61
May-August 2004

SPAINGOURMETOUR

Food, Wine & Travel Magazine

Melon of
La Mancha

Rosés:
In the Pink

The Gastronomy
of Spain's
Popular Festivals

Artful Acidity.
Spain's Fine
Vinegars

Culinary
Shopping in
Spain. Delicacies
of the North

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Sea. Sunshine. The sound of cicadas. A glass of chilled rosé... For many, that's what holidays are all about. In this issue, we introduce you to Spain's huge range of rosés. And, indeed, to Jürgen Mathäß' Spanish wine choice, a contribution from Germany to our Sip by Sip section.

Telmo Rodríguez, the first guest in our new Big Names in Wine series, is a straight talker: "*terroir is fundamental*", he explains. This amazing biologist and winemaker has left his imprint on a dozen or more wineries. And at a time when question marks hover over what happens next in European wine, he has plenty to say.

Melons are the perfect hot weather dessert: in Spain they often signal the start of the holidays. We bring you melons of La Mancha–rough on the outside but sweet as could be within–whose producers are working towards making them available all year round. But perhaps you're more of a strawberry person. Have you tried them with a drop of vinegar? Not just any old vinegar, but one of the latest from Spain. We tell you about them here, and explain how to use them for more interesting things than vinaigrette. (Mind you, a mixture of Spanish vinegar and extra virgin olive oil is hard to beat). And there's also the story about the ArteOliva project, whose very different way of packaging oil is a far cry from the stylized bottle.

Holidays are synonymous with festivals. We have been tracing the *fiestas* that make up Spain's festive calendar and the foods associated with them–sometimes humble stuff compared with what we have available in the 21st century. If you follow our new series on gourmet shops in Spain's main towns, you'll know just where to go for ingredients next time you visit us.

From this issue on, we hand over the choice and cooking of our recipes to chefs who are the movers and shakers on the Spanish ...and international... food scene. There's moving and shaking going on in the business world, too: see our news flashes for the latest.

And as the cyber-literate 21st century gets underway, we pay homage to the unsung heroes who have devoted their lives, skills and energies to those humble occupations, many now on the brink of extinction, that have kept us fed down the centuries.

Cathy Boirac
Editor-in-chief

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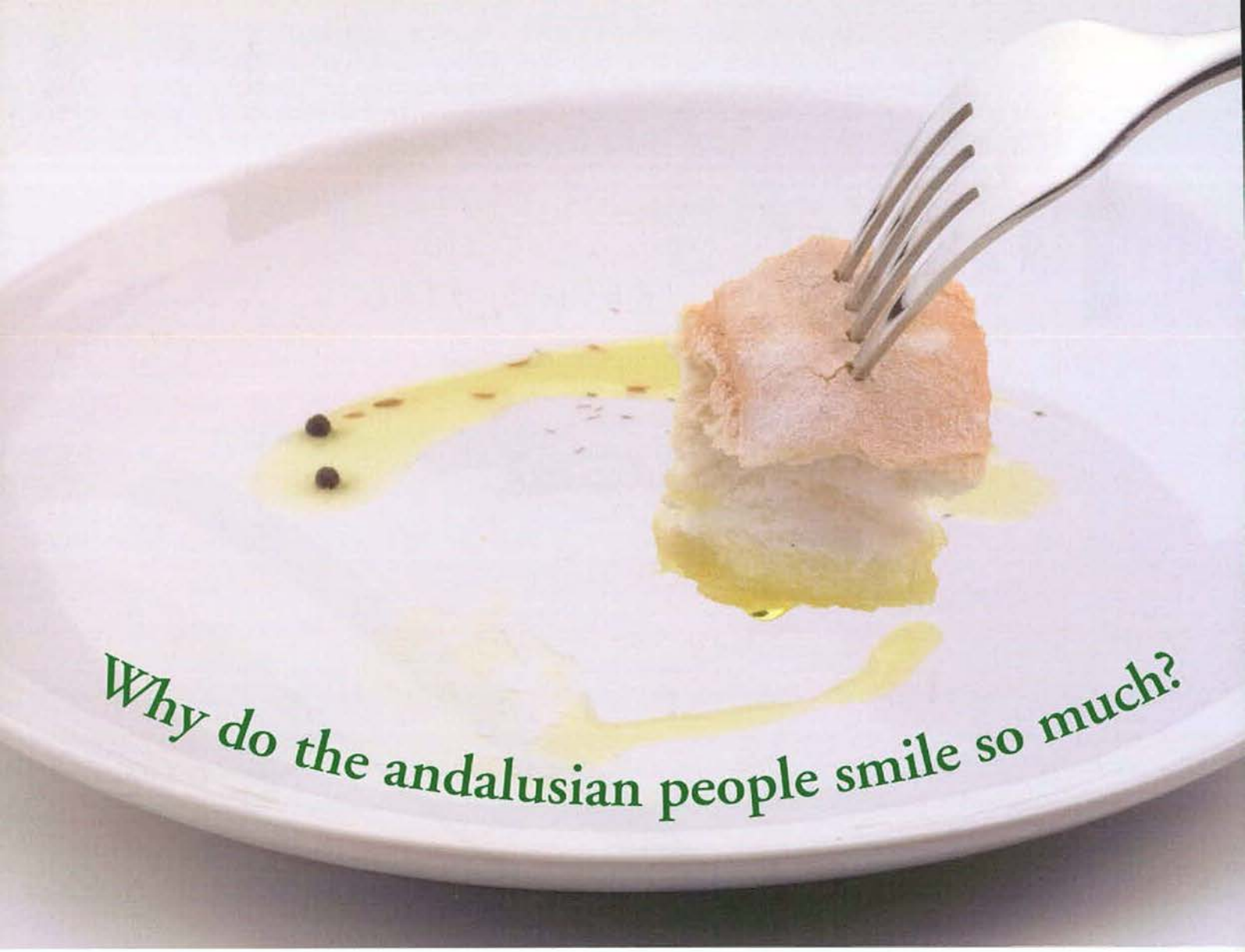

Why do the andalusian people smile so much?





Andalusia is the southernmost region of the Iberian peninsula and the main exponent of the Mediterranean diet, rich in healthy and natural products: fruit, vegetables, fish, olive oil, garlic, cereals... and notable wines such as Sherry, Montilla-Moriles, and other no less important from Huelva and Malaga. Perhaps it is this inexhaustible source of culinary excitement which makes the Andalusian people smile so much each morning, midday and even through to the evening.

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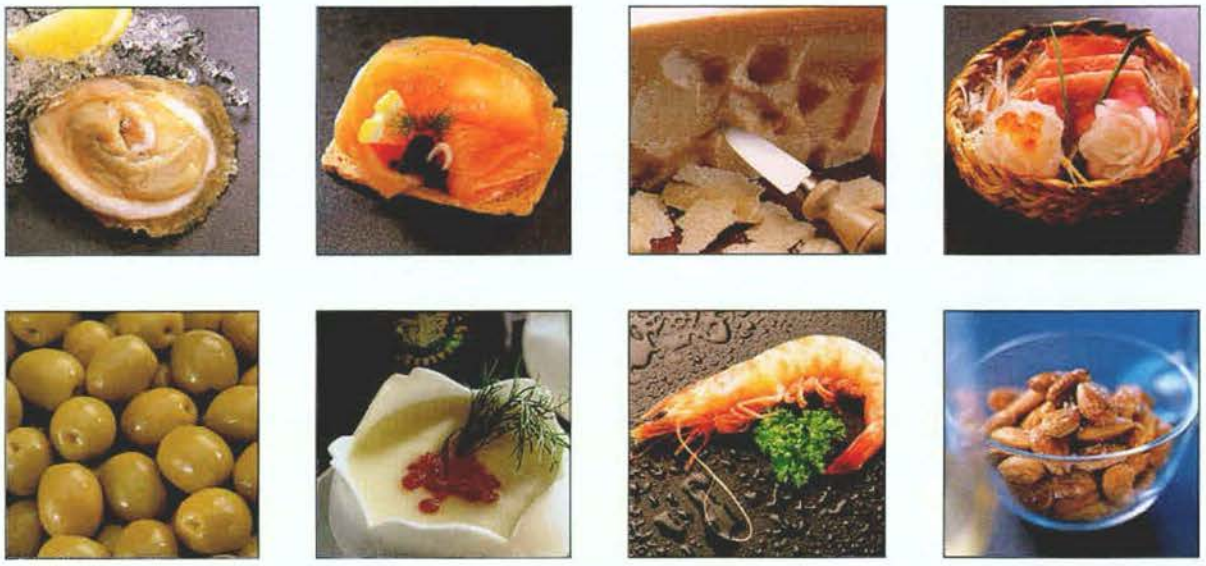

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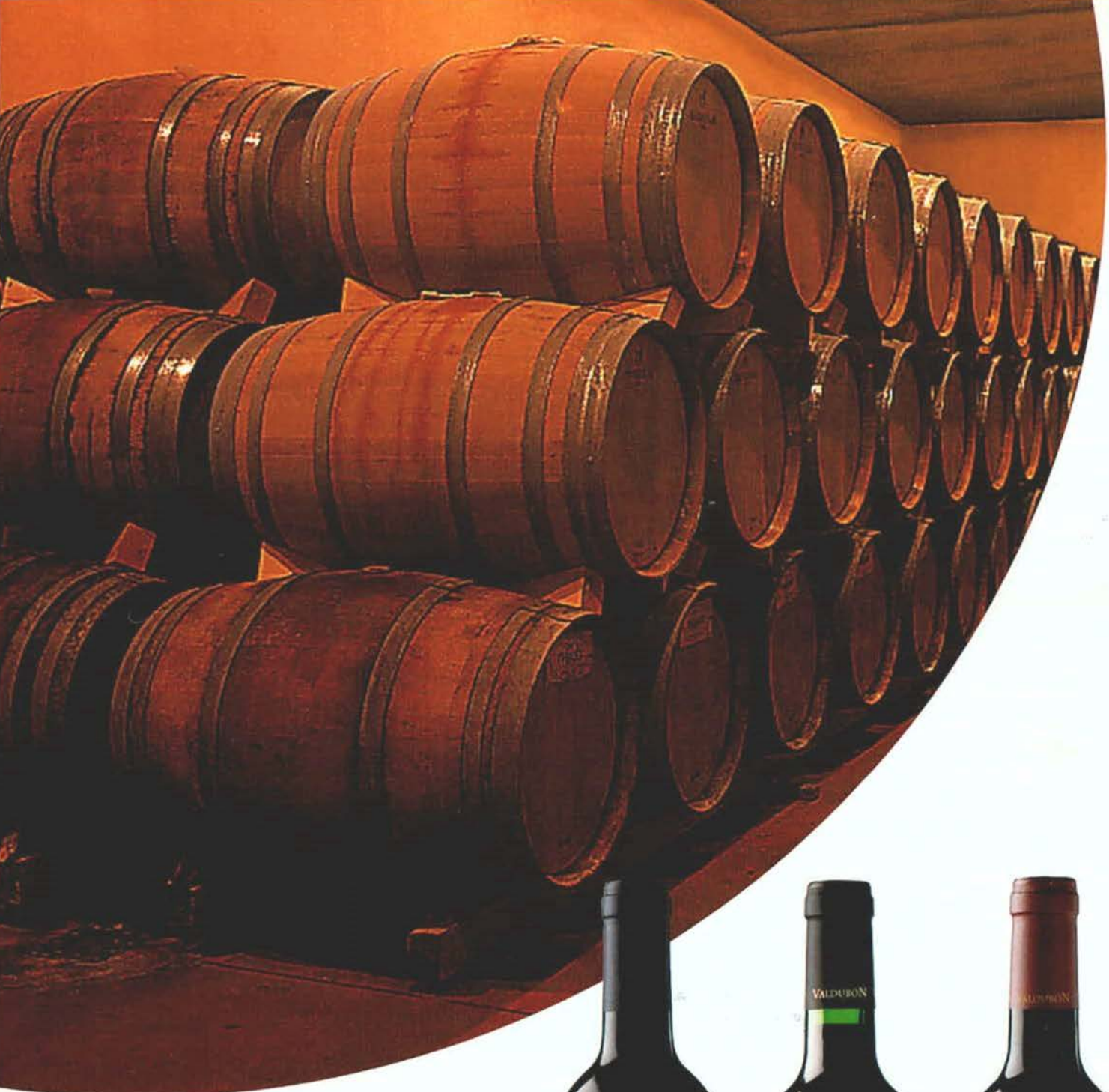

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OCTAVIO OLIVEIRA 2004

A Regal Treat from the Land of Don Quixote

Here's a riddle. Shape: rugby ball; color: green; appearance: toad skin; touch: slightly rippled. Believe it or not, it is edible. Can you guess? Here's another hint: Weight: 1.5-4 kilos (3-9 pounds). Not a clue? Then this will do. Interior: creamy white; taste: honey-sweet; texture: crisp and juicy. Yes, now you've got it! Of course it's the famous Spanish melon or *melón piel de sapo* (toad-skin melon). And much as Don Quixote proudly carried the simple title of Man of La Mancha, next summer melón piel de sapo grown in this area will be granted the distinction 'Melon of La Mancha'. A traditional culture in this extensive region of Central Spain, at present some 300,000 tons of its finest specimens are produced here. With the active support of the regional administration, local growers' associations have spared no efforts in their campaign to endow their prized melon with the corresponding PGI *Melón de la Mancha*. Assigning products of outstanding quality a "surname", as Mercedes Gómez, the region's Secretary of Agriculture, puts it, is not only a means of differentiating them, but also warrants continuity in the growers' commitment to excellence. In La Mancha they take on more than windmills!

TEXT
ANKE VAN WIJCK

Indeed the region, while still here and there dotted with the paradigmatic whitewashed windmills that the Man of La Mancha so bravely fought, has also become the widest agricultural expanse in the country. La Mancha is the common name for the autonomous region officially called Castile-La Mancha that stretches over a large part of Central Spain just south of the capital Madrid and comprises the provinces of Toledo, Guadalajara, Cuenca, Albacete and Ciudad Real. As a matter of fact, Melon of La Mancha is in rather distinguished company because the region can also claim to house the world's vastest expanse of vines (600,000 hectares / 1.5 million acres), yielding the products of seven DOs: La Mancha, Méntrida, Valdepeñas, Mondéjar, Jumilla, Manchuela and Almansa). Castile-La Mancha is also Spain's largest garlic and second-largest olive grower and is famous for its saffron, honey and, of course, its cheese. Who hasn't heard of their zesty *queso manchego* (Manchego cheese)? In fact, La Mancha's topography is ideally suited to combine both agriculture and sheep-herding. Numerous small flocks roam the gently sloping landscape specked throughout with the characteristic dark-green oak trees that contrast beautifully with the soil's deep red to ochre tones. Every turn of the road is worth another picture.

Don Quixote's everlasting allure

"In a village in La Mancha, the name of which I choose not to recall..." reads the opening sentence of Miguel de Cervantes' famous *Don Quixote*, a true bestseller already in his days. That forsaken place turns out to be Argamasilla del Alba where the author, a man of several trades, was imprisoned because of a minor fiscal irregularity. Argamasilla is also one of a number of villages and small towns around the city of Ciudad Real where the majority of Melon of La Mancha is produced. It comes as no surprise then that Sancho Panza, Don Quixote's gluttonous servant, knew well about this local melon. On the other hand, it comes as no surprise either that the Association for the Promotion of Melon of La Mancha has adopted the famous nobleman's image for the simple but evocative logo of its recently requested PGI (Glossary p. 127). Creating an emblem that includes a spiffy design version of Don Quixote's austere face with his goatee and the upside-down shaving dish for a helmet, is doubtlessly the surest and fastest way to forge in people's minds the link between melón piel de sapo and its region of origin, La Mancha.

At the initiative of Apolonio Moreno, a local melon grower, the association was created last May by a group of seven progressive cooperatives that produce and commercialize around 15% of the piel de sapo melon production in the area, but of course, new members both in the cooperative and private sectors are welcome to join. According to Moreno, who now presides the association, it was their purpose to earn recognition for their melon as a product autochthonous to the region, steeped in tradition but grown with the help of the latest agro-technological advances and with a commitment to outstanding

Melon is a traditional culture in Castile-La Mancha. At present some 300,000 tons of its finest specimens are produced here.

agricultural practice. "We analyzed our sector," Moreno explains "and understood that there is no longer a season for fruit". He recognizes that melon from a variety of origins is available year round. "Yet we also know," he continues, "that, come August, familiar consumers are eagerly anticipating the arrival of our melons in stores and markets. Unfortunately, for a long time our product was commercialized without any kind of identification of origin." This is precisely what they want to put an end to, and also why the association, with the strong support of UCAMAN (Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Castile-La Mancha) and particularly of its president, Alejandro Cañas, has applied for the PGI Melón de la Mancha.

Indicación Geográfica Protegida
"Melón de la Mancha"

Conquering new territories

This is not the place to start a discussion about when to call a product autochthonous. Indeed, melon did not originate in Castile-La Mancha but reportedly was introduced to the area by the Arabs as early as the eleventh century. It was the experienced Arab gardeners who, by careful selection, had succeeded not only in increasing the size of melons but also in bringing out their taste and sweetness. However, from that time onwards, melon remained a traditional crop in the area, as evidenced in numerous writings since. In 1550, the region's census clearly states the profession of *melonero* (melon grower). The fact is that almost a thousand years have proven that La Mancha offers an ideal *terroir* (a combination of optimal weather and soil conditions) for open-air grown piel de sapo melon, the Melon of La Mancha. But a PGI is not something a product inherits–it needs to be earned and it needs to be consolidated.

"Today's consumers demand quality and safety. Our seal guarantees both," affirms Moreno. The association and its participant cooperatives are taking all necessary steps to offer full traceability of their products. Most of their growers, some 3,000, have been conveniently codified and plantation, recollection and manipulation are subject to rigorous controls. They also commit to the punctual observation of pertinent European plant-sanitary and food-safety rules. Agronomists at both the cooperatives and UCAMAN offer free information and assistance to their farmers. What is certainly relevant in achieving uniform quality is the fact that most cooperatives have up-to-date nurseries where, from selected commercial seeds, they produce their own seedlings that growers buy in large flats for a very reasonable price. Yet carrying a PGI does not only involve obligations, it also means benefits. In uniting under one banner, the cooperatives combine efforts in national and international sales promotions as well as in R+D projects.
Although the majority of melon produced in La Mancha is still

A MAN OF LA MANCHA IN ROME

Not only was José Esquinas-Alcázar born in La Mancha of a local farming family—with his sharp nose and long silver hair, he could easily be cast for a title role as Don Quixote. The FAO's present Secretary of the Intergovernmental Commission on Food and Agricultural Genetic Resources is all too aware of this. "My office is full of caricatures," he smiles. Hands-on experience and an interest in the miracle of growth came early on, while helping his father in the fields during school vacations. "In La Mancha there is no farm without melon," affirms Esquinas. The fact that his doctoral thesis at the Polytechnical University in Madrid should deal with the genetics of melon varieties in Spain seems only natural. He succeeded in rounding up, listing, and analyzing as many as 357 different varieties. But more than that, deep in Spain's inland, he came upon farmers who were growing melons that turned out to be naturally resistant to different diseases and adverse conditions. Thanks to these farmers' seeds, such beneficial characteristics have been successfully incorporated into melons in many places throughout the world. That this valuable genetic material might have been lost, with the anonymous farmers never receiving official recognition, preyed on Esquinas' mind. A scholarship from the University of California at Davies allowed him to contrast his empirical data with up-to-date laboratory techniques, thereby enabling him, alongside other notable achievements, to trace Spanish melons back to India and the Near East. Soon after obtaining his second doctoral degree, this time in biogenetics, Esquinas joined the UN Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome, now some twenty years ago. At each step, his ideas about the universal relevance of protecting the world's biological and cultural diversity were forged deeper and took on greater dimensions. In this context, Esquinas has been throughout a fervent advocate of the rights of farmers as long-standing safekeepers and guarantors of such crucial biodiversity. "Genetic improvement of plants started ten thousand years ago," he states, interjecting: "Most probably at the hands of women". He explains that, although still widespread, traditional selection practices are gradually being substituted by new technologies. Methods should, however, be able to coexist, and never be exclusive. Esquinas has been the driving force behind the recently approved International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources. It goes without saying then that this binding agreement not only explicitly mandates legislation and the active pursuit of genetic diversity, but also specifically includes Farmers' Rights. Not surprisingly, the FAO also recently nominated Esquinas as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Ethics in Food and Agriculture. And it all started with a melon seed from La Mancha!

José Esquinas-Alcázar

La Mancha offers an ideal terroir (a combination of optimal weather and soil conditions) for open-air grown melón piel de sapo, the Melon of La Mancha.

destined for domestic consumption (in fact, Castile-La Mancha itself is the largest consumer in Spain), increasing their export share is high on the association's priority list. "Our cooperative could perhaps serve as a model for others in the area," says Luis Navarro, general manager at Santiago Apóstol, which in the past six years has spent over two million euros in innovations. Indeed, this cooperative exports some 8,000 tons of the best piel de sapo, which amounts to 35-40% of their total production. The cooperative has clients in most European countries,

including Finland, and even exports to Hong Kong.
"At times, the somewhat rough look of piel de sapo melon can be a problem but once people try, they find out for themselves how really phenomenal they taste," says Navarro. Meeting consumers' demands is therefore key. In this context the melon's caliber (size and weight) becomes a factor. The piel de sapo tends to weigh between 1.5-4 kilos (3-9 pounds). Large sizes (3-4 kilos / 6.6-9 pounds) are still much in demand, on the one hand by those wholesalers who cater to the large African communities in and around many European capitals that have traditionally consumed this kind of melon and, on the other hand, by suppliers of pre-cut melon. The latter also require the fruit to be harvested somewhat earlier so that its consistency is firmer. As for supermarkets, here the preferred size follows the tendency of most other fruits and vegetables. This means that, in view of changed social structures in which small families and singles dominate, the demand is for smaller sizes (1.5-2.5 kg / 3-5.5 lb). Melons are exported in convenient recyclable boxes (sizes may differ according to the melon's caliber) that tend to weigh about ten kilos and, if so requested, carry the client's personal logo. Santiago Apóstol has an agreement with several specialized trucking companies that transport the melons at 10-14°C (50-57°F) to their destination anywhere in Europe. It is certainly Navarro's goal to further increase his export market and his company has started to attend major trade-fairs abroad.

The cooperatives are taking all necessary steps to offer full traceability of their products. Most of their growers, some 3,000, have been conveniently codified and plantation, recollection and manipulation are subject to rigorous controls.

