers. The first prize went to **Juan Francisco Hernández Caraballo** from the Kyalamy restaurant in Toledo. The jury considered questions of cutting style, the thickness and size of slices, presentation of dishes, etc.
www.gourmets.net

Ferrán Adrià, Spain's best-known chef, has invented **Fast-Good**, a new concept for hotel catering which is expected to revolutionize this sector. The aim of Fast-Good is to combine fast food with top quality. "This was the conclusion we reached after studying the markets in many different countries," says Adrià. "Today's businessmen can't spare much time to eat, but they are concerned about their health and want quality." Adrià has reached an agreement with the Spanish NH hotel chain, Europe's third largest with 237 hotels and a total of 34,121 rooms,

to set up Fast-Good restaurants within the hotels. The first to open–in February 2003–will be in the Eurobuilding hotel in Madrid. Ferrán Adrià and NH Hoteles have already worked together on other projects such as the nhube which combine catering, leisure and relaxation activities all within the same area inside hotels.
www.nh-hoteles.com

Casa Pons, a Catalonian company that produces and sells virgin olive oil under the **Mas Portell** brand, is extending its range of aromatic oils to include four new varieties–rosemary, oregano, black pepper and smoked sweet paprika. According to the company's spokesperson, "These oils are produced using traditional methods of maceration, with Arbequina-variety oils and natural dried ingredients." Casa Pons is a family-run company set up in 1945 that today sells its products in 50 countries and is one of Spain's top exporters of virgin olive oil."
www.euroaliment.com

A group of Spanish gastronomists came together for the **First Gastronomic Meeting for Auteur Cooking** held in a 15th-century castle just outside Cáceres, Extremadura in the southwest of Spain. Four top-ranking creative cooks were invited to speak and prepare a dish related to the subject of their talk. One of the thought-provoking themes was "The Thinking Stomach," discussed by **Arturo Pardos** (chef of the Madrid restaurant, La Gastroteca de Stéphane y Arturo). The theory expounded by Arturo was, "We are nothing but flesh around a hole, an empty piece of gut. The stomach is not inside us. We are around it." Black Sorbet (made from black olives) was the dish he chose to accompany his talk. **Alberto Elorza,** from the Zelai-Zabal restaurant in Oñati, Guipúzcoa in northern Spain, offered his "salad of sautéed coquilles Saint-Jacques with a Parmentier of ibérico ham, creamy garlic sauce and aroma of peanut with chives" by way of illustration for his ideas on "Our View of Basque Cuisine." The neurologist and cook, **Miguel Sánchez Romera,** owner of the L'Esguard restaurant in Barcelona spoke on "Total Cuisine" and offered "sirloin of duck with fruit purees and mountain herbs." Finally, **Omar Torrijos,** owner of the eponymous restaurant in Valencia, discussed "Where Is the Future Taking Us?" and presented a "loin fillet of hake with Duxelle and carpaccio of prawns, broad beans and peas with fresh pasta and concentrated prawn juice."

Abroad

Spanish wines received **102 medals** in the Challenge International du Vin held in Bordeaux on 13 April. Of these, 13 were gold medals, 45 silver, and 41 bronze. This prestigious competition has been held annually for 25 years and about 5,000 wines from all over the world are entered every year, with awards going to only 20 or 25 percent of them. The prize-winning Spanish wines included 74 reds, 19 whites and 9 rosé wines.
www.challengeduvin.com

Carlos Tejero is a journalist and coordinator for Spain Gourmetour *since May of this year.*

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Protos

75th Anniversary of an «excellent» winery.

REPORT

High hopes, a love of the land and a business spirit were the things that brought eleven farmers from the zone of Peñafiel (Valladolid) to found a cooperative winery to make their work and investment profitable. Back on 29th March 1927 they chose the name of «La Primera en la Ribera».

The project soon acquired international support and acknowledgement when, at the Barcelona Universal Exhibition of 1929, it was awarded first prize for the quality of its wines produced from its first two vintages, 1927 and 1928. And thus commenced the history of a company which, from the very start, has managed to combine winegrowing tradition with the most vanguard approach in wine production.

growth__

This was so to such extent, that the first changes were soon to be made, and in 1943 the winery name was changed to Bodega Cooperativa Ribera del Duero. The considerable increase in wine production lead the cooperative to expand for the first time to nearby vineyards in the town of Peñafiel, by means of lease contracts.

However, it was in the sixties when the Protos vineyard was the first to surpass market expectations by covering the whole country. Maintenance of its already widely-acknowledged quality standards and increased production encouraged its partners to commence a new growth phase, building new production and maturing premises.