Hand-in-hand with science

The association has also commissioned several research projects–more proof of the ongoing convergence between Spanish agricultural entrepreneurs and academic research institutions. In collaboration with the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC, or Superior Council of Scientific Research) in Murcia (southeastern Spain) the cooperatives are studying the most cost-effective way to keep their melon in optimal conditions while in temporary storage. In fact, the study addresses the "stabilization and control of the factors that influence the prolongation of the melon's commercial shelf-life".
Post-harvest conservation is fundamental to proper commercialization of this type of open-air grown melon. "Harvest campaigns used to be short and abundant. Prices would be low and large stocks would go to waste," explains Manuel Ramírez, in charge of the technical office at the

cooperative Ceresco in Manzanares (Ciudad Real). Clearly, conservation is essential. It not only ensures quality levels but also extends the period over which production can be marketed. As a natural means of pre-refrigeration, melons cut throughout the day are typically left in crates in the fields to benefit from La Mancha's cool night-time temperatures. It is not until the next morning–no later than 10:30 am–that they are transported to the cooperative warehouses. Here the fruit is cleaned and brushed before being dispatched. A melon grown, harvested and manipulated in optimal conditions (all three are equally relevant) will keep well for twenty-five days, but if cooled to 8-10°C (46-64°F), this period can be protracted to forty. However, Félix Romojaro–who heads this study–suggests that in view of the piel de sapo's favorable characteristics (it produces extremely low ethylene levels as compared to other types of melon), in order to be more cost-effective, a temperature of 15-20°C (59-68°F) would do perfectly (outdoor summer temperatures in La Mancha frequently go up to

40°C / 104°F). "This is important," he explains, "because installing refrigeration equipment is especially costly in La Mancha. There is no alternative horticultural crop like in other parts of the country where besides melon, other vegetables like tomatoes, cucumbers or peppers are grown, and for which cold-storage facilities can be optimally used". Temperature-controlled storage is important because despite the widespread perception that melon continues to mature after being picked, it does not. Unlike tomatoes, pears or avocados, melon is a non-climacteric fruit. It does not mature in storage but, according to Ramírez, if not properly kept, will rather consume up to 2-3% of its sugar. The more mature the melon, the higher its sugar content (measured in degrees *brix*), but also the more perishable, because the pulp gradually loses consistency. Needless to say, picking the melons at the right time is of utmost importance. *"Melón cuajado, a los cuarenta días cortado"* (melon should be cut forty days after the fruit has set) is a popular saying. However, depending upon weather circumstances, that period may be

THE SPIRIT OF MELON

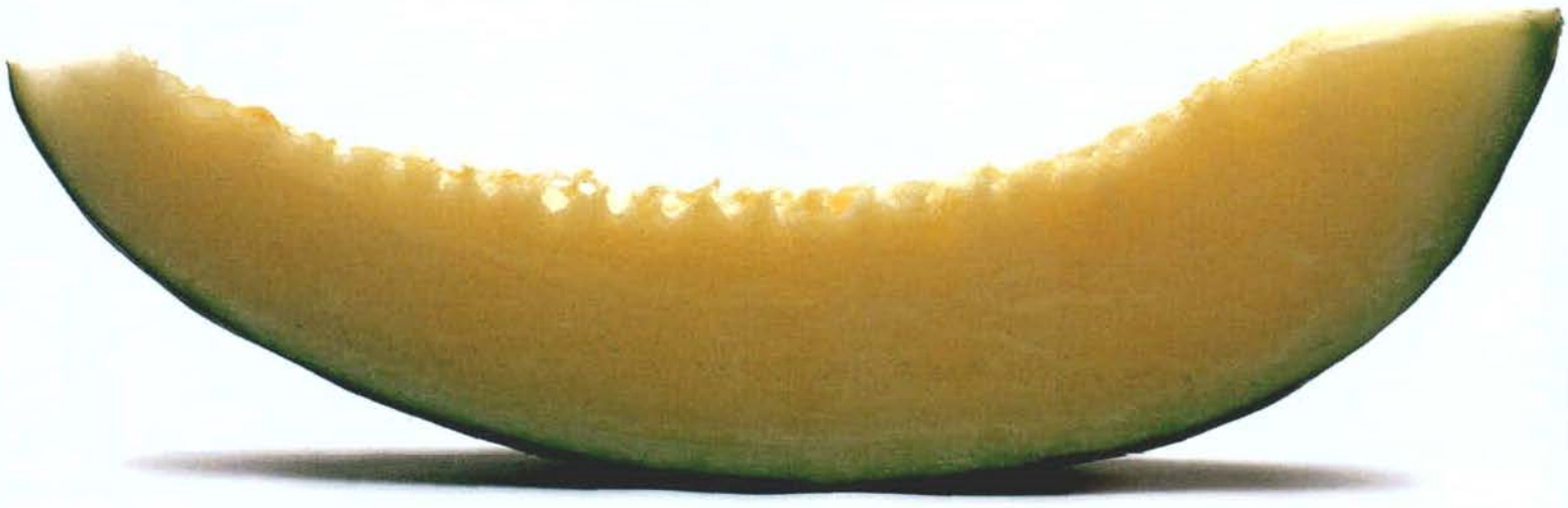
An interesting diversification project has just been completed. In the year 2000, Ceresco, the horticultural cooperative in Manzanares, approached the University of Castile-La Mancha (UCLM) in Ciudad Real to devise an alternative use for their melons. As we have seen, the region of La Mancha produces substantial quantities of melon that need to be marketed in a relatively short time-span. Market saturation is not rare. "We wanted to find an outlet for our melon other than its fresh consumption," explains Manuel Ramírez of the technical department at Ceresco. The project was taken on by Juan Úbeda and his wife Ana Briones who both teach and do research at UCLM. At the suggestion of *Ofelio* López, Ceresco's president, they started to work on a melon-based *eau-de-vie*. Under their supervision and in the context of a scholarship, Luis Fernando Hernández, one of Ana's former students, initiated a research project that will afford him his doctoral degree and has exceeded initial expectations. Not only did it bring to life an eau-de-vie that is fully obtained from the product of fermented melon, double-distilled in an a typical copper still called *alquitara* and kept in the bottle for 6-12 months, but it also came up with a liqueur drawn from the melon's macerated pulp and pips and steeped in melon eau-de-vie. Another student, Victor Titos, has designed the corresponding processing and bottling plant for the production of 500-1,000 half-liter bottles a day. The production of this double-distilled genuine *aguardiente de melón* and the mellower *licor de melón*, both already patented under the name *Cucumis Melo*, is now set to begin.

prolonged to 45-50 days (see box). This is the moment when a well-matured melon will have reached the desirable sugar level of 12° brix.

A family affair

Stretching the production period in this area is particularly relevant for two more reasons, both of which have to do with a clear synergy between the cultivation of piel de sapo melon and La Mancha's rural population. One is the fact that melon is a rotating crop, which means that it cannot be sowed in the same place year after year. Winter temperatures that come with the area's continental climate are cold, so farmers can only cultivate the less lucrative cereal, or at times legumes, as an alternative. Unfortunately, melon and cereal crops do not complement each other well time-wise, explains Francisco Gutiérrez, a local farmer. This means that in the same year they cannot harvest both a melon and a cereal crop on the same plot. Therefore farmers divide their land into parcels and rotate their crops. To stretch the season, a solution has been found in planting a combination of early and late varieties of the piel de sapo. "Seed companies are really doing a great job," affirms Moreno. As a rule, the Sancho variety is planted mid-May and is harvested mid- to late August. Later varieties like Ruidera, 015, Trujillo or Cantasapo are planted mid-June and harvested late August or early September. Additionally, the now-widespread use of transparent plastic to cover the planting rows not only avoids excessive weed growth but also enhances precocity, meaning that the fruit will set earlier.

The second reason is manpower. In La Mancha, melon is an eminently social tradition that has a direct impact on regional income levels and the well-being of its rural population. It is still primarily grown by small farmers who dedicate an



average of 4.2 hectares (13.8 acres) to its cultivation. This means that growing melon is a family affair and that to cut costs, at harvest time everybody has to jump in. "We all help," says Luciana Ocaña, who in winter works part-time in a nearby clothing factory, but joins her husband and three daughters in the fields during harvest time. The good thing is that recollection fully coincides with school vacations. It also allows young people to earn some good extra money. "Thanks to this, many of our kids have been able to attend university," agree both Moreno and Gutiérrez.

Melon in a myriad of ways

As we have seen, growers are keenly aware that the continuity of their livelihood depends on their ability to offer regularity and uniformity in their melon's outstanding quality. "Speaking objectively," says Félix Romojaro, "there is no doubt that the melon they grow in La Mancha has an excellent quality and a great personality. Besides being sweet and juicy, it is balanced and delicate and has a very pleasant texture. Its aroma is slightly herbaceous." Romojaro, a recognized research scientist from

Melons are exported in convenient recyclable boxes (sizes may differ according to the melon's caliber) and, if requested, carry the client's personal logo.

WHEN IS IT RIPE, RIPE ENOUGH?

To savor a *piel de sapo* melon in its prime, the moment of picking is vital. According to Ceresco's Manuel Ramírez, this moment is determined by the following agronomic characteristics:

- When the first two leaves of its stem start wilting
- When the spot where the melon touches the ground (the so-called 'bed') where sunlight cannot reach and thus no chlorophyll forms, turns yellow
- When its green skin starts showing a slightly golden undertone
- When the web of thin carvings that many, but not all, melons show, intensifies towards the poles and gradually diminishes towards the center

If the piel de sapo melon that you are about to buy shows most of these characteristics and also feels heavy for its size, then you are in for a treat. And don't let anybody outsmart you. It is a fallacy that a well-ripened melon shows a soft spot at its end.

As piel de sapo melon naturally keeps better than most other types of melon, it will also do so in your kitchen. It is perfect for eating in small portions, which, in view of its considerable size, is an important asset. "It is rare to find another fruit that once you have opened it up, will keep in the refrigerator, even uncovered, without losing any of its outstanding organoleptic qualities," explains Félix Romojaro.

In La Mancha, melon is grown primarily by small farmers who dedicate an average of 4.2 hectares (13.8 acres) to its cultivation.

One more reason to go for Melon of La Mancha

Melon of La Mancha is not only becoming to the palate, it also promotes health. The beneficial characteristics of melon in general have been well documented. Because of its high water- and low fat-content, the fruit is slightly diuretic and laxative and therefore exceptionally suitable for weight-loss diets. Although *piel de sapo* from La Mancha is well-known for its outstanding organoleptic qualities (taste, texture, perception), unlike for other types of melon such as Cantaloupe, Honeydew or Casaba, no scientific documentation existed on its nutritional composition. So, once more, UCAMAN commissioned a complete and thorough study. The food technology institute AINIA in Valencia has just released its preliminary conclusions–and they certainly look promising. Indeed, piel de sapo melon shows levels of sodium, potassium and phosphorus in excess of the Recommended Daily Intake (RDI) and superior to those found in oranges, peaches or watermelon. It also contains iron and calcium in a somewhat lesser proportion. Plus, piel de sapo melon is a good source of water-soluble vitamins B3 and B5 with the added benefit that, as only the pulp is eaten, none of the nutrients are lost in the process of washing or cooking, as may occur with other fruits or vegetables. Its content of essential amino-acids is comparable to that of milk. There is no doubt that besides being one of the most delicious summer fruits, Melon of La Mancha provides a good number of nutrients that are essential to our well-being at all stages of life. Miguel Blasco of AINIA contends that for a product like melon, it is important to increase the number of positive factors on which the consumer can base his or her purchasing decision. Come July, look out for them–and enjoy!

Murcia, knows that the latter may sound surprising, because the piel de sapo belongs to the group of inodorous melons. "It is a special freshness, of low intensity but very subtle," he insists. Melón piel de sapo is one of about 800 varieties of the *Cucurbitaceae* family that can be of quite diverse origin and that, throughout history, has been of great relevance in human nutrition. The group also includes cucumbers, marrows, pumpkins, gourds, zucchinis, and squashes. Melon–or *cucumis melo*–however, has the highest sugar content, and among the many kinds of melon on the market, the piel de sapo is one of the sweetest. No wonder then that it has been primarily used for dessert or as refreshment during the summer, with perhaps the sole exception of the ubiquitous and widely appreciated 'melon and ham'. Yet increasingly, chefs are growing fascinated by its versatility. To give an idea of just how versatile piel de sapo melon can be, Juan Elvira, chef-owner of the restaurant El Corregidor de Almagro in the heart of La Mancha, proposes Marinated sardines with melon sorbet and crunchy ham. The dish also features trout caviar, snow peas and sautéed sticks of melon. Food for thought, isn't it? But perhaps less surprising when one learns that the recipe is wholly inspired by a traditional popular dish. "Here it is an old custom to eat melon and sardines," says Elvira, explaining that in inland Spain, salt herring, sardines or



The PGI Melón de la Mancha is grown with the help of the latest agro-technological advances and with a commitment to outstanding agricultural practice.

codfish were until quite recently the only fish available to common folk. "The purpose was," he continues, "to contrast the dry and salty taste of the fish with the refreshing and sweet sensation of the melon". This only goes to show that even though today's food gurus exploit the idea to the furthest stretch of imagination, binary oppositions are an age-old concept in even the earliest human food-ways. So, what Elvira did was modernize the dish. He confesses to no longer using salt sardines but less pungent marinated fresh ones. But he continues to play with contrasts: cold melon sorbet against the warm somewhat caramelized melon sticks, the distinct taste of sardines against the sweetness of the melon, the gelatinous trout caviar against the slightly crunchy snow-peas. Not to mention color contrasts, of course. "It is fun to play with opposites," he says. "Dire times,"–and here he pauses–"fortunately, are over." Even so, Elvira's intention is to evoke his clients' memory, those who still recognize these flavors from their youth. He vows for modernization, but for one which does not compromise roots. "A people without history, is nothing," he concludes.

Juan Elvira and his colleague Pepe Rodríguez, chef at 'El Bohío' in Illescas (Toledo) who is responsible for the melon-based recipes in this issue of *Spain Gourmetour* (p. 78), are among a number of selected Spanish top chefs whose recipes are featured in the PGI Melon de La Mancha's ambitious promotional brochure. In fact, the association has recently commissioned a cookbook that will comprise a complete range of recipes featuring Melon of La Mancha–just one in a series of promotional efforts. Plus, this year they have also launched the first annual melon-tasting contest. Last September, growers were invited to present their best specimens before a jury of professionals in the sector. After a double-blind trial, the jury's final decision fell upon a small cooperative called Guadialba. And it fell upon Luciana Ocaña, who is also Guadialba's treasurer, to collect the first prize. "For many years we have worked very hard to be recognized," she smiles. "And finally we are succeeding."

Unlike their famous *hidalgo*, people in La Mancha only dream 'possible dreams'... and don't leave anything up to fate to make them come true.

Anke van Wijck *is a sociologist and has a Master's degree in gastronomy from Boston University. Her articles have appeared in the Boston Globe.*

Recipes page 78, Exporters page 111, Photo Credits page 128

WEB SITES

www.ucaman.es
Web site for the Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Castile-La Mancha (UCAMAN). The site offers unrestricted information for all users as well as an area reserved for registered visitors. Useful information includes an extensive list of cooperatives in Castile-La Mancha and links to pertinent legal documents. (Spanish)

www.santiago-apostol.com
Santiago Apóstol Cooperative web site, giving details of the association's products, methods, production, contact information and policy on traceability. (English, French, Spanish)

www.paralelo40.org/corregidor
Web site of El Corregidor de Almagro Restaurant, providing a brief description of the restaurant and contact details. (Spanish)

Casa Azagra, Pamplona

Culinary Shopping in Spain

This is the first of a series of reports on our visits to different parts of Spain, starting with Pamplona, Logroño, San Sebastián, Bilbao, Oviedo and Santiago de Compostela, to search out local gastronomic specialties and the most attractive food stores, those that are most concerned about what they sell. We came across real enthusiasts, people with a vocation, professionals who have inherited from previous generations their nose and their passion for quality products, as well as young entrepreneurs devoted to discovering, displaying and selling artisanal products that might otherwise be forgotten.

Text
María Unceta

Translation
Jenny McDonald

Delicacies of the NORTH

Top: Basandere, Bilbao; bottom: Crivencar, Oviedo

La Casa de los Quesos, Santiago de Compostela

According to Imanol Jaca, the owner and manager of Don Serapio, a quality food shop in San Sebastián, "A region's gastronomy is a prime indicator of its culture". This statement goes beyond culinary activities. The different ways of obtaining ingredients, of preparing and cooking food are an important factor in cultural diversity. Each area and each region of Spain has its own dietary peculiarities that are often related to climate, geographical location, population structure, lifestyles and even religious practices. Study of a region's raw materials and foods is an essential means of finding out about its history and culture. Demanding consumers and knowledgeable, or curious, travelers enjoy discovering these different foods and like to take samples back with them and use them at home in an attempt to prolong the flavor of their travels on return.

Though the subject of our article is the whole of the north of Spain from East to West along the coast, there are certain features that are shared by the various autonomous communities in which the cities visited are located. Perhaps the main one is the weather. The typical drizzle–called *sirimiri* in the Basque Country and north of Navarre, and *orbayu* in Asturias and Galicia–is characteristic of the temperate, damp climate of northern Spain. Another is the relief, with high and medium-high mountains covered with woods and meadows, and traditionally scattered habitation, with a higher-than-average proportion of rural population. Only the south of Navarre and much of La Rioja–which are flatter and have a drier, sunnier climate–are exceptions. It is these climatic and geographic peculiarities and the importance of the rural world that hold the secret to many of the food products of northern Spain. The green pasturelands provide the food for

many cows, goats and sheep which represent the first link in the chain of a great variety of cheeses, the main exponent being Asturias.
In the words of Nacho Sandoval, general coordinator of Crivencar, which deals in the recovery, distribution and sale of natural products from Asturias, "We have recovered as many as 40 different varieties of cheese—strong, mild, ripe or semi-ripe, piquant or creamy, made from cows', ewes' or goats' milk". Since 1982, some excellent, traditional cheeses have been saved from oblivion. And throughout the north, the production of pork products from varied, traditional recipes has been promoted. The Galician wines and brandies, Asturian cider and *txakolí* (a type of wine) or *patxarán* (sloe liqueur) from the Basque Country or Navarre have been constantly improving in quality and are increasingly being consumed outside the traditional areas. In the historical fishing towns in the Basque Country, Asturias and Galicia, many small cooperatives and canning businesses are keen to improve their processes in order to enhance the quality of their products–mainly bonito, anchovies, mussels and sea urchins. In Navarre and La Rioja, both of which are renowned for their top-class vegetables, some small growers and brands cover the whole process for their asparagus, artichokes, cardoons, borage, etc.–from planting to canning. As we shall see over the next few pages, revitalization of natural and artisan products goes right through the chain to the point of sale, in shops that stand out for their high-quality produce.

Pamplona and Logroño

We began our tour in Pamplona, in the easternmost part of Navarre and the Navarran capital. The first establishment visited, Torréns, has been managed for the last 14 years by Jesús Torréns, who began working in it with his parents in about 1967. Starting with its cheeses, the most outstanding is labeled Príncipe de Viana, a large cheese made from ewes' milk from the Pyrenees. Other ewes' milk cheeses are from the PDO Roncal, Valle de Ulzama or Orbaiceta, both supplied in small

Top: Txirrinta, Pamplona; bottom: Jelen Rioja, Logroño

AROUND&ABOUT

Top: Torréns, Pamplona; bottom: Txirrinta, Pamplona

batches by a single farmer. Amongst the canned vegetables, the star is asparagus. Jesús Torréns says he sells asparagus from the Ribera area on the banks of the Ebro, "with the Protected Designation of Origin label". Of the meat products, the most traditional is the *txistorra*–a long sausage containing a mixture of pork and beef with *pimentón* (a type of paprika from Spain) and garlic–from Zubiri and Tafalla. The *chorizo* on offer is "made in the authentic, old-fashioned way", explains Torréns, "with natural tripe, which explains its irregular shape". The onion-flavored blood sausages also contain egg and saffron. Small producers in Vera de Bidasoa and Alsasua supply *foie, magret* and *confit* of duck in glass jars as well as partridge, quail and pigeon. The Torréns shop, located in the old quarter of Pamplona next to the church of San Nicolás, also sells homemade sweets such as *turrón*, made of almonds, honey and wafers from Artajona, as well as fried, doughnut-shaped *rosquillas* and *chanchigorri* cakes, which are made from a bread dough baked with sugar, cinnamon and pork rinds. According to Jesús Torrens, "We select these by traveling around the local villages and finding the best cooks".

The next stop was Txirrinta, run by Sagrario Lora, who has 14 years of experience in the food business. The Navarran products of which she is most proud include asparagus, the famous Piquillo peppers–a variety grown in and around the town of Lodosa, and the wild mushrooms collected from local woods and sold in glass jars. The rustic appearance of the shop, with wood as the main element, makes fitting surroundings for the display of cheeses. Sagrario too offers ewes' milk cheese from Larra, Berruete, Baztán, Roncal, Arbizu and Valle de Ulzama. She also recommends the txistorra from Arbizu and Pamplona, and the patxarán–a beautiful red liqueur made from purple sloes that is typical of the Basque Country and Navarre, with brands produced in small quantities, such as Bainez or Sadar. Sagrario Lora notes that the increasing numbers of tourists coming to Pamplona show a great liking for sweets, such as the white coffee toffees bearing the Las Dos Cafeteras label, well known in Spain. Also popular are the Salinas *mantecadas*, or buttery sponge cakes, and the honey from Ulzama.

Three generations of the Azagra family have kept the Casa Azagra going for one hundred years. Starting out as a general food store, it gradually came to specialize in Navarran and delicatessen products. The current owner and manager, Juan Azagra, states, "Today it's important to specialize, so we focus on knowledgeable customers who want quality. They know that gastronomic products are not necessary but they buy them as gifts for themselves and for others." The articles he sells include the produce of the Navarran market gardens–mostly beans, asparagus and Piquillo peppers, homemade txistorra and chorizo, caramel-coated almonds from Ujué, the traditional milk coffee toffees in the Las Dos Cafeteras wrapping, PDO Roncal cheese and Salinas mantecadas.

Rioja wines are among the first to come to mind when talking about Spanish wines and are certainly the

best-known and most popular outside Spain. But La Rioja has a variety of landscapes and wine is not all it has to offer. Jelen Rioja is the name of a company established in Logroño that specializes in the production and sale of select wines and food products. It has two shops in the center of Logroño and another in Santo Domingo de la Calzada, a town on the Road to Santiago (*Spain Gourmetour* N° 53). Alongside its careful selection of wines, Jelen Rioja sells a wide range of Riojan food products, many under its own brand such as the artisan *pâtés* from Robledillo flavored with pepper, port, herbs or truffle. Vegetables are an essential element in any display of Navarran foods, and the Jelen brand offers peppers from Santo Domingo, artichokes, Swiss chard, leeks, borage, green beans and asparagus in cans or bottles. Also presented in attractive glass jars are a large variety of ready-to-eat poultry and game bird dishes, such as partridge in a pickle sauce.

Jelen Rioja, Logroño

San Sebastián

Our next stop is San Sebastián, a beautiful Basque city that has given Spain and the world an amazing lineup of top-ranking chefs–Juan Mari Arzak (*Spain Gourmetour* N° 42), Pedro Subijana, Martín Berasategui or, best-known among the younger generation of cooks, Andoni Luis Aduriz (*Spain Gourmetour* N° 53). Though the list of local products is not extensive, local consumers have traditionally been great enthusiasts of good food and insist on top quality.
This they can find in the eponymous shop owned and run by Aitor Lasa, just a few meters from the charismatic La Brecha market (*Spain Gourmetour* N° 39), from which the city's great cooks stock their kitchens. Aitor is convinced of the importance of recovering the flavors, smells and textures of the past and, for many years, has been visiting village markets to see what is on offer. He has contacted shepherds who produce ewes' milk cheeses for him in the Urbasa, Andia and Aralar mountains. By law, these have to be ripened for two months, after which they can be sold in his shop. Aitor speaks at length about the tremendous difference between the flavor of these cheeses that are made by adding rennet to freshly-milked, warm milk and that of industrial cheeses that are cooled, then heated to pasteurize them. "People have forgotten what cheeses used to taste like," he says. "And what we are trying to do is to recover the old flavors so that our customers can taste the difference for themselves. The secret lies in the combination of flavors and textures, and the French are clearly ahead of us in this." Most of Aitor Lasa's regular customers are local residents, but tourists drop in all the time. Other local products on sale are apple jelly made with lemon juice and sugar, txacolí from Guetaria–an aromatic, white wine with a low alcohol content served chilled and produced in small quantities, or *piperrak*, chili peppers that are eaten as an aperitif or in a Tolosa bean stew. The canned products–all free of preservatives–include vegetables, Ondarroa bonito and some excellent pre-cooked dishes such as *marmitako* (a typical bonito and potato casserole), *bacalao*

Top: Don Serapio, San Sebastián; bottom: Aitor Lasa, San Sebatián

al ajoarriero (salt-cod in a tomato and garlic sauce) or squid in ink sauce.

A little further along the same street is Solbes, with its impressive display of quality fresh produce and an excellent selection of wines. First to catch the eye are the fruit and vegetables brought direct from farms in the province. Next come the pulses, with Tolosa beans being the star product, and chestnuts and walnuts from the Basque Country. Alongside these everyday foods are exquisite cheeses, a wide selection of meat products including foie, pâtés and hams, and top-quality canned goods.

In the Amara district of San Sebastián is the spacious Don Serapio, with a staff of 25, in which as much care is taken in the display of goods as in ensuring that they are all of top quality. According to Imanol Jaca, the manager and owner, "Our aim over the last 16 years has been to promote gastronomic culture. This is more than just eating well. It involves knowledge of the ingredients, and understanding and respect for natural production and processing methods which all have a history and are based on traditional know-how." Imanol Jaca states that eating good food is not a luxury, and that the key to his business is his commitment to the product and to his customers: "I sell nothing that I would not like to eat myself". The Don Serapio catalog offers about 4,000 items, with local products receiving priority. Under the establishment's own label are chili peppers, anchovies, bonito in virgin olive oil, peas, asparagus, peppers and artichokes as well as cooked *pochas*, young beans ready for turning into a wholesome bean stew.

Our last call in San Sebastián is Pikabea, a simple but well-qualified establishment in the El Antiguo district. For the last 13 years, it has been specializing in the production of the most delicious of meat products, all prepared by strictly traditional methods, as well as pre-cooked dishes. "We bring the meat in from small farms that we know

Top and bottom: Don Serapio, San Sebastián

well in the local area–in Aia and Asteasu–where we can be sure that no artificial feed has been used to fatten the animals," says Peio Pikabea, a young farmer who has won a gastronomic award in Aquitaine as well as the bronze medal for charcuterie for the whole of France. The son and grandson of butchers, he acknowledges a French influence in his homemade meats, chicken with truffles, duck mousse or pork belly stuffed with pistachio and ham. This establishment, in which Peio works alongside his parents, Pedro and Nekane, was selected to serve the reception offered every year during the Cannes Film Festival by the organizers of the San Sebastián Cinema Festival. Products always available in the shop include txistorra, baby chorizos, blood sausages and local cheeses such as Idiazábal and Joshe Mari from Aldanondo, both of which are made from ewes' milk and smoked then ripened to different degrees, as well as an exquisite cows' milk cheese from Leaburu.

Bilbao

Thanks to the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao is the Basque Country's best-known city internationally. It was precisely with the intention of offering visitors to Bilbao a selection of traditional and modern Basque crafts that a team of six women set up the Basandere in 1998. This store, with high ceilings and a simple but refined atmosphere of quality and warmth, is close to the Guggenheim. Mabel Andreu, one of the six owners and workers at Basandere, says, "We aim to showcase some of the characteristic elements of the Basque people by recovering objects and motifs from traditional handicrafts while encouraging new creation, with the focus on quality and good presentation". Pottery, table linen, carefully-crafted furniture, hand-blown glass, works of art and traditional objects accompany a small but select display of gastronomic products. "What tourists ask most for is txakolí," says Mabel, "and our main brand is Señorío de Otxaran which comes from Zaia. But they also buy patxarán, bonito from Ondarroa, Idiazábal and Izarra cheese and honey, tuile biscuits from Tolosa, and Bizcaia and Hueto chocolates." The Basandere partners have traveled around villages and farmhouses and have visited fairs looking for the best products and encouraging "many small suppliers who were reluctant to become professional, fearing the paperwork and complications involved".

Also in Bilbao, in a pedestrian area close to the main Gran Via, we

entered La Viña del Ensanche, another shop displaying and selling gastronomic delicacies. This family business has kept the name of a bar with great prestige that was opened in 1927 by Bautista González, the grandfather of Mónica and Elena González, today's managers. "My father," says Mónica, "still travels around searching out the best suppliers". The large store, in an attractive, late 19th-century building, is magnificently laid out. Nothing is left to improvisation, with the products carefully presented and customers served by professional staff. Smoked and unsmoked Idiazábal cheeses are laid out on tables and shelves alongside txacolí from Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa and many other articles bearing the establishment's brand, La Viña, including excellent bonito from Bermeo, asparagus from Navarre, goose or duck foie, and peppers. La Viña del Ensanche also offers a wide range of top wines and gourmet products from other parts of Spain, notably Ibérico ham. "More and more tourists come into the shop," says Mónica González. "The Japanese have a great gastronomic culture and already know about many products, especially Ibérico ham, but they show interest in everything we have to offer."

Last but not least in Bilbao is an establishment that specializes in an essential, though not homegrown, ingredient in local culinary traditions–salt-cod. The story goes that, because of an accounting error, a Bilbao storekeeper received an enormous batch of dried cod just before the city was sieged by the Carlist troops (1873). The resulting food shortages enabled him to sell off all his stock and, since it was all families had to eat for months, a huge variety of cod recipes was invented. Whether the story is true or not, salt-cod is one of the best-known ingredients in Bilbao cuisine. It is prepared Basque style, in a *pil-pil* sauce, in a tomato and garlic ajoarriero sauce, or in green sauce. These are just a few of the many preparations served in Bilbao homes and restaurants.

Oviedo

Now on to Oviedo, the capital of Asturias, an autonomous community that has one of the widest selections of gastronomic products. This is a large region, with a long coastal strip, rocky mountains, and extensive pastures and wooded areas. Not only is its landscape outstandingly beautiful, but Asturias is steeped in traditions, and its gastronomic culture is very much a part of everyday life. It was precisely with the aim of making the local products better known that Crivencar was set up in Oviedo 21 years ago. But it was a complex initiative because the owners found they not only had to make known the existing products, but also had to rescue and breathe new life into customs and processes that were practically dying out or were restricted to very limited areas, sometimes being little more than a family secret. "Today we are a landmark," says Nacho Sandoval, the company's coordinator. "With four shops and the Tierra Astur restaurant and shop in the center of Oviedo, Crivencar can now offer a catalog of 600 Asturian products. But we also hold tasting sessions, gastronomic events and other activities that keep us very much involved in this exciting cultural, business and human adventure." Crivencar started out with cheeses–Cabrales,

La Viña del Ensanche, Bilbao

Top and center: Casa Veneranda, Oviedo; bottom: A Mouga, Santiago de Compostela

Valdesano, Oscos, Urbiés, Casín, Beyos... The list of place names covers the 40 varieties that are now being produced and sold, in many cases thanks to great restoration efforts. "Everything we sell is totally handmade," says Sandoval. "We believe in small-scale, artisanal production, in quality, in products that become exclusive without trying, and our customers appreciate this." Meat products, such as the Villamayor loin sausage or the deer or wild boar chorizo from Pola de Allande, smoked cheese from Pría, sea urchin caviar–with all the flavor of the ocean–and pâté, and the much-appreciated *fabe* beans are some of the Asturian food products on sale in the Crivencar shops.
The owners of Casa Venerando also helped spread the word about the traditional foods of Asturias. "My grandfather, Jose María Soler Fernández," Beatriz Suárez tells us with pride, "started out in 1927 with a general grocery store. He went on to specialize in traditional Asturian products, what today are described as 'delicatessen' products. He was the first to use a vacuum-packing machine and the first to sell vacuum packs containing all the ingredients for making *fabada* (a ham and bean stew) and *pote asturiano* (Asturian pot) at home."

Santiago de Compostela

Santiago de Compostela is the final destination of the Pilgrims' Road to Santiago (*Spain Gourmetour* Nº 53, 54) and the political capital of Galicia. With such a relevant role in history and art, it inevitably became a crossroads, as well as the commercial hub of the whole region. The city market (*Spain Gourmetour* N° 39) was traditionally visited by peasants and fishermen from all round, all of whom left their colorful mark on this surprising stone and granite complex. In Galicia, the varied climate, the many kilometers of rugged coastline and the scattered farms have led to a great variety of seafood and foods based on the fruits of the land and the cattle.
Our first stop in Santiago is a small shop, the Casa de los Quesos, which has been faithful to itself for several decades. The current owner, Mercedes Piñeiro, who was preceded by her mother and grandmother, knows everything there is to know about each cheese, about what she describes as its essential partner (quince jelly), about each of the meat products, and about the brandies and handmade liqueurs on sale in the 30 square meters (98.5 sq ft)–if that–of her shop. The only marketing is word of mouth, but

From top to bottom: Casa de los Quesos, A Mouga, Casa de los Quesos; all in Santiago de Compostela

Mercedes reports that large numbers of foreigners come along with the shop's card–from Portugal, Germany, France, etc. "And," she adds, "we have received not just one, but several, visits from the King and Queen of Spain and the Norwegian Royal Family". She talks about the San Simón cheese that is smoked with birchwood and made in the province of Lugo, the Tetilla de Curtes, the Teixeiro, La Llana and the famous Arzúa-Ulloa cheeses. "Every one of the cheeses I sell are made by villagers in wooden molds and are finished by hand. And they sell them not by the kilo, but by the pair". Hanging from the ceiling and on the shelves are meat products such as the Sarria chorizo–"which is still being made as it was 35 years ago, and is good for frying, for stewing or for eating raw", Villalba shoulder of ham and homemade *salchichón*. But what Mercedes was especially keen to point out was a large, irregular block of butter. "We make this at home by beating the cream, keeping it for eight days wrapped in cabbage leaves, then cooking it. It's traditionally used for cake-making but I have French customers who take it for cooking. It used to be given to women who had just given birth to help them get their strength back," she says.

After chatting with Mercedes, we move on to the O Beiro wine shop run by Pepe Beiro. He, too, is a fount of wisdom on his subject and he, too, grew up in the business. His establishment is just a few steps from the cathedral and offers hundreds of wines with information and tasting notes. "On Mondays, we often hold tasting sessions with oenologists, wine professionals and customers." He also organizes courses and discussions on wines. "We concentrate on wine," says Pepe. "We have all the best Galician wines, as well as wines from all over Spain. But our customers like to eat a little something so we also offer a selection of top-quality Galician products." From him we learned that Nabiza cheese, which is very similar to Tetilla, is air-cured for one month then coated with barley and stored for 10 or 12 months. At the back of his establishment is a pleasant restaurant, its walls lined with bottles. He also offers a number of Galician desserts and sweets: the famous Santiago almond cake, 'Santiago stones' (chocolate-coated almonds), crystallized chestnuts and 'mirabelles'–a cherry plum or damson grown in the south of Pontevedra–either in syrup or in *orujo* (eau-de-vie).

A Mouga is in one of Santiago's typical steep, cobbled streets. Everything in the shop is a delight –from the traditional suits and hats to the wonderful bottles holding gooseberry, grape, cranberry, strawberry, cherry and mirabelle liqueurs. Mónica Moure, an ethnographer and co-owner of A Mouga, together with two professional colleagues, tells us they are made in the Rosal valley in the province of Pontevedra, which has a very special microclimate. "Our stock," she explains, "is small but carefully selected". It includes clams from Carril, sardines from Burela and some unusual sweet goods such as Allariz almonds and jams made by the monks at Sobrado dos Monxes. Mónica and her colleagues travel round the Galician villages

Casa Veneranda, Oviedo

recovering songs, garments, recipes... They are endeavoring to "reconstruct the thin thread linking us to a past which is dying out but which deserves to be rescued and valued. It's in all our interests because these are our roots and without them we cannot understand our culture," says Mónica. Nor would we understand gastronomic culture.

María Unceta, *born in San Sebastián, is a travel journalist. She works regularly with magazines such as* Viajes National Geographic *and* Mujer de Hoy *and with the daily newspaper,* El Correo. *She has written a number of travel guides.*

Photo Credits page 128

WEB SITES

Useful Information for the Tourist

Pamplona
www.pamplona.net
Web site for the City Council of Pamplona, includes general tourist information, maps of the city and other useful information about the capital of Navarre.
(Basque, English, Spanish)

Logroño
www.logro-o.org
Web site for the City Council of Logroño. Extensive tourism information available, as well as cultural events, agendas and other information about the city. Somewhat complicated surfing, click the big 'Ñ' on entrance to access the main page.
(English, Spanish)

San Sebastián
www.donostia.org
Web site for the City Council of San Sebastián. The section for visitors has four main headings: general information about the city, information on how to get around town, culture and entertainment and, finally, information for people on business visits.
(Basque, English, French, Spanish)

Bilbao
www.bilbao.net
Web site for the City Council of Bilbao. Under the section 'Visitors', there is information about the city, tourist activities and highlights, gastronomy, maps, a street directory and suggested accommodation.
(Basque, English, Spanish)

Oviedo
www.ayto-oviedo.es
Tourism section includes information on Oviedo's architectural heritage, shopping, gastronomy, fountains and parks, as well as a variety of suggested tourist routes.
(Spanish)

Santiago de Compostela
www.santiagoturismo.com
Tourism web site of the Santiago de Compostela City Council. Sections include a cultural guide, information on accommodation, gastronomy, shopping and services of interest to tourists provided by the local authorities. Also present is a photo gallery and a 360º view of the town.
(English, Galician, Spanish)

Aitor Lasa, San Sebastián

THE SHOPS

In many Spanish cities, the El Corte Inglés department stores include a section called 'El Club del Gourmet' offering very select regional Spanish specialties.

PAMPLONA

Torréns
San Miguel, 12
Tel: (+34) 948 224 286
Navarran market garden produce, excellent meat products, ewes' milk cheeses, seasonal wild mushrooms.

Txirrinta
Calceteros, 14
Tel: (+34) 948 222 348
Duck and goose *pâtés*, ewes' milk cheese from the Navarran mountains, and local meat products and *patxarán*.

Casa Azagra
San Juan de la Cadena, 4
Tel: (+34) 948 270 365
A shop with a tradition stretching over one hundred years. Meat and vegetable products, and top-quality Navarran wines. Also Ibérico pork products.

LOGROÑO

Jelen Rioja
Marqués de Murrieta, 5 y 7
Tel: (+34) 941 202 676
www.jelenrioja.com
In addition to the winery and the Logroño stores, there is also a shop in Santo Domingo de la Calzada. They specialize in canned game and vegetable produce, pâtés and handmade meat products. Also an extensive wine catalog.

SAN SEBASTIÁN

Aitor Lasa
Aldamar, 12
Tel: (+34) 943 430 354
A wide selection of ewes' milk cheeses from the Aralar, Andia and Urbasa mountains, among others. Homemade apple jelly and a wide range of *txacoli*.

Solbes
Aldamar, 4
Tel: (+34) 943 427 818
The shop has a large wine cellar, and offers Tolosa beans, chestnuts, pâtés, and an interesting range of canned and fresh produce.

Don Serapio
Sancho el Sabio, 22
Tel: (+34) 943 469 677
A large establishment with a very good display. The catalog offers four thousand entries, with the emphasis on local products. Canned anchovies, bonito and vegetables. They supply leading restaurants throughout Spain.

Pikabea
Matía, 18
Tel: (+34) 943 214 762
Offering top-quality, pre-cooked dishes and meat products–stuffed poultry, cold cuts, homemade blood sausage, duck and goose mousse and *foie*.

Biarritz
Avda. Zurriola, s/n. Centro Kursaal
Tel: (+34) 943 003 161
This store specializes in duck–*confit*, foie, *magret*, etc. It also has a small selection of txakolí and other wines, cheeses and preserves.

Jenny
Paseo de Ondarreta, 1
Tel: (+34) 943 218 903
www.a-jenny.com
Top-quality meat, charcuterie, pre-cooked dishes and preserves.

La Koxkera
Fermín Calbetón, 34
Tel: (+34) 943 424 599
www.lakoxkera.com
A traditional shop in the old central district of San Sebastián, specializing in salt-cod, fish preserves and other typical products.

Isabel
Avda. Madrid, 22-24
Tel: (+34) 943 452 524
A general, good-quality food store.

Bilbao

San Sebastián

La Casa de los Quesos, Santiago de Compostela

THE SHOPS

BILBAO

Basandere
Iparraguirre, 4
Tel: (+34) 944 236 386
www.basandere.com
A good selection of Basque gourmet products in an establishment devoted to the best of handicrafts.

La Viña del Ensanche
Diputación, 10
Tel: (+34) 944 169 127
A wide range of canned food (asparagus, peppers, bonito, sardines, foie gras, etc.) under the shop's own brand. Top-class cheeses and Ibérico meat products. A good wine cellar.

Bacaladera La Bilbaína
Henao, 30
Tel: (+34) 944 230 707
Salt-cod under every possible guise–from the traditional dry product to pre-cooked dishes. Also olives, wines and preserves. A few tables to try out the wares.

Casa Rufo
Hurtado de Amézaga, 5
Tel: (+34) 944 432 172
An old-established food shop, now including a small, stylish restaurant offering the goods on sale—anchovies, asparagus, wild mushrooms, smoked produce, meat and meat products. A good wine cellar.

La Oka
Rodríguez Arias, 55
Tel: (+34) 944 422 052
Marqués del Puerto, 1
Tel: (+34) 944 236 507
Las Mercedes, 25 (Las Arenas)
Tel: (+34) 944 648 011
A chain of high-quality food products and Basque Country specialties.

Halagos
Maestro García Ribero, 6
Tel: (+34) 944 423 041
A shop and restaurant specializing in duck and goose products–confits, foie gras, *demi-cuits*, etc. A select wine list.

Ibeas
Licenciado Poza, 23
Tel: (+34) 944 435 647
A classic food store with quality fresh and packaged local products. A good selection of wines.

OVIEDO

Crivencar
Melquíades Álvarez, 3
Santa Susana, 2
Plaza del Fontán, 1
Tel: (+34) 985 225 272
www.productosdeasturias.org
The leading, and largest chain of Asturian products, with the focus on cheese (over 40 varieties). Also charcuterie, canned fish and shellfish and traditional ciders. Products can be tried in the chain's shops, restaurants and cider bars.

Casa Veneranda
Melquíades Álvarez, 23
Tel: (+34) 985 212 454
One of the city's traditional stores, now specializing in gourmet food. They sell the ingredients for *fabada* in vacuum packs.

Loli Arrieta
Suárez de la Riva, 2
Tel: (+34) 985 226 402
A selection of quality food products, good charcuterie and cheeses.

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

La Casa de los Quesos
Bautizados, 10
Tel: (+34) 981 585 085
In the same location for over 80 years, it offers all sorts of handcrafted Galician cheeses. Also honey, *chorizo*, ham, butter, quince jelly, traditional chocolates, etc.

Viñoteca O Beiro
Raiña, 3
Tel: (+34) 981 581 370
Excellent wine cellar that organizes tasting sessions. A small selection of Galician gourmet products to be eaten on the spot or to take out.

A Mouga
Xelmírez, 26
Tel: (+34) 981 560 796
A delightful shop with an impeccable display of handicrafts and a selection of gourmet products–jams, fruit liqueurs, fish preserves, etc.

O Filandón
Rúa da Acibechería, 6
Tel: (+34) 981 572 738
Shop and wine cellar. Fish preserves, walnuts in honey, cheeses, chocolates and pies, and more.

Manxares de Galicia
Rúa do Franco, 25
Tel: (+34) 981 888 246
A large establishment with wines from all over Galicia, cheeses, pastries and Santiago almond cake. A brandy distillery, and produce bearing the shop's own brand. Products can be sampled.

A Troia
Troia, 8
Tel: (+34) 981 587 159
Homemade pies with all sorts of ingredients–cod, octopus, bonito, vegetables, walnuts, chorizo, ham, apple, etc. Handmade pastries and breads.

In the pink:

ROSÉS

A rosé could be described as a red wine that's white at heart. Nowhere in the world are made as many rosés, and such good ones, as in Spain. And rosés are currently 'in'. This perhaps explains why modern ones are taking on more color, acquiring body, filling out. Spain's quality rosés, formerly a Navarran specialty, are spreading throughout the country, and the view of rosé as the easy restaurant option, characterless enough almost to qualify as a soft drink, now belongs firmly to the past. Now, both the quality and status of rosé have improved across the board to such an extent that, today, there are excellent rosés on offer in any wine-producing area of Spain. They are made from nearly all the red varieties–both native and foreign–currently grown here, which means that consumers can be sure of finding a rosé suitable for all weathers and all occasions.

Text
Bartolomé Sánchez

Translation
Hawys Pritchard

Photos
Juan Manuel Sanz/ICEX

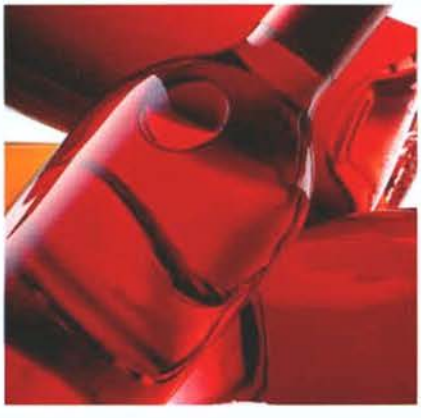
Rosé is a direct descendant, or perhaps successor, of the type of wine known in Spain as *clarete*, also inaccurately known as *aloque*, which receives such frequent honorable mentions in the works of the great writers of the Golden Age. Though those wines survive only vestigially, we know them to have been fairly crude mixtures of white and red. The name *aloque*, an obvious reference to their color, was borrowed from the Arabic name for a saffron-colored perfume via the language of cloth dyeing, an industry of great importance during the Middle Ages. What is known as clarete today, however, is a wine made with a large proportion of white grape juice combined with a small proportion of red, both juice and skins. This mixture is fermented in contact with the skins, as for red winemaking, the process being known as *fermentación en tinto*.

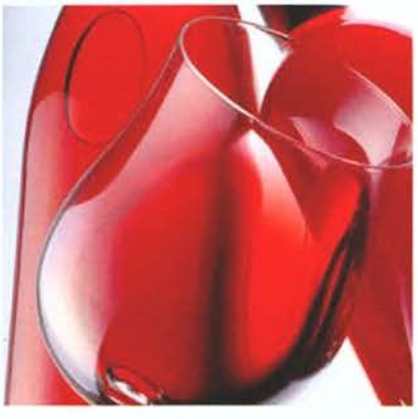
For traditional reasons, many regions still apply the term clarete to rosés, and there is constant confusion between the two, despite their being two quite different products. Rosés are made with red grapes (in some regions they also generally include a small quantity of white) and are vinified as for whites, undergoing *fermentación en blanco*.

The technique for making rosé wine most widely used in Spain is known as *sangrado*. In broad terms, this is what it involves: the bunches are destemmed and the grapes are crushed and lightly pressed to release their juice; this then undergoes short-term maceration with the skins for just long enough to absorb the desired degree of color. The more highly pigmented the grapes are, the less time the juice should spend in contact with the skins: in any case, it should never exceed 24 hours. It is essential to prevent fermentation occurring during this process if one is to produce a good quality rosé: this is achieved either by adding a precise dose of sulphur or by lowering the temperature of the tank to around 7°C (44°F) to inhibit yeast activity. Next, the desired quantity of must is extracted and transferred to another tank where it is kept at a low temperature in an inert atmosphere, to avoid oxidation, for a few hours more to allow waste matter and solids to settle on the bottom of the tank. The required quantity of clean must is then transferred to another tank so that nothing taints the grapes' marvelous primary aromas. Free of impurities, the now beautifully pink must is finally allowed to ferment, a process that takes place at a low temperature (16-18°C / 60-64°F, or even lower).

There is a simpler method of making rosé still in use: known as direct pressing, it involves, as its name suggests, pressing the grape bunches directly, as is done with white grapes for making young white wines. The process continues as for a young white and, unsurprisingly, there is barely a hint of pink in the end product. This sort of wine is known in Spanish as *vino de una noche* (one-night wine); the French call it *vin gris* (grey wine).

The rosés currently being produced in Spain are modern, fresh and aromatic, on the whole impeccably made and bearing unbeatably reasonable price-tags. They are made using techniques which place them at the forefront of modern winemaking. I was updated on the latest scientific advances by Rafael Cambralla, professor at the University of Alcalá de Henares,





whose discovery of a technique for 'cleaning' the color of wine using ultrasound technology will revolutionize the wine world. His experiments during his research were carried out on rosés–more precisely, Bobal-based ones made in Requena.

De luxe color

Spanish rosés are made from top raw materials in the sense of varieties which, when used for reds, would produce wines that would be expected to mature superbly well. In addition to Garnacha Tinta, an ideal grape for this purpose, some of the noblest varieties are also used: in La Rioja, La Mancha, Extremadura and almost the whole of the Duero basin the variety in question is Tempranillo; on Spain's east coast, it is Monastrell, the reigning variety used in several DOs, and even for rosé *cava*, a type of sparkling wine which seems to be gaining in popularity; still close to the Mediterranean, Bobal produces one of the most fragrant rosés, with delicate aromas of flowers and fresh fruit; in El Bierzo, rosés are made with Mencía, and in Los Arribes del Duero with Juan García and Rufete; in Valdevimbre-Los Oteros (León), they use Prieto Picudo; outstanding rosés also come from offshore, with Mallorca (Balearic Islands) using Manto Negro and Callet, and the Canary Islands offering a truly exotic range made from native varieties Negramoll, Listán Negro and Tintilla, all of which give rosés with warm, spicy aromas. Rosé fans will also want to explore the non-native varietal rosés made with Cabernet, Merlot, Pinot Noir, and even more exotic grapes, such as the central European Muskattrollinger, that have appeared in recent years. In both mono-varietals and harmonious blends, these constitute one of the most solid, convincing, branches of Spain's modern rosé range.