The site chosen for the new premises was the foot of the hill on which Peñafiel castle stands (Provincial Museum of Valladolid Wines), giving the winery an identity and bond, Fortress-Protos, which has lasted to the present day. Not for nothing did the winery contribute economically and practically in the museum's foundation, providing large amounts of money and objects for exhibition to the public from its private collection.

The premises, excavated on the hillside, contain over 1,500 metres of underground galleries at a constant

temperature of 12° and humidity of 75% throughout the year. Inside, 3,500 American and French oak barrels provide the tannin and aromas which distinguish the Protos wines.

quality and prestige

Protos wines enjoy such a high level of quality and renown that in 1982, the winery granted the use of the recent «denomación de origen» (product quality) of its name and wine names, Ribera del Duero, to identify the production and region, backed by this quality label.

The growth and quality policy maintained by the winery's directors demanded further investments, and in 1995, Protos extended its installations with the construction of a new cellar for maturing wines, with a capacity for storing 6,500 barrels. During the same growth phase, the production area was also extended and modernised, with stainless steel tanks with a capacity of 1.2 million litres, and impressive bottling premises. Furthermore, computer systems were introduced throughout the production line, to ensure complete and total quality control. This extension and growth process took Protos to the town of Anguix, Burgos, where it purchased wine processing installations, capable of processing over two million kilograms of grapes.

But growth did not stop there, for soon there was to be further wine production premises and another underground gallery for wine maturing.

Growth was also reflected in vineyard surface area, in order to obtain better quality grapes. At present, Protos has 100 hectares of its own vineyard and it is supplied by almost 500 more from its partners. Grape supplies are completed with production from a further 300 hectares belonging to winegrowers in the region who are regular suppliers.

The whole of the vineyard surface area is perfectly controlled by the vineyard's technical team, from the start of the vegetative cycle, through harvesting, until the arrival of the grapes at the selection area.

Grapes are still picked by hand, and since the 2001 harvest, 50% of the grape production goes through the selection process, so that only the best grapes reach the wine production stage.

Annual wine production at the winery exceeds three million litres, and approximately 30% is exported. Its principal foreign markets are the European Union, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Panama, United States, Mexico, Argentina, Peru and Japan.

75th Anniversary

75 years since its foundation, Protos now has 270 partners and about 40 employees, who are all responsible for ensuring that the Protos name is a symbol of Castilla y León. They are the heirs of the pride of the eleven partners who welded the legend behind the name and trademark in the Spanish grape and wine-producing scenario, achieving world-wide renown. Its prestige and quality are the result of such determination and business spirit, which makes its worthy of the significant prizes awarded by the international wine community.

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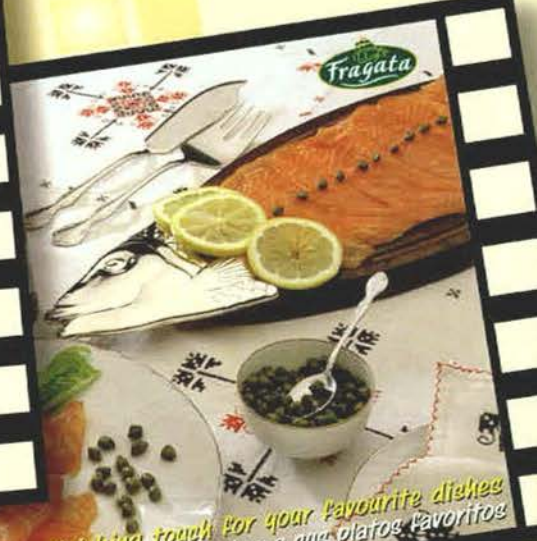

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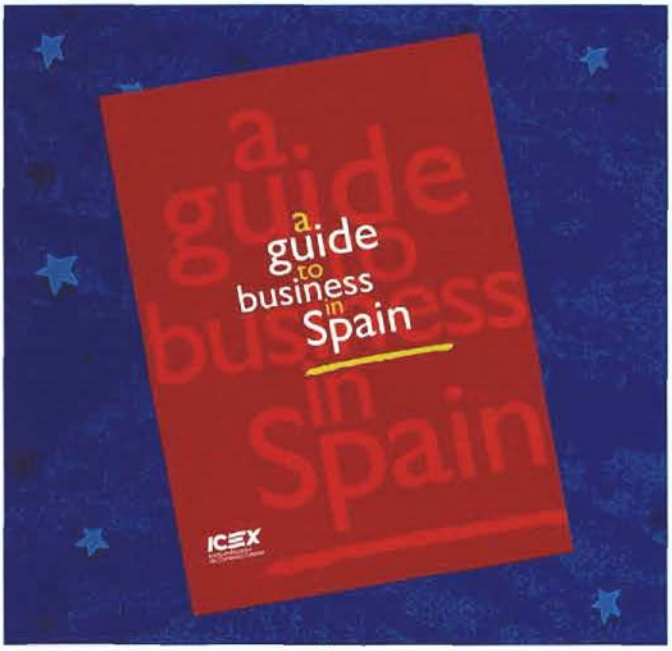