Speciality rosés

One rosé with a particularly long history is an unusual *vino de aguja* (petillant wine) made in the sub-regions of Valdevimbre and Los Oteros, not far from León. Prieto Picudo is the predominant variety there and winemakers and their customers traditionally preferred a wine with not much color. The healthiest, ripest bunches would be set aside during picking for this curious method of vinification. In general, this was done without the skins, though some producers preferred to start off fermentation with the grape juice in contact with the skins to give more body, albeit at the cost of primary aromas. When effervescence was at its peak in the fermentation tank, whole bunches of grapes would be added, triggering intercellular fermentation to give the wine its slight sparkle. Very few wines of this type are ever produced these days, not least because this region has made extraordinary strides in the direction of modern wines (in an area where still very few bodegas have high-tech equipment) and because of the enormous demand for red wines. All these considerations have taken precedence over updating and promoting a highly original wine. Someone who is determined to stand out from the rest by offering an out-of-the-ordinary product, guided by his own taste rather than the demands of the marketplace, is Felipe Gutiérrez de la Vega. He has

called his Alicante-produced rosé Viña Alejandría, in poetic tribute to Cavafy (the Alexandria-born Greek poet, 1863-1933), and produces it almost exclusively for drinking with delicious red prawns from the Mediterranean. It is a wine with the special characteristic of being different every year: this depends on the assortment of grape varieties, for how long it was macerated, and on whether or not it has spent time in the cask. It is always guaranteed to be a highly individual wine, potent and full-bodied, in a way closer to a red than its rosé status might suggest. And best of all, it always fulfills its remit as the perfect accompaniment to the delicious seafood caught off Spain's east coast. The winemakers of the Ribera del Duero winery Real Sitio de Ventosilla also make a rosé, fermented in American oak casks which contribute spicy aromas and enhance the palate with a degree of tannin that lends structure and even a certain hard edge. But the most unusual example of keeping a style and traditional approach going is provided by the young winemakers who run the long-established Riojan bodega, Viña Tondonia. Pedro López de Heredia's children, María José, Mercedes and Rafael, demonstrate what some might describe as blind faith by producing a rosé which is cask-aged for a long period, thereby maintaining a tradition that dates back centuries in Rioja. Made from typically Riojan varieties–Tempranillo, Garnacha, Mazuelo and some white Viura–their wine spends over four years in American oak casks and another four in the bottle before seeing the light of day. This product represents a different take on winemaking–complex, handed down from an earlier period–of which our tables have been deprived by fashion, which currently decrees that rosés be light.

Ronda (Málaga province), impressive natural monument of a town, and birthplace of bandits, artists, and a classic style of bullfighting, is blessed with an enviable microclimate. There, German winemaker Friedrich Schatz (known locally as Federico) produces a highly original rosé made from the red variety Muskattrollinger and aged in wood. In Navarra, not far from the surprisingly arid Bardenas Reales, a couple of young winemakers, Dani Sánchez and María Barrena, both with a wealth of professional experience acquired abroad, use a combination of varieties and unusual methods to produce a wine whose structure pushes rosé to the limits and takes it almost into the red category.

Garnacha: top pink variety

Garnacha Tinta is the top variety for young wines. Thanks to its aromatic

ROSÉ IN THE UK

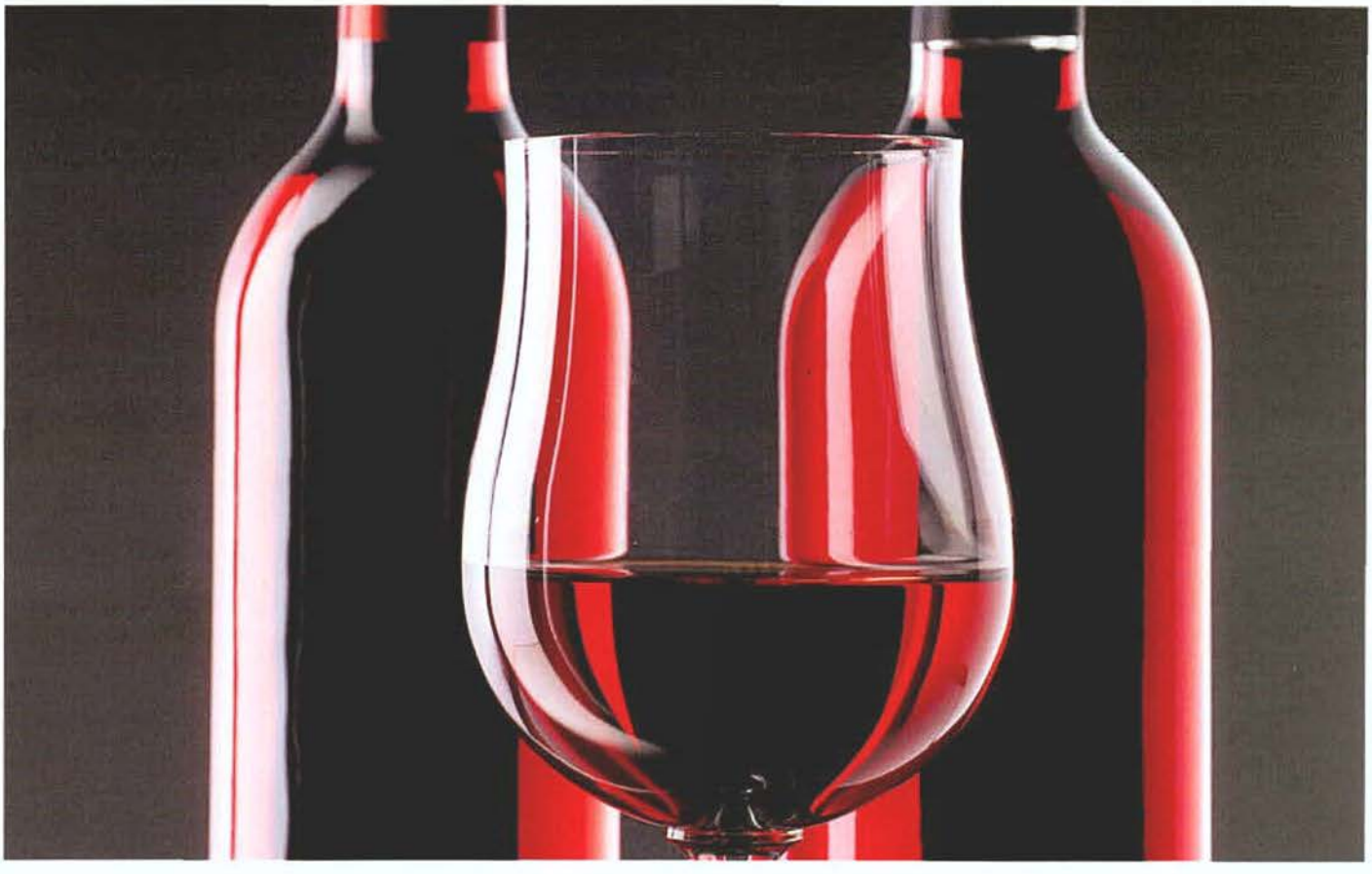
For years people involved in the UK wine industry have been saying, "This is going to be the year. This will be the one for rosé." Well, it seems, finally the dream has come true–2003 was the year for rosé wines in the UK. The hot summer, soaring temperatures, and long barbeque-filled evenings drove the British consumer to drink rosé, at last. Forget the beer–the Brits were reaching for the rosé.

A quick look at the wine charts shows that to the end of September 2003, rosé sales had increased by a phenomenal 25%. Admittedly, this growth is from a relatively low base, but even so, that kind of increase in rosé sales has never been seen before. Rosé's market share in the UK has remained static at around 2% of total wine sales for at least the last decade. The top performer in sales of the pink stuff was the United States, driven primarily by California–it seems that Gallo and Blossom Hill were the preferred pink tipple across Britain. Next were France and Portugal, who both saw some growth but nothing near the 35% annual boost the U.S. experienced. Spain, in fourth position, was up there in the percentage points however, with a 32% increase over 2002. Which raises an interesting point in terms of wine style. If Spain and California are charging ahead–only beaten by Australia and Chile, whose rosé sales grew by a staggering 80% each–it seems that the UK consumer prefers the fuller, fruitier style of rosé to any other. Perfect for Spanish producers of rosé from the native Tempranillo and Bobal–keep up the good work. A bit of clever marketing, another hot summer and *rosado* could be one of Spain's major success stories again in 2004.

Charlotte Hey *was Publishing Director of* Harpers *until April 2002, when, in co-operation with former Harpers Chairman Alan Chalmers, she launched the new b2b title* The Drinks Business, *of which she is publisher.*

presence, millions of liters of red and rosé wines have brought pleasure to many a discerning palate. There are plantations of Garnacha Tinta in almost all Spain's vineyards, and there are still many regions where it is the predominant variety. With good reason, it used to be the most frequently planted variety in Spain, only recently ceding this position to Tempranillo. The qualities that make a good rosé are supported by its abundance of primary aromas, its hints of fleshy fruit and flowers, aromatic herbal notes and the freshness in the mouth that it provides. Navarra is a wine-growing area for which rosés are a trademark product, and this is attributable to Garnacha's admirable qualities. Characterized by the delicious fruit with which this variety endows young wines, the region produces almost 12 million liters a year, mostly Garnacha-based. It was from Navarra that the 'new rosés' emerged so buoyantly back in the 1980s, a boom that is only now losing impetus to the unstoppable upward trend in red wine drinking. But modern, fruity rosés have earned themselves a loyal following, and many fans look forward avidly to the next vintage of Navarra rosés such as Julián Chivite's always flawless Gran Feudo.

This type of wine, made with this variety, is one of the things that cooperatives do best: one example is La Virgen Blanca's Sardasol, of unfalteringly high standard over many years, and Nuestra Señora del Romero's delicate Malón de Echaide is another. Javier Ochoa of Bodegas Ochoa has many years of rosé-making experience behind him, and his Vino Lágrima, whose combination of Garnacha and



Cabernet strikes just the right note for current rosé enthusiasts, is meeting with merited success in the international marketplace. Navarra is also something of a bastion of organic winemaking, and wines are starting to emerge, rosés among them, whose labels guarantee their ecological credentials.

Color from Aragón

Home of good Garnachas, Aragón's four designations of origin produce excellent rosés, mostly with Garnacha as their main ingredient. Those from Campo de Borja are particularly attractive for their lovely color: Viña Collado, made by the Santo Cristo de Ainzón cooperative, and Coto de Hayas, by Bodegas Aragonesas, are both eloquent examples of Garnacha at its best. The Calatayud area is famous as a source of excellent rosés in bulk, and when improved infrastructure made its vibrant wines more available, many were astonished by their quality: the Cooperativa San Alejandro's color-rich Marqués de Nombrevilla is one of the best. Any catalog of great rosés would have to include those made in Somontano: Enate's lively Cabernet rosé, and Bodegas Pirineos' Montesierra, made with a combination of Merlot and Cabernet, are just two examples.
Méntrida (Castile-La Mancha) offers the quality provided by a good Garnacha with the added attraction of affordable price, as exemplified by Condes de Fuensalida–not only fresh and nicely balanced, but also a bargain. Garnacha's powerful aromas, flavor and notable alcoholic contribution are also making their mark in the Sierra de Madrid sub-zone of DO Vinos de Madrid (see Glossary, page 127).

Garnacha is not the only fruit

Garnacha's fine qualities are unmistakable, but excellent rosés are also made from Tempranillo, that noble, multi-purpose grape. The best of the bunch comes from Cigales, source of notable rosés. Wines from this region have enjoyed an excellent reputation down the centuries, and the story goes that when the Spanish court was based in Valladolid, an edict was issued that prohibited commoners from drinking Cigales wine, so that it could be reserved exclusively for drinking at court. Time, fashions, and patterns of living, drinking and thinking have come and gone since then, but Cigales wines have lived on in the folk memory. The wines coming out of Cigales today still retain their old strength and personality, but are now much better-made: they used to be made by the clarete method (and indeed were known as such) using a mixture of white and red varieties, with Tempranillo (known there as Tinto Fino) as the most notable, but also including Garnacha and whites such as Viura and the delicate Albillo. This combination of varieties is still to be found in its stony vineyards today, but the wines have changed spectacularly. In fact, one of them is of such consistently outstanding quality that it is ranked among the best in Spain: it is called Docetañidos (Twelve Chimes), an unusual name for an extravagantly aromatic rosé. Another notable wine from the same region is Viña Calderona, a full-bodied, well-balanced rosé, one of the best wines produced by the Frutos Villar group, which has bodegas in various wine-growing areas.
Some Riojan wineries pay special attention to their rosés (despite the fact that many of them produce millions of bottles a year), such as Unión Vitivinícola's delicate, pale pink Marqués de Cáceres, of consistently marvelous quality; the Faustino group's attractive Faustino VI; and Martínez Bujanda's gorgeous, richly colored Valdemar.
There are fine Tempranillo rosés in La Mancha, too (the variety is prettily known as Cencibel there): among the best are Corcovo from Valdepeñas, made by the Mejía brothers, and the Provencio cooperative's Canforrales, whose balance of freshness and body is exemplary. Right in the heart of DO Manchuela, where Bobal is the most important variety, we find a couple of rosés which are astonishing both for their aromatic intensity and their sumptuous palate: Altos de Cabriel, made by the San Antonio Abad cooperative of Villamalea, and Azúa, made by Vitivinos Anunciación. On the other side of the region, in Almansa, where Monastrell territory begins and within range of winds from the Mediterranean, Bodegas Piquera (*Spain Gourmetour* Nº 57) make Castillo de Almansa, a wine at once delicate and harmonious that comes away every year with one of the top awards in the Gran Selección competition for the best wines in Castile-La Mancha.

Exotica

Some of the great Spanish rosés are made with non-native grapes. It is

many years now since the emergence of Spain's 'new rosés', many of them made from well-known, mainly French, grape varieties, as indeed they still are. These are forceful, complex, full-bodied wines, most with over 13° of alcohol and well able to retain their qualities all year: the Merlot-based Gran Caus from Can Ràfols dels Caus qualifies as a pioneer. Joan Milá, a winemaker with a particular talent for rosés, makes another Merlot-based one– Mas Comtal–using the technique of micro-oxygenation in the process; and he also makes another, similar, Merlot at Juan Antonio Roura's bodega in Alella. New designation of origin DO Monsant can claim one of the best rosés in the country: made by Tony Coca at Celler Capafons, it is a Syrah with enough body and meatiness for a red. The fact that all these wines come out of Catalonia is no accident, since this is the region where these varieties are present in the most significant quantities, allowing for exceptions such as Somontano.

This summary of Spain's rosés offers pointers, but is far from exhaustive in its coverage. These wines come into their own in the spring as the weather gets milder and the palate responds enthusiastically to their freshness and subtlety. Now is the time to start!

Bartolomé Sánchez *is editor of the specialized wine magazines* Vinum *and* Mi Vino.

Exporters page 111

WEB SITES

www.pradorey.com
Web site for Bodegas Prado Rey. Includes sections on the history of the winery, the winery itself, the vineyards, wines, distribution channels, research and development facilities, location, a shop and news.
(English, German, Spanish)

www.lopezdeheredia.com
The web site for López de Heredia-Viña Tondonia offers two access options: A short, guided '*Crianza* visit' and a more in-depth look at the winery through the '*Gran Reserva* visit'. The Gran Reserva visit includes information on the winery (including a virtual visit), the wines, the distributors, the coopery at the bodega and contact details.
(English, Spanish)

www.bodegasochoa.com
The web site for Bodegas Ochoa displays a brief overview of the winery, its products and activities and a contact email address.
(Spanish)

www.bodegasaragonesas.com
The Bodegas Aragonesas web site features sections on the winery, its products, Internet sales and oenology links.
(Spanish)

www.enate.es
Extensive information on the winery, vineyards, grape varieties, grape harvesting, elaboration processes and wines. Also available is a news section and information about Enate winery's art promotion initiatives.
(English, Spanish)

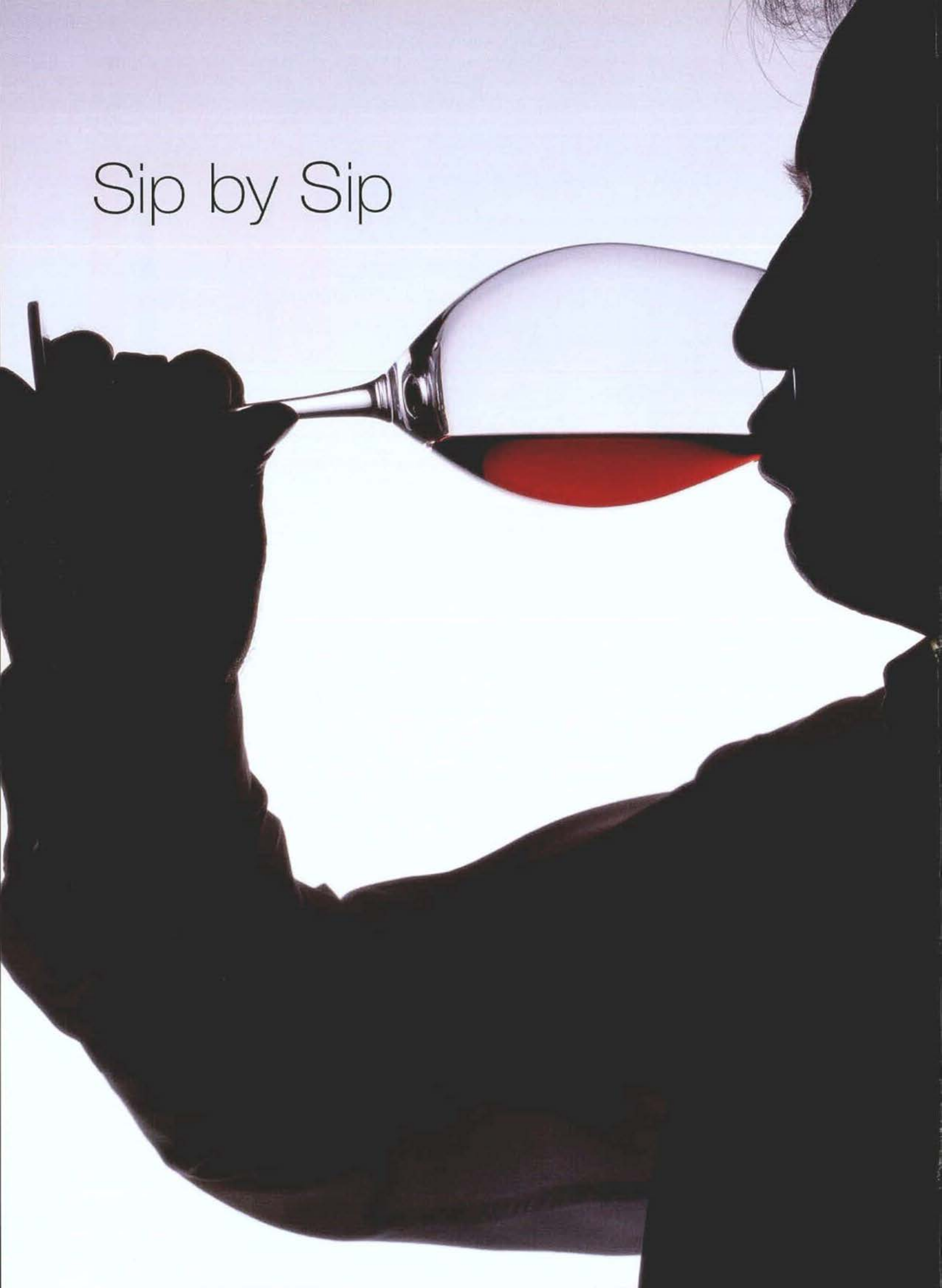
www.bodega-pirineos.com
Web site features sections on the winery, the wines on offer, the grapes and winery, a collection of reviews on the wines in different media, and location of the winery. Also available is a listing of worldwide distribution outlets (under the 'Purchases' heading), latest news on the winery and a section on new vintages.
(English, Spanish)

www.bodegasfaustino.es
The Faustino Group web site is structured into eight sections: History, location, vineyards, wines, cellars, news, a gastronomic dictionary and contact details.
(English, Spanish, Swedish)

www.martinezbujanda.com
The web site for the Martínez Bujanda group has four sections, one dedicated to each wine division of the company. These sections are, namely: Bodegas Valdemar, Finca Valpiedra, Finca Antigua and its younger *cosecheros* and crianza wines. Detailed information on each type of wine can be found under those headings.
(English, German, Spanish)

www.capafons-osso.com
Cellers Capafons web site includes information on its history, its locations, its two cellars, the different wines it offers, a section for the press and a photo gallery, as well as contact details for the winery.
(Catalan, English, French, German, Spanish)

Sip by Sip



Text
Jürgen Mathäß

Translation
Synonyme

Spanish WINES

Chosen and Tasted by International Experts

Germany

Jürgen Mathäß was already deeply involved in the wines of Spain during his time as editor-in-chief at the magazine *Weinwirtschaft*. After becoming a freelance journalist and marketing consultant in 1993, his ties with Spain became even closer, particularly when he was in charge of marketing initiatives for the Ribera del Duero and Rías Baixas DOs in Germany between 1993 and 1999 and did wide-ranging research for articles published in journals such as *Wein & Markt, Vinum* and *Feinschmecker*.

Mathäß has visited Spain regularly for over 15 years. Always a close observer of the international wine scene, he has concentrated on market developments and marketing issues as an economist, as well as being an experienced wine taster. What fascinates him about Spanish wines is not only the dynamics of their increasing quality throughout the numerous and very different regions as well as the ongoing discovery of new *terroirs*, but also the excellence and ageing potential of the country's reds and sweet wines. This provides the basis for his choice in this edition–Mathäß believes that tradition and modernity, far from being irreconcilable antagonists, are necessary alternatives that must be nurtured.

Winery: Dos Victorias
Wine: José Pariente, 2002
DO: Rueda
Type: White wine
Elaboration: 100% Verdejo

This concentrated and yet magically fresh wine finally proves that the Verdejo, the typical grape variety of the Rueda region, can produce internationally noteworthy white wines. Just a few years ago, two oenologists, Victoria Pariente and Victoria Benavides, who also make some excellent red wines in Toro, began careful work at a 30-year-old vineyard belonging to the Pariente family on the best gravel terroir. From the very beginning they achieved an outstanding Rueda, which brings together all the best features of the Verdejo grape. This is also true for the 2002 wine. Its bouquet mixes exotic fruit aromas with green herbs and reminiscences of balsamic. At the same time, the wine has an almost metallic clarity in the manner of the great Sauvignon Blancs or Rieslings from cooler climes. Though it has considerable mineral weight on the palate, the wine is both fresh and nuanced and combines a superb acidity in the finish.

Matching recommendation:
Light, summer dishes, superb with pasta or *gnocchi al pesto* or as a contrast to a Torta del Casar cheese.

Winery:
Dos Victorias
Tel: (+34) 983 590 912
Fax: (+34) 983 590 912
victoriaparient@terra.es
vikivini@lexnova.es

Winery: Toro Albalá
Wine: Amontillado Viejísimo, Solera 1922
DO: Montilla-Moriles
Type: Amontillado
Elaboration: 100% Pedro Ximénez

This sensational and many-faceted old *amontillado* from the searingly hot province of Córdoba proves that the Pedro Ximénez grape can create more than just sweet wines. It is produced only in small quantities and confirms that high alcohol content (21°) and velvety, almost tender characteristics need be no contradiction in a wine oak-aged for a long time. Shimmering golden amber colors and glimmers of gold distinguish the amontillado. Its many-layered bouquet creates an astonishingly differentiated picture of the utmost harmony, blending the aromas of fine wood, opulent dried fruit, a suggestion of orange peel freshness and subtle hints of nuts and almonds. With a little air the wine also develops notes of vanilla and caramel. This great wine is at all times velvety and harmonious on the palate, leaving an aftertaste that seems to go on forever.

Matching recommendation:
Drink by itself or with a handful of sweet almonds. The wine also pairs well with strongly-flavored main dishes such as kidneys in sherry or *morcilla*, game or mature hard cheese.

Winery:
Toro Albalá
Tel: (+34) 957 660 046
Fax: (+34) 957 661 494
sorgato@talbala.com

Winery: Torres
Wine: Grans Muralles, 1998
DO: Conca de Barberà
Type: Red wine
Elaboration: Garró, Monastrell, Garnacha, Samsó and Cariñena; aged for 18 months in Allier and Nevers oak

In Conca de Barberà, Miguel Torres has proven with this wine that older, regional grape varieties from almost forgotten wine regions may have the potential to stand side-by-side in quality with the country's greatest wines. Years of work went into selecting the young vines, clones and varieties before the vineyard was planted. Today, the individual varieties are picked at their ripest. After harvesting, the grapes are vinificated separately with loving care and the resulting wines are only married at the very end of the process. The result is an alcoholically powerful (14°), masculine red wine with a deep, dark, almost wild bouquet composed of leather, licorice, black pepper and ripe plums. The wine is tasty and exceptionally long in the mouth.

Matching recommendation:
Rich meat dishes with red pepper and tomato-based sauces, or sauces featuring tangy herbs such as oregano, thyme, bay or rosemary.

Winery:
Torres
Tel: (+34) 938 177 400
Fax: (+34) 938 177 467
export@torres.es
www.torreswines.com

Winery: Hermanos Cuadrado
Wine: Finca Villacreces Reserva, 1999
DO: Ribera del Duero
Type: Red wine
Elaboration: 75% Tempranillo, 15% Merlot, 10% Cabernet-Sauvignon; 26 months in 80% new Allier oak

Pedro Cuadrado bottled the first wine from the 1994 vintage obtained at this time-honored property on the banks of the Duero. The distinctive structure of the land, located near the river and with abundant water at a depth of 4 meters (13.1 feet), is most unusual. The first wine, released in 1996, was immediately recognized as among the region's best. Since that time the wines have continuously gained in style and finesse. In my opinion, they are among the finest of Spain's modern red wines. Their most remarkable feature is a rare combination of velvety smooth tannins, strength and smoothness, with an almost cool elegance. The 1999 *reserva* captivates with its aromas of licorice, red fruits, violets and subtle smoky hints. This complex wine does not appear heavy at any moment.

Matching recommendation:
All types of red meat, medium cooked and accompanied by mild sauces with subtle herbs.

Winery:
Hermanos Cuadrado
Tel: (+34) 983 234 501
Fax: (+34) 983 239 000
fincavillacreces@olanet.net

Winery: La Rioja Alta
Wine: Gran Reserva 890, 1989
DOCa: Rioja
Type: Red wine
Elaboration: 90% Tempranillo, with Graciano and Mazuelo

Since 1890 this monument of the Spanish wine tradition, nowadays with 350 hectares (865 acres) of its own vineyards, has been producing first-class Riojas. Gran Reserva 890 is one of the truly great traditional wines of Spain; distinguished by its long cask-ageing as well as its fine and elegant style, driven by acidity rather than by tannins. Traditional Riojas of this kind are unique the world over and, indeed, inimitable. Although these at first sight complex wines have been less fashionable in recent years than interchangeable, tannin-rich fruit bombs, their time will come again. This extraordinarily long-lived wine will still be a pleasure when that day arrives. Today it reveals bewitching, intertwined aromas of cinnamon, vanilla, forest, chocolate and ripe red fruit. The wine's velvety harmony in the mouth finishes with a refined acidity.

Matching recommendation:
Fine roast beef or game, stuffed breast of veal, sweetbreads or calf's liver.

Winery:
La Rioja Alta
Tel: (+34) 941 310 346
Fax: (+34) 941 312 854
riojaalta@riojaalta.com
www.riojaalta.com

Winery: López Hermanos
Wine: Moscatel Don Salvador
DO: Málaga
Type: Sweet wine
Elaboration: 100% Moscatel de Alejandría; 50 years ageing in solera

López Hermanos has not only nursed the image of the historic Málaga DO with stylish traditional wines, but with Don Salvador has also created a brand that stands for muscatel of the highest quality. Even after years in *botas*, this aromatic muscatel is extraordinary for its lively bouquet and fresh acid notes, which endow it with a playfulness not to be found in many an old sherry or PX.
To my taste, Don Salvador, of which only some 500 bottles are filled each year, is one of the very best of all sweet wines, alongside Riesling *Trockenbeerenauslese*, the great Sauternes and vintage Port. It is dark brown in color with gleams of orange, displays a generous fragrance of mocha, coffee, toffee and citrus. Though tremendously concentrated, it is well-structured and offers an endless finish with the fresh acidity of oranges.

Matching recommendation:
Strongly-flavored desserts based on figs, raisins, chocolate and mocha.

Winery:
López Hermanos
Tel: (+34) 952 319 454
Fax: (+34) 952 359 819
comercial@lopezhermanos.com
www.lopezhermanos.com

Telmo RODRÍGUEZ

Text
Luis Cepeda

Translation
Hawys Pritchard

Photos
Pablo Neustadt/ICEX

From an early age, Telmo Rodríguez, a Basque from Irún near the French border, was involved in the setting-up and subsequent success of Finca Remelluri, one of Rioja's lynchpin wineries, which was founded by his father. Trained as a biologist and oenologist in Bordeaux and the Rhône, Telmo Rodríguez now directs a dozen winemaking ventures all over Spain. Imaginatively conceived, fueled by a passionate dedication to wine, and aptly described by Santi Eraso, director of ARTELEKU (the San Sebastián 'Arts Factory') as "bodegas in the air", these virtual wineries are currently offering twenty or more very real wine treats to the world.

Omnipresence in Spanish Winemaking

How would you sum up your wine-growing project?

As a flexible concept based on the principle of 'respectful agriculture', not restricted to any specific region; it involves reinstating old native grape varieties and locating the ideal terrain where they can demonstrate their excellence with a view to producing the best possible wine. It's a collective effort in which ten other winemakers are involved, all of them younger than I. *(He states this in a tone that makes it clear that he only respects the opinions of those younger than himself.)*

And you are something of an expert on *terroir?*

The terroir is fundamental. I spent ten years living on a Rioja estate, and I learned to recognize grape varieties and the best soils for them, both in those magical areas of Europe with consolidated vineyards and in tiny, densely-planted emerging vineyards. I left Remelluri because its complacency was getting in the way of my tackling new challenges. I found an old plantation in Navarra with a very interesting microclimate and poor, stony soils where I was able to indulge my rather idealistic enthusiasm for old vineyards. I translated all this into a simple, straightforward wine which did extremely well on foreign markets. That was the origin of Alma, whose '94 vintage Robert Parker described as an "atomic wine", making me all the more determined to create free wines made to exacting standards and expressive of their provenance.

Is there a personal message in your approach to wine?

I don't believe in production for production's sake, nor in the winery as a piece of architecture. I do believe in grape varieties and in responsible, healthy growing– 'natural' but not crackpot; I believe in a biodynamic approach which teaches us how to co-exist with diseases and to respect nature. I am interested in vineyards which express the personality of a soil and a climate through the medium of local native grapes, and in skillful timing and handling during the harvest. Our winemaking concept doesn't need a winery, but it does call for rescuing good vineyards from oblivion and revitalizing them by means of respectful farming methods. The grapes they produce can then be processed in any artisanal winery into wines worth seeking out: simple, contemporary, democratic. It's a question of working in harmony with nature with the aim of achieving the best possible wine in Spain.

What are your wine-growing activities concerned with at the moment?

Over the last nine years, we have been selectively seeking out vineyards with qualities expressive of an area's specific personality, by which I mean its vine varieties, climate, soil and facilities offered by local presses and wineries. The excitement of coming across old vineyards in the back of beyond, mineral-rich plots, microclimates, natural yeast reactions in unexpected wineries, has stimulated our work. Research, chance, and considerable freedom of action have taken us to the Rioja Alavesa, where we make our LZ, Lanzaga and Altos de Lanzaga; to Ribera del Duero, where we make Matallana and Gazur; to Cigales, whose rosé tradition finds expression in a red, Viña 105, a combination of Tempranillo and Garnacha; to Rueda, home of Basa, a Verdejo that New York has adopted as its favorite white wine; to Toro, source of Gago and of Pago de La Jarra; to Alicante, where we make Almuvedre; to Cebreros in Avila province, where we make Pegaso; to San Martín de Valdeiglesias, in Madrid province, where we are bringing out Montazo; and to Malaga, where we have seen through the whole recovery process a vigorous muscatel, Molino Real. We are also on the point of launching

projects in La Mancha, a region whose quality potential is exceptional.

How do you see the future of your wine-growing project?

The first phase has been thrilling, and has contributed to making wine less generic and more expressive of genuine development. Our reinvestment-based business plan means that we can now move on to create vineyards that meet optimal criteria, explore beyond conventional approaches and promote the growing of exclusively native grape varieties in appropriate locations using rational, original methods.

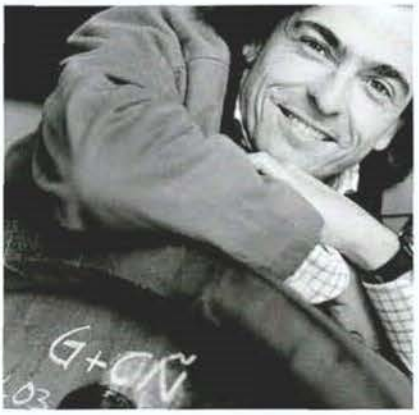
Need things change that much?

I admit that I'm very critical. The rise of Spanish wine has had its downside, too: things have been done in the name of efficiency which, all too often, has prevented its attaining the quality one would wish and the competitiveness it deserves. Plantation density has been governed by the use of tractors and conformity to standard planting patterns; the introduction of foreign grape varieties has impeded the proper expansion of Spanish ones. We need to be more aware, more exacting in our requirements as regards land, orientation and method.

Who are your wines aimed at?

We want to make Spanish wines available to everyone keen on exploring their richness and simplicity, their diversity and personality, to make them both accessible and worthwhile. We have been extremely well received on foreign markets from the beginning, and the Spanish market, which we joined later, is realizing that our wines are different. We have a special distribution system, managed from Burgos by El Lagar de Alma Vinos Unicos, owned by Paco Berciano, who has shared our aims from the start.

Luis Cepeda *is a journalist and writer. A food and wine specialist, he is the author of several books, including* Los cien platos universales de la cocina vasca; Gusto de Reyes; Lhardy; La cocina de Paradores; *and* Maridaje de Vinos y Platos. *He is currently restaurant and wine critic of the Madrid weekly listings guide,* Guía del Ocio.



Telmo Rodríguez

He is 41 years old and has something of the bullfighter about him. He has the gift of being immediately likeable yet slightly aloof. He goes from silent attentiveness to good conversation, from social smile to intellectual seriousness with a readiness that communicates both depth and approachability. An inveterate traveler about the countryside, he balances his daily immersion in rural life with the urban weekends in Madrid, a paradoxical tonic whose benefits he enumerates enthusiastically: "I love Madrid's special places, its museums and galleries, its gastronomy, the way its weather varies with the seasons and its pace of life; here I enjoy my family, friends and everyday life". Meanwhile, he has had to put on hold his fascination with the sea–he used to be a keen surfer–though he maintains his interest in the plastic arts.

In the last ten years a new generation of Spanish artisanal-quality vinegars have begun to make their mark. Golden, amber or crimson in color, they play with acidity, tempering its attack by allying it with big or soft aromas, intense or subtle overtones, and unexpected flavor-twists. Some lean to the sweet-and-sour, others are infused with wine barrels' oakiness, and a few carry the qualities of just one grape variety. Their producers build on the specialities of past centuries: natural wine-vinegar making, which has flourished in Spain's vineyard *terroirs* since Roman times; medicinal fruit-and-wine vinegar making in Al-Andalus; and, perhaps most important of all, the ageing of sherry vinegars in wine butts in quiet enclosed corners of Jerez's shadowy whitewashed bodegas. But there are fresh ideas here, too. As one saying runs, "*El vinagre y el vino andan juntos el mismo camino*". Vinegar and wine tread the same path together. And this, perhaps, is the key. Following in the footsteps of Spain's modern winemakers, the producers have placed a new value on their vinegars' individuality, pushing latent flavors and aromas to the max, experimenting with processes, refining the quality of raw ingredients and–along the way–changing our ideas about vinegar in the kitchen.

Spain's Fine Vinegars

Artful ACIDITY

TEXT
VICKY HAYWARD

An invitation to a mid-morning vinegar tasting may not sound appetizing–but, believe me, it can be a revelation. A row of glass flasks, carafes and long-necked neat round or square bottles contain the vinegars. All carry elegant labels bearing small print as detailed as that for a fine wine. If the descriptions seem tricky to grasp, don't worry, because as soon as you open the tightly-sealed bottles, a series of aromas waft up, like escaped genies, spelling out the vinegars' contrasting characters. Later, when it comes to the actual tasting process–by dribbling the vinegars onto dry toast or dipping your finger into them, or diluting them half-and-half with water, as the professionals do–there comes the revelation: the sheer spectrum of acid flavors.

Take, for example, three vinegars. One is a glass-sharp white wine vinegar with a bright attack perfect for marinating raw fish. Then there is a thin, grapy, sweet, pale red vinegar designed for cooking and perfect for reduced sauces–say, deglazed pan juices or the syrup on a dried fruit salad. And then there is a much darker, fabulously satisfying sherry vinegar, with a long aroma and rounded tartness that would be great tasted neat on green salad leaves along with a dribble of extra-virgin olive oil, a sprinkling of salt and a few pomegranate seeds.

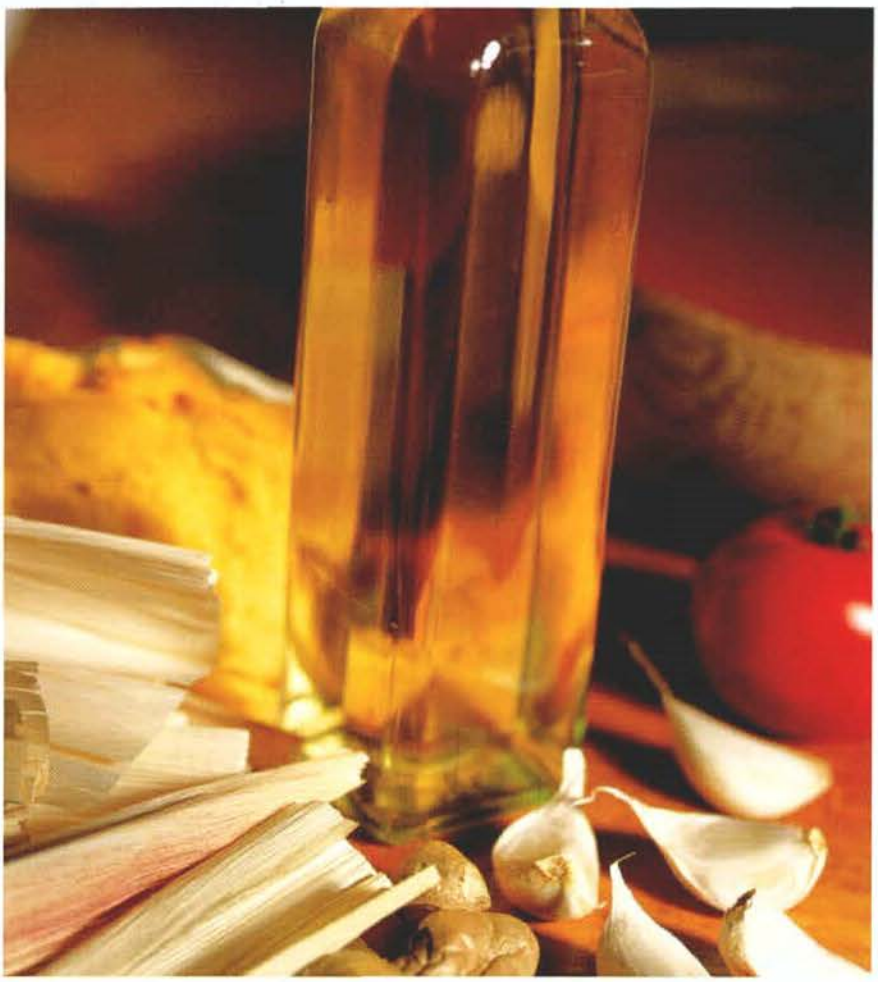
Happy families

What gives this range of contrasts? The answer lies largely in the vinegars' raw materials. There are red or white wine vinegars, among which organic and varietal vinegars stand out for their individuality. Most of these check in at around 6° acidity. Then there's the newer 'condiment' family –*condimentos*– so-called to encourage us to think afresh about gourmet vinegars or, more simply, to find a name for closely related acidic liquids lacking the double fermentation required by European law for vinegar. They float between 5-7° acidity as, too, do the artisanal apple and cider vinegars still being made by Spain's traditional northern cider-presses. And finally there are the sherry vinegars, which are aged, blended and coaxed to a uniquely high acidity, using a process very similar to that for sherry winemaking. They have fragrant aromas and, after years of ageing, develop a satisfying roundness of flavor. These and other similarly aged vinegars–for example, those from nearby Condado de Huelva and Montilla–range from 7° acidity, in the case of the very youngest vinegars, to up to 10° and more in the case of the finest, rare, very old vinegars.

This range is the key to understanding why Spanish vinegars are selling so well. Sales at home in 2002 and 2003 are grew, each year, by 13%, but at the same time 45% of Spanish speciality vinegars and 75% of all sherry vinegars were already sold abroad in 2003. Equally revealing is a marked curve towards a taste for quality. The French, for example, who are the longest-standing and most discerning fans of sherry vinegar, now buy more aged than young vinegars (57.4% and 42.6%, respectively) despite their expense. And, alongside all that, there are the new made-to-measure condimentos, a wild success in Spanish professional kitchens, with the producers running hard to keep up even with local demand.

The Jerez story

Not all of these vinegars are new. Sherry vinegar, for example, like Modena's *aceto balsamico*, has a well-established word-of-mouth local reputation. Originally made in tiny quantities in the bodegas, the vinegars were kept for family use, but were also given to friends and the families of bodega workers–and on this network they became a byword for refinement. "A



transubstantiation of wine that some prosaic people reduce to 'acetic fermentation'," is how José Briz, the Andalusian author of *Brevario del Gazpacho* (1989), summed it up.
But however fine these vinegars, the fact remained that their origins lay in wine *picao*–that is, sour wine–and, in the proud world of Jerez, that spelled *desprestigio*, or discredit. At the end of the 19th century some bodegas set up small vinegar shops or offered vinegars for export, but since the trade was small-scale and the risk of desprestigio was high, they generally gave it up again a couple of decades later.
Then, in the 1940s, Antonio Páez Lobato, the son of the owner of a small wine shop in the old quarter of Santiago, began to make sherry vinegar for sale. "It was easy then," he remembers. Now in his eighties, he keeps a twinkle in his eye. "Desprestigio! Nobody else wanted to know back then." So it was easy for him to buy up several hundred barrels of mature sherry vinegar. Some came from an abandoned wine bodega in Puerto de Santa María, and others came from a craft-based fish-canning factory on the Cádiz coast. At the same time he also bought in young oxidized wines to feed the mothers-of-vinegar. In this way he laid down a large future production stock. At first he sold his vinegars locally, filling customer's bottles or flasks from his vinegar barrels, then he sold tankerfuls to French mustard makers and finally, by the 1970s, he began to export the vinegar as he felt it deserved–bottled and branded.
At the same time the old bodega vinegars continued to develop in their quiet corners. González Byass's oldest working vinegar-making system, La Tanger, has now been maturing for eighty years. At Sánchez Romate, the main production system was put together in 1945, using barrels previously used for maturing sweet, raisiny PX wines (*Spain Gourmetour* N° 59) and brandy, two of the bodega's specialities.
But it took another fifty years for the separate worlds of the winemakers, or *bodegueros*, and the speciality vinegar-makers, or *vinagreros*, to come together. Finally, increasingly united by the problem of widespread imitation, they formed today's sherry vinegar Designation of Origin, tying it at the hip to the Jerez-Xérès-Sherry and Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda wine DO. The first wine-linked vinegar DO of its kind, it still awaits final European approval. But already over 50 registered producers, three-quarters of them bodegas, have set a cracking pace.

A SPLASH OF SPANISH VINEGAR ...

Lots of Spanish dishes have flavors and aromas heightened by a splash of wine or sherry vinegar. Try them on a visit to Spain or try making them at home. Remember you always need to try a new vinegar's strength before working out the quantities to use.

Ajo blanco: a chilled ground almond and olive oil soup sparked up by sherry vinegar.
asado: roast lamb or pork marinated with wine, and a few drops of wine vinegar, before being roasted in a wood oven and served with pan-juices deglazed with extra vinegar.
Bienmesabe: firm-fleshed fish steeped in a sherry or wine vinegar marinade, dried, then dipped in flour and fried in olive oil. Also known as *adobo*.
Boquerones en vinagre: filleted fresh anchovies marinated in wine or sherry vinegar and dressed with olive oil, finely chopped garlic, and parsley.
Encurtidos: spicy-hot *pimientos*, whole baby eggplants, capers and caper bud halves, artichokes and gherkins–all pickled and preserved in wine vinegar.
Gazpacho: southern chilled soup traditionally made with tomato, sweet bell pepper, cucumber and bread, and flavored with garlic and vinegar.
Escabeche: game, fish and vegetables–such as partridge, trout, mussels, anchovies and mushrooms–pickled in their cooking juices with wine vinegar and flavorings.
Mayonesa: a homemade mayonnaise often starts off with a dash of sherry or wine vinegar added to the egg yolk.
Potajes: a dribble of cider or wine vinegar brings out the flavor of braised lentils or beans cooked with a hambone, *chorizo* sausage, and plain garlic clove. Add just before serving.
Salpicón: chopped, fresh, steamed shellfish tossed in a parsley vinaigrette dressing.
Salmorreta: a fresh, thick purée of roasted tomato, garlic and a few drops of wine vinegar served with Mediterranean rice dishes.
Vinagreta or aliño: emulsified wine vinegar and olive oil used to dress all kinds of salads–such as potatoes or fish roe–or for steamed mussels, poached or baked fish, or boiled asparagus.

The premier vinegars

"It's been a bit like changing the wheels of a car while it's still running," comments César Saldaña, General Secretary of both the wine and vinegar DOs. "But you can now say there's a collective project."
That project embraces many different approaches and brands, but it rests on a shared assumption: Jerez's vinegars should match its wines in quality. As a result, most producers make at least one premier vinegar using the traditional artisanal Jerez method: that is, first, secondary fermentation inside wooden barrels of oxidized wine covered by a 'mother-of-vinegar', or yeasty dark layer of aerobic bacteria, then, second, ageing in almost exactly the same way as that used for sherry wines.
If you stand close to the fermentation barrels, where temperatures are allowed to reach 30°C (86°F) in summer, you can breathe in the gloriously full, rich

edgy wine aromas carried by the vinegars. Once fermentation is over–the precise time depends on temperature, season and the position of the barrel, but it usually takes about three months–it is siphoned off into partially full recycled wine butts for dynamic ageing. This is known in Spain as the *criaderas* and *soleras* system and it works in the following way: as the newly added young vinegar takes on the qualities of the existing vinegar in each butt, so vinegar from the barrel is drawn off and siphoned into another barrel of more mature vinegar, and so on, through a series of half a dozen barrels, until finally, years or decades after the vinegar has entered the system, it is drawn off for filtering and bottling.

What exactly happens to the vinegar during this ageing process? While the acidity continues to rise slowly due to oxidation, the vinegar slowly decants and acquires deep amber and brown tones, at the same time picking up the winey, woody taste of the barrels and the concentrated flavors produced by evaporation. Last but not least, the reaction of the acids with the remaining alcohol–which ends up somewhere below 3% of the finished content–forms esters, compounds which give the vinegar a series of rich and complex aromas.

As varied as these vinegars may be, they share certain raw ingredients. One is very healthy wine with no undesirable bacteria–these are screened out by laboratory analysis. Time is the vital second ingredient for a vinegar to realize its full potential. For example, most *reserva* vinegars spend an average of five years ageing on wood–that is, three years more than the minimum laid down by DO regulations. A good vinegar simply cannot be rushed.