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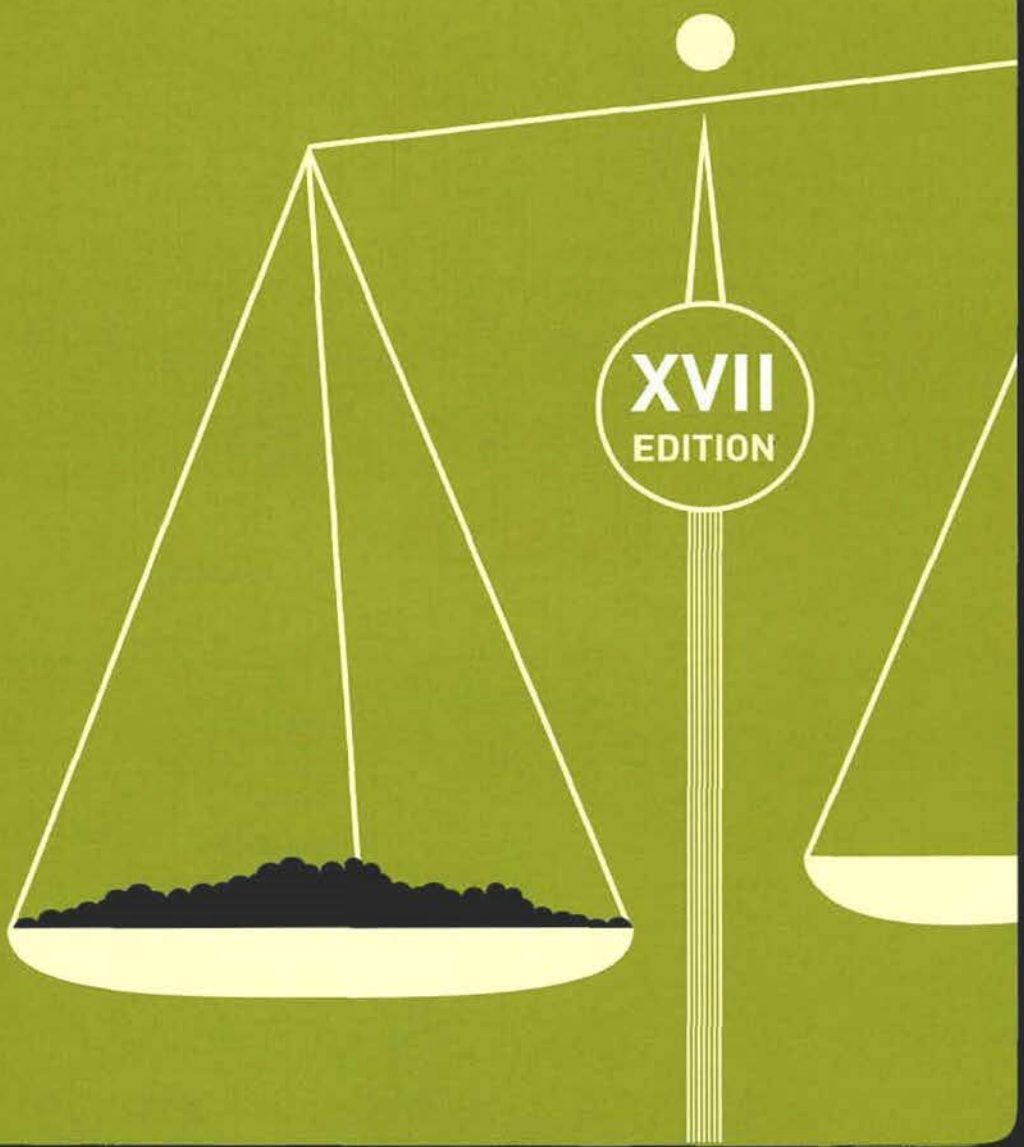

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GLOSSARY

Wine Aging Terms

Crianza. This term is reserved for wines aged in the wood and bottle for at least two years, six 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, six 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 six 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 nine months in the bottle, though many spend between 18 months and three years, and a few up to five 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.

D.E. corresponds to the P.G.I. (Protected Geographic Indication) on European level.

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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Erratum
In the last issue of Spain Gourmetour No. 55, "Saving the Sobrassada de Mallorca", on page 82, we stated that Sobrassada de Mallorca de Cerdo Negro was registered in 1996 as a Denomination of Origin. In fact it is a PGI (or D.E.), which is controlled by the same Regulatory Council as PGI Sobrassada de Mallorca.

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