The growing range

For this reason, the premier vinegars are all produced on a very small scale. With the transfer of a maximum of a third of a barrel a year, as a general rule of thumb, even a large stock gives a tiny production. So, veteran Antonio Páez Lobato's company Páez Morilla, for example, releases only 300,000 liters of vinegar annually from a total warehouse stock of 4,000 500-liter barrels. Bodega producers González Byass and Sánchez Romate, each with over 500 butts and bocoyes in their soleras, release only 30-50,000 liters a year. Even more exclusively, Vinagres de Yema, a speciality vinegar producer, releases just 500 liters of their '*Gran Reserva*' brand every year from a well-matured 800-barrel solera system acquired by Fernando de Terry y Galarza in an old abandoned bodega in the early 1990s. Of course there are many other very worthy if less finely tuned DO sherry vinegars. Younger vinegars aged in line with DO legal minimums–six months for all vinegars and two years for reservas–are, in truth, a bargain at the price, and make up a large part of the 28 million liters of sherry vinegar produced annually. Sometimes their fermentation is

... AND A DROP OF NAVARRESE VERJUS

Ten years ago Spanish *verjus* seemed to be lost forever. We could read about this delicate acidic condiment made from unripe grapes in historic cookbooks but, tantalizingly, it looked as though we'd never get to taste it. Now, however, thanks to Navarrese historians, research scientists and winemakers, it is being produced again under its medieval name, *agraz-verjus*. The project, a labor of love started by the Sociedad Navarra de Estudios Gastronómicos (Navarra Society of Gastronomic Studies), came to fruition thanks to a remarkable chain of collaborators. It was EVENA, the region's prestigious oenological research station, which turned the society's research into a modern making process and, in 1996, produced the first verjus. This was then sent round to various chefs for tasting. After fine-tuning, production rights were offered to the region's wine bodegas. Just one, Bodegas Ochoa, took up the idea of small-scale commercial production. Five years after producing their first bottle in 1998, they annually make and sell 3,000 liters of the green, tangy, bitter juice. The elaboration process is surprisingly similar to that used in medieval times: the pulped grape juice is gently fermented, decanted, and chilled to stabilize it, but then, twenty-first-century style, it is filtered and bottled, using air-extraction to extend the verjus' life. The society suggests trying it in carpaccios and cooked fish, on roast meats and dripped over hot boiled potatoes before they are dressed as a salad.

speeded up by a continual industrial process, in which case the thinner resulting aromas and flavors may be boosted by the addition of Oloroso wine. Many such vinegars are exported to France for mustard-making or for authorized bottling there–the label clarifies that these are not bottled in Jerez–and one can expect their quality to keep rising as stocks grow and ageing times increase.

Then, at the other end of the range, are new categories of extra-special vinegar. The first of these to be authorized, in 2003, was PX sherry vinegar, which had first appeared in 1999, produced by Sánchez Romate as a delicious aged vinegar blended with 15% Pedro Ximénez wine towards the end of its ageing on wood. "We produced it for a British client," explains Marcelino Piquero, export director, "but there is a very long tradition in Jerez of mixing a few drops of PX wine with sherry vinegar when you're making a vinaigrette". The result is a vinegar with a wonderful deep flavor and rich aroma.

These extra-special vinegars are likely to develop fast in the near future. Last year the DO authorized vinegars to which muscatel wine is added, although none are yet being released, and Vinagres de Yema are currently 'observing' a Manzanilla vinegar. Meanwhile, many producers are beginning to release very much older vinegars labeled in one way or another to describe their age and quality. These vinegars, fabulously subtle and rounded, have quickly found niche markets, both in Spain and abroad, and the DO is now looking carefully at the ways in which they should be classified and labeled. Watch that space!

Sweet-and-sour condiments

At first glance the young world of gourmet condimentos has little or nothing to do with Jerez's old vinegars. They are generally modern 'auteur' products, backed by the name of a bodega or brand, and they generally have a sweet edge and lower acidity at the opposite end of the spectrum from sherry vinegar's sharpness.

But look closer and one realizes the condiment makers have learned a great deal from Jerez's vinegar-making traditions. "The secrets of success are time and patience, as well as starting with the right quality wine," explains Enric Roig, the oenologist of Catalan bodega Cellers Puig i Roca, who, in the early 1990s, came up with a pioneering sweet-and-sour Cabernet Sauvignon vinegar called Forum. Aged in oak wine barrels Jerez-style for seven years, it was first made famous by Ferran Adrià as a liquid filling for chocolates and now sells in restaurants and delicatessens in 25 countries.

There are other echoes of Jerez wisdom. "Keeping the right volume of stock is important," he adds, "so there is a slow rotation of vinegar and the quality is never allowed to drop as demand grows". Today Puig i Roca's stock has grown from three to 600 barrels in order to produce an annual total of 40-45,000 liters, which includes a white Chardonnay

vinegar and an older red wine vinegar, Flavium. All the vinegar is fermented in a purpose-designed system of stainless-steel tanks. Then comes the dynamic Jerez-style ageing in 300-liter oak wine barrels. Flavium has an additional five years static ageing.

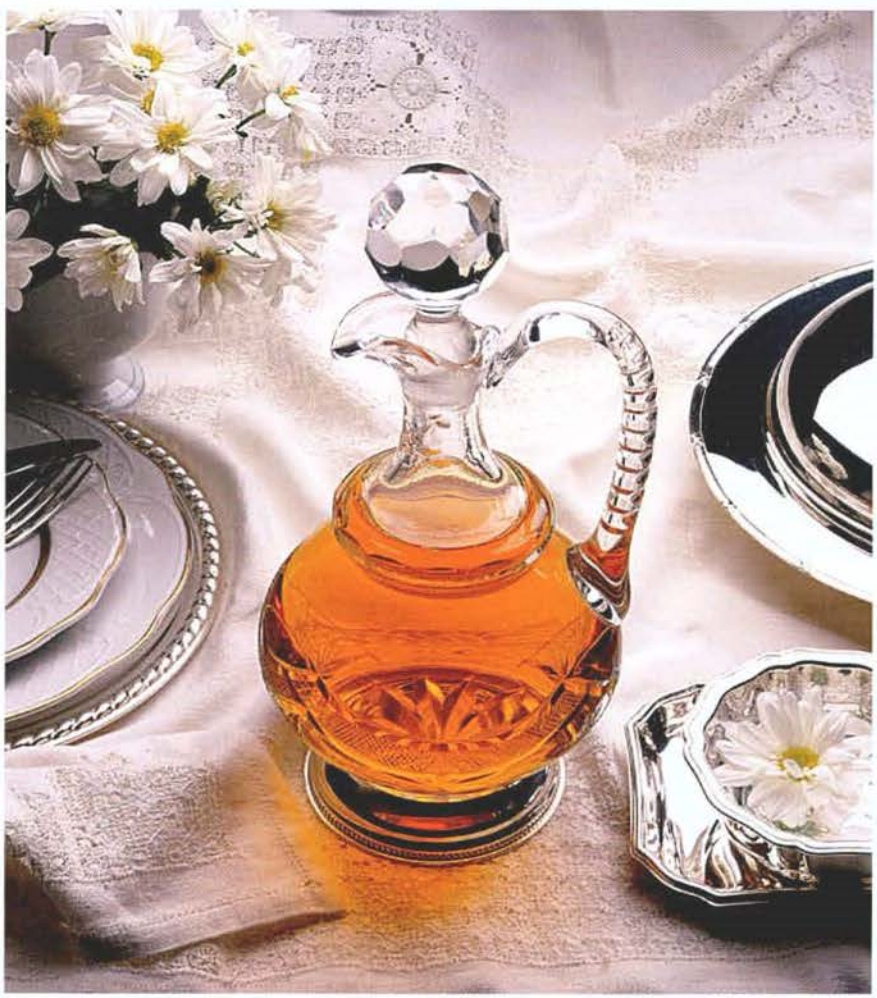
In the wake of Forum, there has been a wave of other such gourmet condiments. "The challenge was to take a *cava*," says Agustí Torelló Mata, (*Spain Gourmetour* N° 41), of the Penedés Cava bodega, "and to develop it into a very mild vinegar that keeps its fruity aromas acquired during the year spent on the lees". They were spurred on to develop their cava "*complemento*"–that, with 6° acidity, could qualify as a vinegar–by clients, especially chefs, who were looking for a vinegar that could respect the delicate shellfish and fish flavors. Once fermented, the vinegar is aged for a year in 300-liter American oak barrels, then transferred to clean barrels for a final year on wood. Sold in dark frosted bottles with spray tops to give a ready-made fine misty spray, it is so popular that even local demand outstrips supply.

A third gourmet novelty, *vinagre de vino al mosto*, is a red wine vinegar made by young Madrid-based olive oil and wine bodega Reova. Fermented from local varieties Airén and Malvar, briefly aged on oak for six months, then given a sweet grapy edge by the addition of Malvar *mosto*, or sweet grape juice, just before bottling, it is used by local chefs for game and meat dishes, and is already exported to France, Mexico and the United States.

And finally, at this soft end of the acidity spectrum, there are the traditional cider vinegars. Lagares Asturianos, who have produced natural cider since 1925, age their apple vinegar for two years and their cider vinegar for six. A mixture of local apple varieties is used and no ferment or bacteria are added–the cider does its own work in huge vats of 10-30,000 liters. The same producer also makes organic and unfiltered vinegars to order–and they export to Mexico and Belgium.

Pioneering varietals & organics

Where to next? Already a few pioneering producers–some of them oil-makers and others winemakers–are producing one-off vinegars to add to the tasting table. Each producer is taking a different approach–but it cannot be coincidence that they are all rooted



WEB SITES

DO

www.sherry.org/vinagre
The official web site of the sherry vinegar DO. Information about the Regulatory Council, general information on vinegar, the history of sherry vinegar, an explanation of the elaboration process and why sherry vinegar is unique, as well as a list of vinegar makers in the DO and gastronomic hints. (English, French, Spanish)

www.vinoscondadohuelva.com
Web site of the Vinagre Condado de Huelva DO. Available information includes: A brief presentation, an explanation of elaboration methods, the different types of vinegar produced, including a general description of the different vinegars and their organoleptic qualities and, finally, a listing of the companies in the DO. (Spanish)

Companies

www.paezmorilla.com
Information about the history and products of Bodegas Páez Morilla. (Spanish)

www.gonzalezbyass.com
González-Byass web site. Information about the different cellars, the company, its many products and worldwide distribution channels. (English, Spanish)

www.romate.com
Bodegas Sánchez Romate web site. Pages on the history of the winery, current affairs of the company, range of products, worldwide distribution channels, as well as pages on news and prizes received. (English, French, German, Spanish)

www.vinagresdeyema.es
Web page of the Vinagres de Yema vinegar company. Available information includes history of the company, elaboration processes, range of products, cellars in the company, a situation map and gastronomic tips and suggestions. (English, French, German, Spanish)

Vinagre de sidra

www.grupotrabanco.com
Web page for Trabanco Group, company to which Lagares Asturianos belongs. The web page offers a presentation and brief history of the group, a section on elaboration processes, a section on the different products the company offers and information about the different sections of the group.
(English, French, Spanish)

Verjus

www.bodegasochoa.com
Web page with a contact address and a brief history of the winery. (Spanish)

in *terroir*. In Catalonia, for example, Estornell produces a varietal red wine vinegar from Priorato-grown Garnacha grapes and Gardeny produces muscatel, Cabernet Sauvignon and vermouth vinegars. Long-established Galician vinegar-makers Gabesa, founded in the 1950s to supply mild white wine vinegar to local fish-canning factories, now specialize in natural fruit and herb vinegars based on Albariño wines from their own vineyards. These are then fermented into vinegar in vast Canadian pine barrels and aromatized with herbs or fresh fruit–lemons and raspberries, for example, which are left macerating in the vinegar for at least a year before bottling. They export to the United States, Ireland and Germany.

Down in the opposite corner of the country, in southwestern Spain, the winemakers of Condado de Huelva's DO have set up Spain's second wine-linked vinegar DO, designing it to embrace not only aged vinegars made from oxidized wine, like those of Jerez, but also a sparklingly clear white wine vinegar made from DO-sourced young white wines. Since these are not oxidized, they reflect the character of Zalema, the local grape variety. At the other end of Condado's range are aged vinegars, such as Corumbel, which are left to mature in a traditional solera ageing system, but in this case built of recycled brandy-making barrels. Most notable of their three categories of 'old' vinegars are the *añadas*, which are boosted by the addition of cask-aged wine during at least three years' ageing.

Elsewhere in Andalusia, Montilla-Moriles DO is also now studying the possibility of adding vinegars to its regulations.

A highly personal route to quality is organic vinegar-making. Dionisio Nova, who reopened his father's old bodega in Valdepeñas DO in 1995, has already made a name for himself with his Vinum Vitae red wine, which scooped the prestigious Biofach (Europe's premier organic food&wine fair) International Wine Award (and others on both sides of the Atlantic) in 2003–but he is currently less well-known for his wine vinegars.

These have two sources of inspiration. One was his chance discovery of a *tinaja*, or earthenware jar, where his father had left wine to ferment in the 1960s. "I didn't know what the liquid was that I tapped off," he says, "but it was so rich and mellow that I could have drunk it

down". The other inspiration was a trip to New York's Fancy Food fair. "When I saw the range of vinegars there, I thought was a great opportunity to do something interesting."
So, using 225-liter oak wine barrels, he set up a vinegar-making bodega in a small, whitewashed room hung with cobwebs. "They're the best ways of controlling the mosquitos and flies," he explains apologetically. Here, behind a tightly closed door, the vinegar is both fermented and aged, either for a year on oak or for a slightly shorter time in large black plastic vats where it is infused with garlic or tarragon. The results are a crystal clear red wine vinegar with an amber color and slightly cloudy aromatic vinegars with really exceptional aromas–big, fruity and full, but not in the least aggressive.

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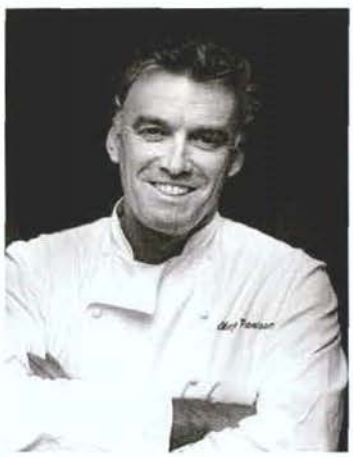
See Recipes page 78, Exporters page 111 and Photo Credits page 128

SHERRY VINEGAR SAUCES: EAST MEETS WEST



Jean Pierre Moulle

Alain Passard

Tetsuya Wakuda

As sherry vinegar has made its way into restaurant kitchens worldwide, so oriental and western chefs have given us a new perspective on how to use it in cooked sauces. "Cooking gives it a round flavor–it has a very sexy taste," says Japanese-born chef **Tetsuya Wakuda**, from Sydney. "We reduce port wine with a little sherry vinegar, we add veal stock and a drop of walnut oil–the acid, the sweetness and the texture are just wonderful, and we serve that as a sauce with *foie*. Perhaps the idea comes from Japanese cooking. I am using the vinegar to lift flavor, not to add acidity". **Jean Pierre Moulle** from flagship Californian restaurant **Chez Panisse** explains that, "We use it to cut the richness of sauces and magnify their flavors–and it adds roundness and sweetness. I especially like it with guinea hen, which has a 'gamey' flavor, braised with bacon or pancetta. We also use it to correct the seasoning in braised dishes, especially those cooked with red wine." Fish is on the menu too: take 'Lobster from the Îles Chausey with acacia honey and turnip petals', for example, served at noted Parisian restaurant **L'Arpège** by French star **Alain Passard**. He discovered sherry vinegar back in 1978, in a sauce served with roast duck. "What I like is its strong personality, its aroma. Mixing it with honey gives a sweet-and-sour effect which marries perfectly with lobster." Back on the other side of the world, a final stunning idea from Tetsuya Wakuda: "We make a sauce, using the Basque *pil-pil* technique, with olive oil, sea urchin flesh and fish stock, all emulsified with a few drops of sherry vinegar–it becomes so round, so soft and it brings out the sweetness of the fish".

Comida de boda en Bergantiños (Wedding Feast in Bergantiños), Fernando Álvarez de Sotomayor (1875-1960), Museo de la Real Academia de San Fernando, Madrid

The Gastronomy of Spain's Popular FESTIVALS

Since ancient times, a banquet has been an indispensable part of festive celebration, regardless of social rank. It is a time for breaking with daily routine and getting together with friends and neighbors, so that the table becomes a focus of conviviality in the true, Latin, sense of the word (*convivium* = a feast, entertainment, banquet).

Popular festivals were always associated with changes observed in Nature, which over time merged with religious celebrations, first pagan and later Christian. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Spain's Golden Age, they were also combined with marking significant events in people's lives, such as getting married or passing exams.

Unsurprisingly, given the difference in climate between the north and south of the Iberian Peninsula, there are considerable variations in dates for rural events such as celebrating the grape harvest, sowing or reaping, while religious festivals are always fixed throughout the territory.

Festive Foodways

TEXT
MARÍA DEL CARMEN SIMÓN PALMER

TRANSLATION
HAWYS PRITCHARD

A special day's festive meal must, by definition, consist of something out of the ordinary, and that in large quantities. Excessive amounts of food have always been equated with success, and there are many literary mentions of popular celebrations as a gastric challenge to those taking part. Nineteenth-century regionalist writer José María de Pereda, author of *Escenas montañesas* (Mountain Scenes), set in the Santander area of northern Spain, describes a *fiesta* during which, after attending mass, people sat down to "an enormous amount of food: the soup tureen, full to the brim, was little smaller than a washing-up bowl, the bowls containing the *potaje* could have served as boats on a fast-flowing river; the first main dish was composed of over half an *arroba* (some 6 kilos or 13 pounds) of stewed meat, and when the cockerel in *pepitoria* sauce, the hero of the banquet, arrived, it was accompanied by a guard of honor of four capons... the banquet concluded with white wine and sponge cakes". Later, during the *romería* (an excursion to a pilgrimage site in the countryside), "they buy hazelnuts, pears, cherries and little doughnuts at the wayside stalls", and then sit down to dinner when they get back. His contemporary and fellow-writer, Benito Pérez Galdós, characterizes popular cooking thus: "abundance and delicious flavor, albeit more tasty than refined, rather down-to-earth, over succulent, Spanish food of the kind apparently made for the stomachs of giants, and intended more for stuffing rustic bodies than for pleasing delicate palates" (*Gloria*).

But let's not run away with the idea that excess is a characteristic exclusive to the lower orders. In the 17th century, a period when the Spanish monarchy was at its most splendid, royal and aristocratic tables were distinguished by the fact of there always being too much food, prepared as if for many more people than there were around the table. Such was the surplus that a below-stairs system evolved for sharing out among the household staff what came back uneaten from the dining room. Upper-class eating also typically involved the consumption of prohibitively expensive foodstuffs, the use of spices for seasoning, and–before the invention of refrigerators–the chilling of drinks. A common characteristic of popular festive meals is the absence of vegetables, foods which, because of their ready availability, are not held in high regard. Sweets, on the other hand, feature largely since they are not everyday foods and are labor-intensive to produce. The repeated eating of certain dishes on a particular day of the year has resulted over time in their being identified with that date and so becoming 'typical' of it. Eating *turrón* (a type of nougat) at Christmas is one example.

La merienda a la orilla del Manzanares (Picnic at Manzanares River Bank)(detail), Francisco de Goya (1746-1828), Museo del Prado, Madrid

Winter festivals and their food

The winter cycle begins with Christmas and Epiphany, extending through saints' days such as San Blas and Santa Águeda and Marian festivals such as Candlemas, and ending with Lent.

Santo Tomás' day is a festival which San Sebastián marks with a special food: fifty stalls are set up in the street selling long-loaf sandwiches of *chistorra*, a sausage flavored and colored red by *pimentón* (a type of paprika from Spain). This custom seems to be a survival from the time when Basque peasant farmers used to travel to the local capital on this date to pay rent to their landlords, bringing gifts of country produce.

In much of Spain, the big Christmas meal is the Christmas Eve dinner on the night of December 24th, though lunch on the 25th is also quite a festive affair. On Christmas Eve, families tuck into a menu which, though it has changed over the years, in Castile traditionally consists of a first course of *sopa de almendra* (a sweet soup made with almonds crushed to a paste, milk and slices of bread, which can be a starter or a dessert) or a vegetable dish (red cabbage or cardoon, for example), a reminder of a time when this was a day of abstinence (on which the Church forbade the eating of meat); this will be followed by sea bream, stuffed turkey or roast lamb, then turrón, marzipan, *polvorones* (powdery cookies made with flour, lard and sugar, traditionally from Estepa, Seville) as dessert.

In Galicia, northwestern Spain, one Christmas Eve classic is *bacalao con coliflor* (salt-cod with cauliflower), while the focus of the Christmas Day meal is a capon bought on December 19th at the fair in Villalba (Lugo), a town famous for its top-quality specimens. As one might expect of this part of the country, local seafood also plays an important part, with luxuries such as *centollo* (spider crab), *nécora* (velvet swimcrab), and *bogavante* (lobster) providing the first course. The equivalent in southern Spain is local *jamón* (cured ham) and *lomo* (pork loin), and *langostinos* (king prawns), the finest of which come from Sanlúcar (Cádiz).

December 25th–feast-day in Antiquity of the pagan god Mithra–was adopted in the fourth century as the date for celebrating the birth of Jesus. All along Spain's east coast, the Levante, Christmas Day is the main focus of the festivities, with little variation in the menu between its different regions. The classic Christmas meal in Catalonia is *escudella i carn d'olla* (a hearty *pot au feu* of boiled vegetables and meat), and in Valencia *caldo con pelotas de carne* (again, a rich hot-pot, to which little meatballs are added), followed by *tronco de Navidad* (Spain's answer to the Yule Log, a cream-filled sponge roll covered in chocolate) or *compota de Navidad* (a compote of

El presente (The Gift), Valeriano D. Becquer (1834-70), Museo del Prado, Madrid

dried peaches, prunes, raisins, pine nuts...) for dessert.

An example of how important food has always been at Christmas is provided in a letter written by author Leandro Fernández de Moratín in 1815: "I have enjoyed Christmas rather better than I did in the year '13: I also had my sopa de almendra on Christmas Eve, and there have been fowls, *morcilla* (blood sausage), *limoncillos de Valencia* (crystallized lemons) and turrón in plenty". In his novel *La desheredada* (The Disinherited Lady), published in the late 19th century, Benito Pérez Galdós declares: "A poor family can be entirely at death's door, yet fail to celebrate Christmas Eve with some grub, never. To be able to buy a turkey, even those families most unlikely to save start earmarking a few coins for the money-box from November on," adding that they will also have "their three sea bream weighing two-and-a-half pounds each, to be served up garnished with aromatic garlic and lemons".

In some places, special Christmas Eve drinks are made. Typical examples are: *vino quemado*, a punch flavored with cinnamon sticks, orange peel and sugar (another version is also made to which the rind of baked quince, pears and apples is added); coffee and marc

ratafía liqueur; and *rosolí* (anis flavored liqueur with morello cherries, white wine and marc, sugar and lemon peel).

Christmas sweets

Royal kitchens always produced particularly luxurious dishes for Christmas, recipes for which can be found in Francisco Martínez Montiño's *Arte de cocina, pastelería, bizcochería y conservas* (Art of Cooking, Patisserie, Cake-making and Preserving), published in 1611. Although the repertoire of sweets has become rather standardized, local specialties, clearly rooted in the Arab tradition, still exist. At Christmas in Valencia, for example, they make *cascas*, a type of doughnut, stuffed with yam and egg yolk, *pastels de boniato* (sweet-potato cakes), *turrón de gato* (nut-brittle nougat), *turrón de cacahuete* (peanut nougat), and thin *tortas de chicharrones* (pork crackling biscuits) and *tortas de manteca* (lard biscuits)–these latter clearly not of Arab origin because of their pork content.

Toledo makes its famous *mazapán* (marzipan), exported all over the world, a recipe for which appears as early as the 15th century in Ruperto de Nola's *Libro de guisados* (Book of Cooked Foods), while Yepes produces *melindres* (marzipan candies glazed with egg, sugar and lemon); *alfajores* (flour, almond or hazelnut, honey, aniseed and cinnamon sweets) are made in various parts of Spain, though they are primarily an Andalusian specialty. Catalonia's Christmas sweets are *neules*, lacy conical or tubular pastries rather like pale brandy snaps. Known in other parts of Spain as *barquillos*, these have a long history and are known to have been eaten in the 13th century by Jaume I, albeit in flat, eggless and sugarless form, and to have been a royal dessert during the Golden Age, when they were known as *suplicaciones* (supplications).

All that said, however, the classic sweet, eaten for centuries by royalty and their subjects alike, has been turrón, a paste of almonds, pine nuts, hazelnuts or walnuts, toasted and mixed with honey. It is generally held to have been created in Jijona (Alicante), and there is documentary evidence of its being made there as early as the 15th century. It was transmitted from Spain to Naples and the rest of Italy and, from the 16th century on, to the Americas, too (*Spain Gourmetour* N° 24).

There is always too much food in the home on Christmas Day, and the Catalans capitalize on this with a traditional dish of cannelloni on Boxing Day, the Feast of St. Stephen, using up leftovers in the filling.

After seeing the old year out with the custom of popping a grape into their mouths with each of the twelve chimes of midnight, Spaniards round off the Christmas season with a *Roscón de Reyes*. This ring-shaped cake, made of light brioche dough aromatized with orange flower water and decorated with crystallized fruits, is eaten on January 6th after the visit of the Three Kings, the traditional distributors of Christmas presents in Spain (*Spain Gourmetour* N° 21). According to social historian Julio Caro Baroja (1914-1995), the roscón dates back to a game played during Roman festivals in honor of the god Saturn at the start of the winter solstice. A dried bean would be hidden in some part of the house or tucked into a loaf of bread, and the slaves set to hunt for it, the finder being granted his freedom for the duration of the festival. By the third century, this had evolved into a tradition aimed at children, the child who found the bean being declared king for the day, treated accordingly and presented with a rich, decorated celebratory cake, known in France as *la galette des Rois*. Later, the custom developed into hiding a little object of some value in the cake, and was

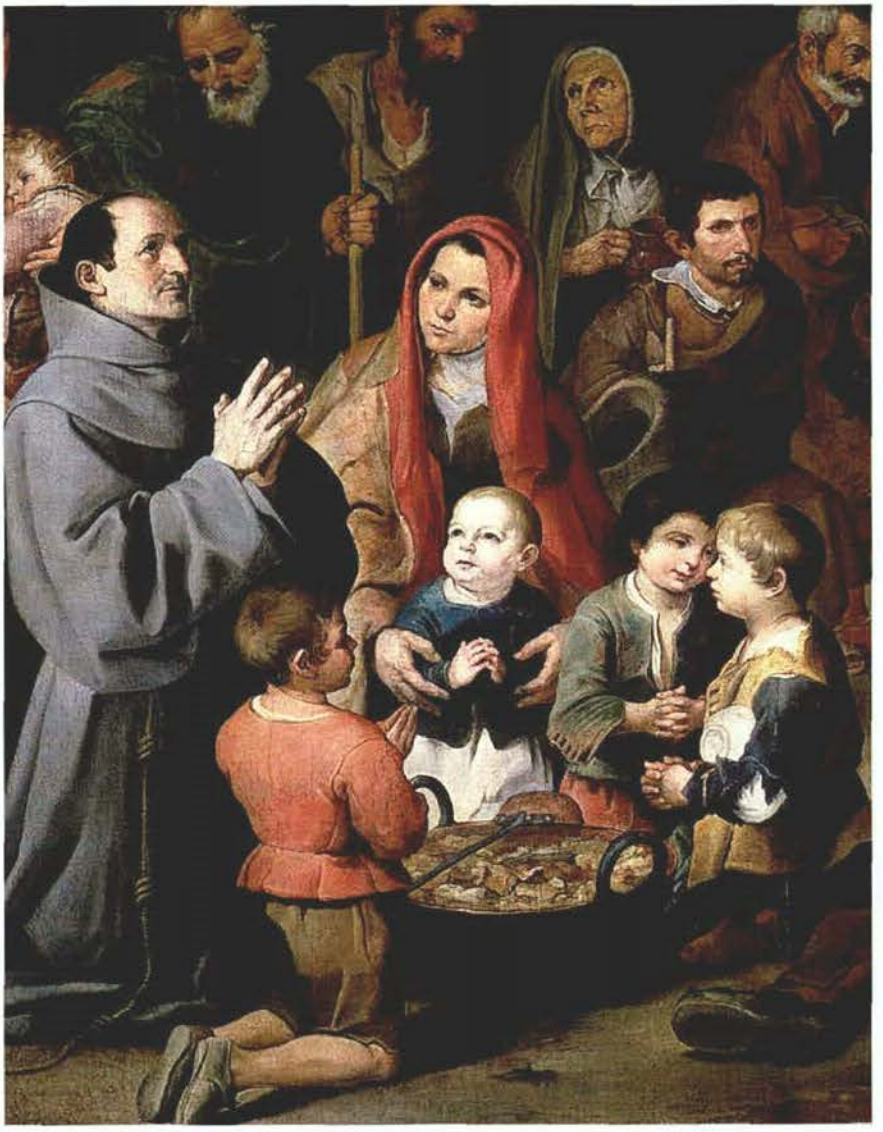
Escena de cocina (Kitchen Scene) (detail), tiles (18th century), Museo de cerámica, Barcelona

introduced into Spain by the Bourbons in the 18th century, the cake taking on its ring or crown shape and the name of Roscón de Reyes.

Christmas and New Year are followed by the feast days of certain popular saints that are celebrated with special festive foods. One of these is San Antonio Abad, protector of domestic animals, on whose day churches dedicated to him distribute buns known as *panecillos del santo*, or other sweets, at their doors; in Asturias, for example, these are *casadielles* (puff-pastry turnovers filled with sugary walnut paste). Meanwhile, in Granada, they celebrate with rural picnics of *potaje de habas secas*, a stew of dried beans cooked in a rich stock made with pig's head, backbone, ear, salt pork and blood sausage (similar to Asturian fabada, *Spain Gourmetour* N° 55). San Sebastián's day on January 20th is celebrated in Reinosa (Cantabria) in northern Spain, with an extraordinary competition for cooking the best *olla ferroviaria*, a bean and meat dish which harks back to stews cooked on board trains, by railway employees back in the days of steam in the 19th and early 20th centuries (*Spain Gourmetour* N° 57). That day, the fountain on the Plaza de España runs with wine instead of water, and they also eat *cocido campurriano*, a stew of white beans, cabbage, *chorizo* and morcilla sausages and salt pork.

Carnival madness

The Christian calendar fixes Ash Wednesday as the start of the forty-day period of fasting and abstinence leading up to Easter known as Lent. In earlier times, the days preceding Lent were a time for copious eating to prepare the body for the deprivation that lay ahead. In his *Libro del buen amor* (The Book of Good Love), 14th century literary cleric Juan Ruiz provides us with a detailed description of the symbolic battle waged each year at that period between don Carnal (Sir Carnal) and doña Cuaresma (Lady Lent). In *Cuentos del terruño* (Homeland Stories), intellectual and prolific novelist Emilia, Countess of Pardo



San Diego dando de comer a los pobres (San Diego Feedind the Poor), Bartolomé Murillo (1617-82), Museo de la Real Academia de San Fernando, Madrid

Bazán, (1852–1921) declares: "Along came the fat Carnival escorted by cooking-pots of fat pork and yellow pancakes". This 'farewell to meat' festival involved excess of all kinds, leading to public disorder so alarming to the authorities that it was banned for many years during the 20th century (*Spain Gourmetour* Nº 55).

Every area has its own local dishes and particular ways of celebrating Carnival. One Catalan specialty is a pot of rice cooked with pig's or lamb's trotters, pork loin, salt pork or *butifarra* (a white boiling sausage) and topped with egg, sugar and cinnamon. Also in Catalonia, in Valls (Tarragona), the Sunday before Candlemas is marked with a *calçotada*, a competition and tasting of *calçots* (baby onions) grown especially for cooking on a grill over the fire. They are served with *romesco* sauce (made with almonds, hazelnuts, cured ham, tomato, oil, parsley and salt), and followed by meat and butifarras also cooked on the grill.

On Carnival Monday in Isona, a town in Catalonia's Lérida province, a delegation goes round the houses collecting foodstuffs, particularly noodles, rice, potatoes, green beans and onions, which are cooked up with pork bones and spices on the following day to produce something similar to the Christmas escudella (see above). The cauldrons, each carried by two men, are then paraded through the streets in a procession headed by musicians and children in fancy dress as far as the town square where the contents are shared out among the local inhabitants.

In the villages of Galicia, the first Sunday of Lent, which marks the end of the Carnival, is known as *domingo de la piñata* (the piñata is a box of goodies which shower out when least expected), and it is the custom to hold a *festa da filloa* (pancake festival) on that day. The batter for filloas is made of egg, flour

CULINARY FARE

and pork-bone stock, and the pan in which they are cooked–the *filloeira*–is greased with pork fat. Sweet and savory versions are made and served up in their thousands at street stalls, alongside others selling plates of boiled octopus, doughnuts, *empanadas* (pies), chorizos and cheeses. On the second weekend in March, people all over Asturias eat pote de *Antroxu* (Carnival stew), which contains cabbage, potatoes, beans and pork products, followed by *frisuelos*, or *fayuelas*, the local equivalent of filloas.

The end of Carnival is marked by the 'Burial of the Sardine', a ceremony symbolic of the arrival of a period of mourning at which hundreds of 'widows' and 'friends' bewail the death of the sardine while processing along the route to where it is to be buried. The burial is followed by a feast of grilled sardines, which in Extremadura are accompanied by *perrunillas* (lard, flour and sugar biscuits) sprinkled with anis.

Romería de San Isidro (Festivities of San Isidro), Lucas Villaamil (1824-70), Museo Romántico, Madrid

Lent: hard times

Abstinence from meat-eating always posed serious problems for people living in towns and villages in those parts of Spain, such as Galicia, where oil was scarce and prohibitively expensive so that salt pork and lard were the staples for making stock and frying. Families nevertheless managed to contrive plenty of special feast day dishes that used no meat-derived products. One example was *potaje granadino*, a wheat and chickpea stew thickened with a dressing of crushed fried bread and a red pepper, quoted by Ruperto de Nola in the 15th century. Other regions, such as El Bierzo, came up with the *pulpo con panecillos* (stewed octopus with bread rolls) and *potaje de lentejas* (lentil stew) served with marrow. Along the east coast the classic Lenten dish is *suquet*, a mixed fish stew, whose name derives from the Catalan word meaning 'to release juice' and which was originally a sea-fishermen's recipe.

Bacalao (cod) was one of the most useful products for landlocked areas of Spain: in salted form, it could be transported easily and lasted a very long time. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Spain has a wide repertoire of salt-cod recipes, including *bacalao al pil-pil* (simply cooked with olive oil and garlic in an earthenware dish which is moved about constantly to create a rich emulsified sauce); *bacalao a la vizcaina* (a Basque recipe whose sauce incorporates the flesh of red *choricero* peppers); *bacalao al ajoarriero* (a drovers' dish of salt-cod broken up and cooked slowly with onion and tomato), and *bacalao en esqueixada* (a salad of raw, desalinated salt-cod flaked and mixed with thinly sliced onion and black olives). Bacalao also comes *con coliflor* (with cauliflower), *con arroz* (with rice), *en brandada* (made into brandade), *en revuelto* (mixed in with scrambled egg), *en croquetas* (as croquettes), in the form of *soldaditos de Pavia* (dipped in batter and fried), mixed with raisins as the filling for big empanadas....

The traditional Easter Saturday dish in Padrón (Galicia) is an empanada, filled on that day with lamprey eel to conform to the abstinence requirements. From then on, empanadas with other fillings are one of the classic foods eaten during romerías (pilgrimage-cum-picnics) out in the countryside.

The classic sweet dish associated with Holy Week is *torrijas*. Recipes for these appear in the cookery books of royal chef Martínez Montiño (1611) and another 17th-century cook, Hernández de Maceras. These delicious fritters, made of bread soaked in aromatized milk or wine, are clearly descendants of the *zalabiyya* of Arab-Andalusian cuisine. Since the 19th century, they have been served at this time of year in bars and *tabernas* to accompany a drink. At home, it has been traditional to make them with the best possible ingredients one can afford–rich milk, good bread, liberal amounts of beaten egg, fine olive oil–and to sprinkle them with cinnamon after frying. In poorer families, the egg would be replaced by syrup and the cinnamon by sugar.

Springtime festivals and their food

Easter coincides with the beginning of spring and there is a long tradition in Spain of making specific sweets to celebrate the end of Lent. In their form, content and decoration, Easter eggs, *monas* and *hornazos* seem to refer back to the chicken, symbol of submission, which used to be paid as a tithe at this time of year in the Middle Ages, and which itself later came to be replaced by an egg.

The Spanish Real Academia dictionary defines the hornazo thus: "A ring-shaped cake or loaf decorated with eggs baked together with it in the oven", going on to explain that "the same name was given to the gifts made by parishioners to the Lenten preacher on Easter Day, after the thanksgiving sermon". The custom of paying the preacher with foodstuffs is also attested to by Emilia Pardo Bazán: "At (...) Easter, as a paschal gift, the priest was given baskets of eggs and chickens, inoffensive cheeses and junkets" (*Cuentos de la tierra*). The hornazo is typical of Salamanca, though it is also eaten in other provinces. The dough of this Easter loaf incorporates chorizo, cured ham, boiled eggs and even pieces of fowl, and it is usually eaten as part of a family picnic in the country on *Lunes de Aguas*, the Monday after Easter Monday. A curious tradition has attached to it since the 16th century when, on Ash Wednesday, the wardens of Salamanca's famous university would organize the

Venta de abanicos y roscas (Selling fans and bread), Ramón Bayeu (1746-93), Museo del Prado, Madrid

temporary banishment of the women from local brothels to the neighboring village of Tejares on the other side of the river. The students would assemble to see them off, then welcome them back on Lunes de Aguas with celebratory hornazos. In Lope de Vega's early 17th-century play *Peribáñez*, the rustic heroine eulogizes the hero thus: "Your love pleases me more than new shoes the feet; among a thousand young men you are an Easter hornazo, with its points and its eggs".
Traditional, straightforward Easter eggs become something of a work of art in Catalonia, where they are known as *monas de Pascua*. They are thought to derive from ancient fertility symbols and are given as gifts to godchildren by their godparents (who are usually also their grandparents), ritually symbolizing spring and the reawakening of the earth after winter. Some scholars believe that the word *'mona'* derives from the Arabic *'muna'*, meaning 'provision of food', a term adopted from the Romans for whom it meant a type of loaf or cake. Monas usually contain a hard-boiled egg and are decorated with sweets throughout eastern Spain. The west of the Peninsula, meanwhile, prefers filloas and, in the El Bierzo area, *tortas de Burgazi* (biscuits made with dried chestnuts and milk).

Patronal festivals with their own associated foods include that of San Isidro, patron saint of Madrid, on May 15th, whose festivities were immortalized by the painter Francisco de Goya. In the 19th century it was the custom to spend the day on the banks of the River Manzanares with a picnic of *ensalada de San Isidro* (a salad of lettuce and soused tuna) followed by *rosquillas* del Santo (little buns designated *tontas* or *listas*–'silly' or 'clever'–according to whether they are sugar-topped or not). Rosquillas are still made for San Isidro to this day.

The summer season

Summer is the time when patronal festivals are celebrated with *verbenas* (open-air parties, often at night), romerías (countryside picnics) and outings to the country, when empanadas, sardines, octopus and other local products feature on the menu. There is magic in the air on the night of San Juan–the shortest night of the year, followed by the longest day. Many places, especially in eastern Spain, celebrate the summer solstice with fire: locals build huge neighborhood bonfires, and the special food associated with the event is a flat bread known as *coca*, for this occasion studded with pine nuts and crystallized fruits. Just a few days later, on the Sunday after San Juan, another fiesta with non-Christian associations, the *fiesta de las Calderas*, is celebrated on the outskirts of Soria. In earlier times, the meat of a bull killed in a bullfight would have been cooked up in cauldrons with various additional ingredients then–after a church service–handed out with bread and wine by the young men doing the cooking as an act of charity. By today, some elements of this fiesta have become merely symbolic, but it still involves parading cauldrons through the streets from the Plaza Mayor to the Dehesa de San Andrés, where local officials taste the food presented by twelve teams. They all then process together, each team bearing an effigy of its specific patron saint, and the bull-meat is blessed at the hermitage of La Soledad in Alameda de Cervantes Park. Throughout the day leading up to the procession, a slice of cooked bull meat, an egg, a bottle of wine and a loaf of bread will have

En torno a la paella (Sitting around a paella), tile (20th century), La Casa de Valencia, Madrid

been delivered to everyone who has taken part in the fiesta. Caro Baroja records the fact that fiestas with bullfights, followed by a banquet at which the meat is eaten, are held in various places during the summer. Capitalizing on the season's many fiestas, various gastronomic competitions are staged in summer: there is a bacalao al ajoarriero (drover's style salt-cod) competition in Navarre; a *tortilla de patata* (Spanish omelet) one in San Sebastián; the nocturnal *nit de l'olla* (stew) competition in Cocentaina (Alicante); an *arroz con costra* (crusty-topped rice) one in Elche (Alicante); competitions for bacalao al pil-pil (salt-cod in oil and garlic sauce) and *marmitako* (tuna stew) in the Basque Country, and many more.

Autumn festivals and their food

The observance of the Feast of All Saints on November 1st was established in the ecclesiastical calendar by Pope Gregory IV in the ninth century, the Feast of All Souls on the previous day, dedicated to prayer for the dead, being added in the tenth century. By the 18th century, it had become a widespread custom to eat chestnuts–a symbol of friendship–on All Souls' Day in Spain. In Asturias, chestnuts had been known since ancient times, and had served the function of a filling staple in the local diet before the potato was introduced from the Americas. Asturians used to mark the arrival of winter with fiestas such as the *fornau*, when young girls and boys got together to eat chestnuts (*amagüestos*, or *magüestos*) roasted in the oven. The Catalan equivalent is the *castanyada*, when godparents give their wards gifts of chestnuts on All Saints' Day. Though there are now fewer of them about, chestnut vendors (usually women, known as *castañeras*), with their street-corner stoves, special outfits and characteristic cries announcing their wares, have been popular figures in many Spanish cities. In Catalonia, *panellets* (little almond and sugar sweetmeats studded with pine nuts, coconut and so on) are historically hand-in-glove with chestnuts, and they are often eaten together on this day.

Galicians celebrate the completion of the harvest around this date in early November with a *magosto*, a night-time get-together out of doors, when friends and neighbors roast and eat chestnuts, washed down with new wine (in some places with honey added), while swapping ghost and witch stories. This is an originally pagan festival, and its associations seem to encompass both the connection of chestnuts with spirits and the idea of a funerary banquet, in which the chestnuts symbolize death and wine represents life. The fiesta is rounded off with chorizo sausages and a great bowl of *queimada*, a punch of *aguardiente*, white caster sugar, lemon ring and a few coffee beans, which is set alight while witches are conjured up with an incantation in the Galician language, *gallego*, beginning with the

words: "Owls, toads and witches! Wicked demons and devils, spirits of the snowy plains...."
In the rest of Spain, the classic sweet food eaten at this time are *buñuelos de viento* (tiny, light weight doughnuts filled with such things as confectioner's custard, sweet potato, and cream). Since the early 20th century, these have been accompanied in Madrid by *huesos de santo*, little 'saints' bones' of pale marzipan rolled around fillings such as coconut, sweet potato, candied marrow and chocolate.
For many places in Spain, the festival of San Martín a few days later, on November 11th, means the *matanza* (pig slaughter), as reflected in the proverb *'A cada cerdo le llega su San Martín'* ('Slaughter-day comes for every pig'). The presence of the pig, basis of the family economy, dates back in the Peninsula to the Iberian civilization, and the earliest medieval legislation makes provision for its protection. On matanza day in Extremadura and Castile-La Mancha, everyone taking part gets together for a breakfast of *migas con sardinas* (fried bread and sardines), which are eaten with olives and anis-spiked coffee or a glass of wine. In the El Bierzo area of León, they eat *botillo*, a large sausage stuffed with pieces of pork rib, head bones and tail. In present-day Galicia, they eat an empanada with a pork loin, offal, pork tripe and octopus filling, but in the old days all helpers would have tucked in to pork scratchings with rice, blood sausage, raisins and sugar, cooked in a large pot (as described in Xavier Castro's *Ayunos y yantares en Galicia*). The sweet food most commonly associated with the matanza is *frisuelus*, or pancakes; in the part of Asturias nearest Galicia, where they are known as *fayuelas* or *fiyuelas*, the recipe incorporates some of the slaughtered pig's blood.
So many festivals with their own associated foods... And, of course, there are many more: our individual celebrations of life's rites of passage–birth, marriage, death–all have their special gastronomic markers, too.

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12 RECIPES

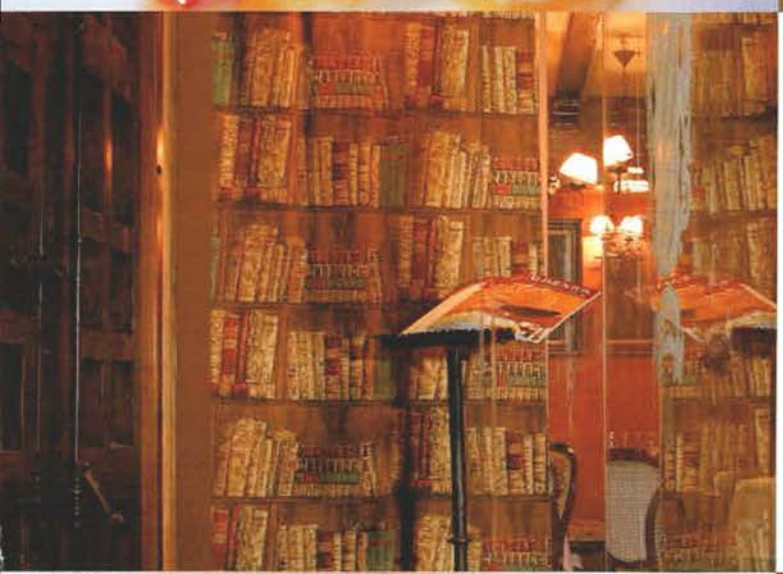
Our recipe section is undergoing a facelift. After several years of close collaboration with María Jesús Gil de Antuñano—whom we would like to sincerely thank for all her contributions to *Spain Gourmetour*—from now on, each issue will have a different Spanish chef giving recipes for the products or subjects covered inside these pages.

We hope this change will bring variety and added interest to the section, while ensuring that the brilliant ranks of professionals working in Spanish kitchens feature regularly in *Spain Gourmetour.*

The best in La Mancha

And our first chef is not new to this magazine. Three years ago, when we published a series on promising young chefs, Pepe Rodríguez Rey was one of those chosen (*Spain Gourmetour* Nº 54). His restaurant El Bohío, in Illescas, a village in La Mancha halfway between Madrid and Toledo, has become one of Spain's culinary landmarks. The latest editions of some of Spain's most prestigious gastronomic guides describe it as "the best in La Mancha", or "the best auteur cuisine in Central Spain". Success did not come to him by chance, or at least not altogether. When he entered the family restaurant's tiny kitchen in 1991, it was because of difficult personal circumstances. His father was ill, so his brother Diego had to take charge of the restaurant and Pepe of the kitchen. He developed a passion for cookery books, spent some training sessions in top-ranking restaurants and developed his own style in which his origins are clear—local produce, including Manchego cheese, partridges, saffron, pork, as well as some very humble, peasant fare such as *gachas* (a sort of porridge made from vetch flour) or *migas* (a dish of croutons fried in garlic, etc.), both of which he has dressed in new clothes and transformed but without losing their original character. His Croutons with squid sautéed in cocoa butter (*Migas con chipirones salteados al aceite de cacao*) carry on the tradition of combining bread with unexpected partners such as fish or even chocolate. In addition to these traditional dishes, Pepe produces others in which he lets his imagination fly... but always keeping his feet on the local ground. Of special interest are his desserts and the very complete wine list, served by sommelier José Carlos de la Fuente (who selected the wines recommended here), which earned him the 2002 Ministry of Agriculture Award for the restaurant with the best wine list.

Idealistic, methodical and amiable, Pepe Rodríguez is a name to watch.



Pepe Rodríguez Rey

Restaurant El Bohío

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Pork Salad with

The idea of this dish is to bring together several methods of cooking different pig meats, presenting them cold while maintaining the traditional flavor of each cooking style.

Serves 4:

1 side of pork
1 l / 4 1/4 cups / 1 3/4 pt extra virgin olive oil
2 sprigs thyme
4 cloves garlic
1 green apple
Salt and pepper
2 small tomatoes
Young salad leaves
50 ml / 4 tbsp / 2 fl oz reduced pork stock
10 ml / 2 tsp / 1/3 fl oz sherry vinegar

Reduced pork stock

1 onion
1 leek
1 carrot
1 head garlic
50 ml / 4 tbsp / 2 fl oz extra virgin olive oil
1 kg / 2 1/2 lb pork bones
300 ml / 1 1/4 cups / 10 1/2 fl oz white wine
5 l / 1 gallon 5 cups / 8 pt 15 fl oz water

Sweetbreads

200 g / 7 oz pork sweetbreads
1/2 onion
2 tomatoes
Salt and pepper

Stuffed pork skin roll

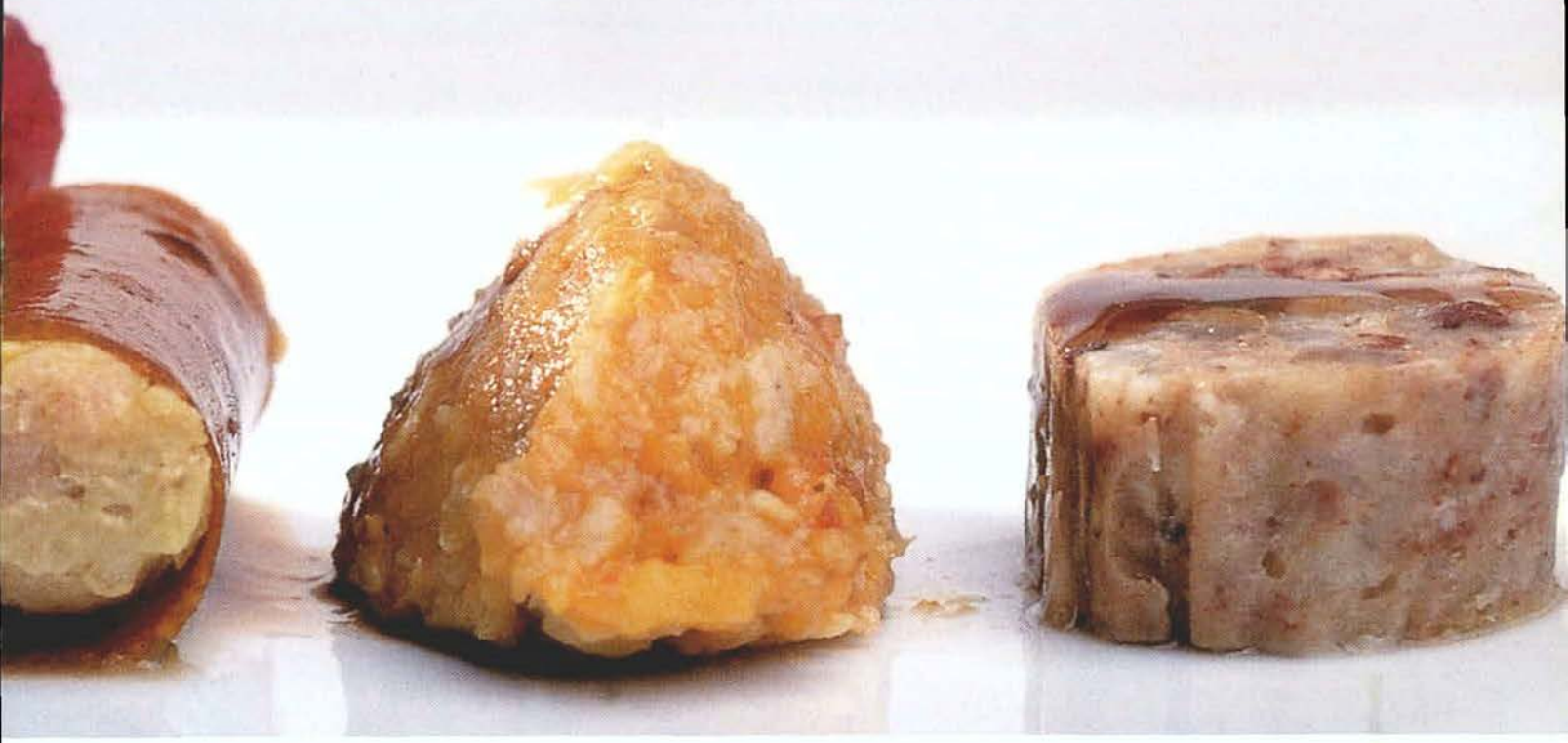
100 g / 1/2 cup / 3 1/2 oz sugar
100 g / 1/2 cup / 3 1/2 oz glucose
200 g / 7 oz ground pork skin
100 g / 3 1/2 oz fresh loin of pork
Salt, *pimentón* (a type of paprika from Spain), caraway, oregano

'Blood sausage'

3 pig's trotters
2 l / 8 1/2 cups / 3 1/2 pt water
50 g / 2 oz white and black *butifarra* sausage

Baked Tomato, Herbs and Spices

(Ensalada de cochino con tomate asado, hierbas y especias)



Gently stew the side of pork in olive oil with thyme and garlic for 3 hours at 69°C / 156°F and set aside.
Cut the apple into small pieces, season with salt and pepper and sauté. Set aside.
Cut the tomatoes in half and dress with oil, thyme and garlic. Bake in the oven for 40 minutes at 160°C / 325°F and set aside.

Sweetbreads:
Boil the sweetbreads in water for 5 minutes then trim. Lightly sauté the onion then add the finely-chopped sweetbreads. Add the grated tomatoes and cook together for 25 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Pork skin roll:
Make a caramel with the sugar and the glucose. Add the ground pork skin. Leave to cool then grind again. Place the resulting powder between two sheets of greaseproof paper, roll out and shape into a roll. Grind the loin of pork and season with the typical marinade ingredients (salt, pimentón, caraway, oregano). Roast for four minutes then use to fill the pork skin roll.

'Blood sausage':
Cook the pig's trotters in 2 liters / 8 1/2 cups / 3 1/2 pt water for about 2 1/4 hours. Bone and chop the meat. Chop the black and white sausages, mix with the chopped meat and sauté. Roll into a cylinder shape, like a blood sausage.

Dress the salad leaves with the sherry vinegar and serve the pork with the sautéed apple, the roll with the filling and the sweetbreads and the salad on top of the baked tomatoes, with the 'blood sausage' to one side. Decorate with a strip of reduced pork stock.

Preparation time:
1 hour

Cooking time:
2 hours 15 minutes

Recommended wine:
Vallegarcía 2001 Viognier. Pago de Vallegarcía. Retuerta del Bullaque (Ciudad Real). Vino de la Tierra de Castilla.

Marinated Tuna with Cheese and Herbs

(Atún en escabeche de queso y hierbas)

Serves 4:

1 red tuna belly fillet, weighing 600 g / 1 lb 5 oz
1 onion
2 cloves garlic
Bay leaf, black pepper, clove
10 g / 2 tsp / 1/3 oz sweet *pimentón* (a type of paprika from Spain)
300 ml / 10 1/2 fl oz water
25 g / 2 tbsp / 1 fl oz sherry vinegar
2 sheets gelatin
1 bundle fresh chives
75 ml / 1/3 cup / 3 fl oz extra virgin olive oil (Arbequina)
400 ml / 1 3/4 cups / 14 fl oz ewes' milk
100 g / 3 1/2 oz Manchego cheese
Salad leaves

Brown the tuna on all sides in oil and set aside. Make the marinade by lightly frying the onions with the bay leaf, pepper, clove and garlic. Add the pimentón and water, season with salt, add the vinegar, strain and pour over the tuna.

Make a jelly with some of the marinade in a proportion of 1 sheet of gelatin to 200 ml / 7 fl oz marinade. Pour over the base of a dish and leave to set.

Crush the chives with the oil to form a bright green oil. Blend the milk with the cheese until a smooth cream forms.

To serve, pour a little of the cheese cream mixed with the green oil over the marinade jelly, add the tuna in pieces and garnish with the salad leaves.

Preparation time:
30 min.

Cooking time:
15 min.

Recommended wine:
Manuel Manzaneque Chardonnay 2000. Bodegas Manuel Manzaneque. El Bonillo (Albacete). Vino de la Tierra Sierra de Alcaraz.

Baked Monkfish with Salsa and a Pedro Ximénez Sweet and Sour Dressing

(Rape asado con asadillo al agridulce de Pedro Ximénez)

To serve 4:

2 duck breasts (magrets)
Salt
Pepper

Peach and pepper sauce:

4 pieces monkfish, weighing 150 g / 5 1/2 oz each
2 tomatoes
1 red pepper
1 onion
1 clove garlic
60 ml / 1/4 cup / 2 fl oz extra virgin olive oil (Picual)
200 ml / 3/4 cup / 7 fl oz Pedro Ximénez sherry vinegar
60 g / 1/4 cup / 2 oz sugar

Lightly brown the monkfish on the griddle on all sides then bake in the oven for eight minutes at 180°C / 350°F.
Cut the tomatoes in half and bake in the oven for 30 minutes at 160°C / 325°F, together with the pepper, onion, garlic and olive oil.
Reduce the vinegar with the sugar until the texture of molasses.
Chop the baked onion, pepper and garlic and mix with the tomato.
Serve and top with the baked monkfish. Drizzle with a little of the reduced vinegar.

Preparation time:
1 hour

Cooking time:
30 min.

Recommended wine:
Cava Kripta. Agustí Torelló. San Sadurní de Noya (Barcelona). DO Cava.

Melon Cocktail

(Cóctel aperitivo de melón)

Serves 4:

400 g / 14 oz melon from La Mancha
100 ml / 1/2 cup / 3 1/2 fl oz water
50 ml / 4 tbsp / 2 fl oz Pedro Ximénez sherry
20 g / 1 heaping tbsp / 1 oz salt
20 g / 1 heaping tbsp / 1 oz sugar
75 ml / 1/3 cup / 3 fl oz ginger ale
75 ml / 1/3 cup / 3 fl oz aged rum

Peel and seed the melon. Cook with the water, sherry, salt and sugar for two minutes. Blend, strain and leave to cool.

In a cocktail-shaker, mix one part ginger ale with one part aged rum and four parts melon juice. Shake with ice and serve very cold.

Preparation time:
1 hour

Cooking time:
2 min.

Rice with Duck and Melon

(Arroz con pato y melón)

Serves 4:
1 onion
Olive oil
320 g / 1 1/3 cups / 11 oz rice
1 l / 4 1/2 cups / 1 3/4 pt duck stock
2 duck breasts
200 g / 7 oz La Mancha melon

Duck stock:
1 onion
1 leek
1 carrot
1 head garlic
50 ml / 4 tbsp / 2 fl oz extra virgin olive oil
3 duck carcasses
300 ml / 1 1/4 cups / 10 1/2 fl oz white wine
5 l / 1 gallon 5 cups / 8 pt 15 fl oz water

Chop the vegetables and fry gently in the oil. Add the carcasses and stir, then add the wine. Reduce a little. Add the water and reduce to about 1 liter.
Slice the onion very finely and stew gently in oil. Add the rice and stir, then add the stock and stir constantly for 15 minutes. Roast the duck breast until pink. Chop the melon into very small dice and warm.
For each person, serve two tablespoonfuls of rice with half a breast, and top with the chopped melon.

Preparation time:
1 hour

Cooking time:
20 min.

Recommended wine:
Petit Verdot 2001. Dominio de Valdepusa. Malpica de Tajo (Toledo). DO Dominio de Valdepusa.

Crayfish with Griddled Melon and Ibérico-flavored Oil

(Cigala con melón a la parrilla y aceite de ibéricos)

Serves 4:
8 medium-sized sea crayfish
4 rectangles La Mancha melon, about 70 gr / 2 1/2 oz each and 2 cm / 0.8 in thick
150 ml / 2/3 cup / 5 1/2 fl oz mild, extra virgin olive oil (Arbequina)
50 g / 2 oz Ibérico *chorizo*
50 g / 2 oz Ibérico ham
Rind of 1 lemon
20 g / 1 heaping tablespoon / 1 oz sugar
20 ml / 1 fl oz water

Peel the crayfish and griddle. Sauté the melon rectangles with a very little oil on the griddle. Stew the finely-chopped chorizo and ham with the rest of the oil for about 30 minutes at 55°C / 131°F.
Cook the lemon rind with the sugar and water for 10 minutes.
Serve the griddled melon, top with the crayfish and drizzle with the Ibérico-flavored oil and the lemon syrup.

Preparation time:
30 min.

Cooking time:
15 min.

Recommended wine:
Martúe especial 2001. Bodegas Martúe, S.A. La Guardia (Toledo). Vino de la Tierra de Castilla.

Bream with Garlic, Sherry and Lemon

(Besugo con refrito de ajos, vino de jerez y limón)

This flavorsome fish used to be a popular choice at Christmas time in coastal areas. The tradition continues, but prices soar in December.

Serves 4:

1 bream, weighing 2 kg / 4 1/2 lb
100 ml / 1/2 cup / 3 1/2 fl oz extra virgin olive oil (Arbequina)
2 cloves garlic
50 ml / 4 tbsp / 2 fl oz *fino* sherry
Juice of 1/2 lemon

Clean the fish and cut off four fillets, weighing 150-200 g / 5.5-7 oz each. Brown on the griddle with a little oil and transfer to an ovenproof dish. Brown the garlic in the oil and add to the bream. Pour over the fino and the lemon juice.
Bake in the oven for 10 minutes at 170°C / 338°F. Strain the cooking juices and beat with a whisk. Serve the fish with a little of this emulsion.

Preparation time:
30 min.

Cooking time:
10 min.

Recommended wine:
Dehesa del Carrizal Chardonnay 2002. Bodegas Dehesa del Carrizal. Retuerta del Bullaque (Ciudad Real). Vinos de la Tierra de Castilla.

Slightly Smoked Cod and Spinach Potage

(Potaje ligeramente ahumado de bacalao y espinacas)

This is an updated version of one of the most traditional Spanish Lenten dishes. As meat consumption used not to be allowed during Lent, cooks made frequent use of salt-cod.

Serves 4:
1 cod fillet weighing 400 g / 14 oz, soaked overnight

Chickpea and bean potage:
100 g / 3 1/2 oz chickpeas, soaked overnight
100 g / 3 1/2 oz dried white beans, soaked overnight
1 ham bone, 1 onion, 1 carrot, salt, bay leaf

Smoked cod broth:
1 cooking fowl
5 l / 1 gallon 5 cups / 8 pt 15 fl oz water
2 carrots
2 leeks
150 g / 5 1/2 oz smoked cod

Cream of spinach:
1 clove garlic
100 ml / 1/2 cup / 3 1/2 fl oz olive oil
100 g / 3 1/2 oz spinach leaves
200 ml / 3/4 cup / 7 fl oz cream
1 siphon

Salt-cod fillet:
Cut into 100 g / 3 1/2 oz pieces. Bake in the oven for 10 minutes at 160°C / 325°F with a little oil. Set aside.

Chickpea and bean potage:
Cook the chickpeas and beans with the other ingredients for 1-2 hours until soft. Set aside.

Smoked cod broth:
Simmer all the ingredients except for the smoked cod for 3 hours then strain. Cook the smoked cod in half a liter of this broth for 15 minutes. Blend and strain.

Fluffy cream of spinach:
Gently fry the chopped garlic in the oil. Add the spinach leaves and fry for 3 minutes. Add the cream and cook for a further 3 minutes. Blend and strain. Transfer to a siphon and keep warm.

First serve the chickpea and bean potage. Top with a piece of cod. To one side, add a little of the fluffy cream of spinach. The smoked cod broth should be served separately by the waiter.

Preparation time:
1 hour

Cooking time:
3 hours

Recommended wine:
Corpus del Muni 2002. Bodegas del Muni. Villatobas (Toledo). Vinos de la Tierra de Castilla.

Stewed Meat Parcels, Dressed Chickpeas and Broth

(La pringada del cocido, garbanzos aliñados y su caldo)

Although the various versions of the typical Spanish stew are eaten all year round, when served complete it is something of a festive dish. It makes for a hearty meal so is most appropriate for winter but this updated version is good at any time of the year.

Serves 4:
5 l / 1 gallon 5 cups / 8 pt 15 fl oz water
1 cooking fowl
1 beef shank
2 ham bones
1 blood and onion sausage
200 g / 7 oz chickpeas
1 tomato
Olive oil
3 g / 1/2 tsp / 1/8 oz cumin
200 g / 7 oz belly pork
1 frozen baguette

Broth:
Soak the chickpeas for 12 hours. Bring a large pan of water to the boil and add the cooking fowl with the beef shank, ham bones, blood sausage and belly pork. Add the chickpeas and simmer for 3 hours until a tasty broth is obtained.

Dressed chickpeas:
When the chickpeas are cooked, drain and sauté in oil together with the grated tomato. Add the crushed cumin and set aside.

Stewed meat parcels:
Cut the belly pork into slices and place in a terrine mold. Remove the meat from the blood sausage and place on top of the belly pork. Cut the beef into slices, like the belly pork, and place on top of the blood sausage meat. Cover with cooking film and top with a weight. Set aside. Cut the baguette into very thin slices using an electric slicer. Place one slice on top of another at right angles, forming a cross. Top with a little of the terrine then fold up the bread to form a small parcel or ravioli. Make four parcels then bake in the oven until golden.

Serve the chickpeas in a bowl, add the broth then top with the crisp bread parcel.

Preparation time:
2 hours

Cooking time:
3 hours

Recommended wine:
Linus Crianza 2000. Bodegas Pago del Infante. Moradillo de Roa (Burgos). DO Ribera del Duero.

Partridge in a Pickle Sauce in the Style of Teresa Rey

(Perdiz en escabeche según Teresa Rey)

Partridge, especially red partridge, is a real delicacy. The close season is autumn and winter so it is a popular Christmas dish. By preparing it in a pickle sauce, as in this recipe by Pepe Rodriguez's mother, it can be eaten at other times too.

Serves 4:

2 cloves garlic
100 ml / 1/2 cup / 3 1/2 fl oz virgin olive oil
Bay leaf and black pepper
2 red partridges, each weighing 600 g / 1 lb 5 oz, peeled and cleaned
1 l / 4 1/4 cup / 1 3/4 pt water
50 ml / 4 tbsp / 2 oz sherry vinegar
1 pinch salt

Brown the garlic in a pan with the oil, bay leaf and black pepper. In the same oil, brown the partridges on all sides then gradually add the water. Cover the pan and leave the partridges to cook for about 2 hours or until tender. Finally, add the vinegar and salt and refrigerate for 48 hours.

Preparation time:
1 hour

Cooking time:
2-2.5 hours

Recommended wine:
Quercus 2000. Bodegas Fontana. Fuente de Pedro Naharro (Cuenca).

Bread Fritter Ice Cream with an Almond Emulsion

(Helado de torrija con emulsión de almendras)

During the run-up to Easter, *torrijas* or sweet bread fritters are on offer throughout Spain in cake shops, restaurants and homes for eating either as a dessert or as an afternoon snack. Traditionally, they are served in a wine or honey syrup.

Serves 4:
500 ml / 2 1/6 cups / 17 fl oz milk
150 g / 2/3 cup / 5 1/2 oz sugar
1 cinnamon stick
1 orange rind
1 lemon rind
250 g / 9 oz bread for fritters
Olive oil for frying
2 eggs

Ice cream:
Milk
Cream
Glucose

Almond emulsion:
100 g / 3 1/2 oz marzipan or almond paste
300 ml / 1 1/4 cups / 10 1/2 fl oz cream
50 g / 4 tbsp / 2 oz sugar

Bring the milk to the boil with the sugar, cinnamon and orange and lemon rings. Leave to infuse for 5 minutes then strain. Slice the bread and submerge in the milk. Leave to soak. One by one, dip the bread slices into beaten egg and fry. (Note: the bread usually sold for fritters has a consistency similar to that of a brioche but ordinary bread may also be used.)

Ice cream:
For every 350 g / 12 oz of fritters, mix 1.1 liters / 4 1/4 cups / 1 3/4 pt of milk with 357 ml / 12 fl oz cream and 100 g / 3 1/2 oz glucose. Bring to the boil, blend and strain carefully. Leave to stand then transfer to the ice-cream maker.

Almond emulsion:
Briefly boil all the ingredients together then blend and strain. Beat with a whisk to make slightly fluffy.

Preparation time:
40 min.

Cooking time:
40 min.

Recommended wine:
Pedro Ximénez Viejo. Bodegas Osborne y Cia S.A.. Puerto de Santa María (Cádiz). DO Jerez-Xérès-Sherry.

Pistachio Marzipan and Pistachio Ice Cream

(Mazapán de pistacho y su helado)

Marzipan, together with *turrón*, is the Christmas dessert par excellence throughout Spain. But in its home town, Toledo, it is made from almonds and sugar all year round. Here Pepe Rodríguez, himself a native of Toledo, gives us a light version and serves it with a refreshing ice cream.

Serves 4:

Marzipan:

4 eggs
125 g / 1/2 cup / 4 1/ 2 oz icing sugar
125 g / 1/2 cup / 4 1/ 2 oz butter
50 g / 2 oz pistachio paste
170 g / 6 oz ground almonds

Ice cream

575 ml / 19 fl oz milk
160 ml / 5 1/2 fl oz cream
50 g / 2 oz pistachio paste
150 g / 5 1/2 oz sugar
125 g / 4 1/ 2 oz egg yolks

Marzipan:

Beat the eggs with the icing sugar. Melt the butter with the pistachio paste, add to the beaten eggs then to the ground almonds. Transfer to molds and bake at 180°C / 350°F for 30 minutes.

Pistachio ice cream:

Bring the milk to the boil with the cream. Add the pistachio paste, then the egg yolks and sugar. Cook at 83°C / 181°F for 1 minute. Leave to infuse then transfer to the ice-cream maker.

Preparation time:
30 min.

Cooking time:
30 min.

Recommended wine:
Moscatel Molino Real 2000. Compañía de Vinos Telmo Rodríguez. Cómpeta (Málaga).

On the move

Text
Saúl Aparicio

J. García Carrión Chosen Provider of the Year by WalMart

ASDA, the British subsidiary of the American retail giant WalMart, has chosen J. García Carrión amongst their best providers this year. The Spanish company won the 'Availability Award' in the 'Chilled Meat & Fish' category, which included all providers of refrigerated meats, fish, pre-cooked foods and other chilled products. Factors such as service, availability, merchandise quality and the on-time fulfillment of compromises were all taken into consideration by WalMart in choosing J. García Carrión over the other 300 companies in its category. This award comes hand-in-hand with another prize, this one granted by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, to the 'Best Promotional Campaign within Spain in 2003'.
J. García Carrión is a company with a long exporting tradition whose flagship brand, Don Simón, was the first to commercialize wine in a Tetra-Brik. Currently, Don Simón is also the name of a range of juices, packaged gazpacho and non-carbonated soft drinks, among other products.

Date of foundation: 1890
Activity: Manufacturing and packaging
Workforce: approx. 600 employees
Turnover in 2002: 360 million euros
Export quota: 20%
www.donsimon.com

Ebro-Puleva Spreads to Northern Europe

The major Spanish food group has continued in its ambitious expansion plan by reaching a buyout agreement with Danish companies Danrice and Danpasta. Ebro-Puleva in 2003 had already performed four major moves. In April it reached an agreement with Kraft Foods to purchase the latter's rice brands in Germany, Austria and Denmark. In September, it created a joint venture with Riviana Foods, giving birth to the largest rice brand company in the UK. Finally, in November it bought Riceland-Magyarország, the leading rice company on the Hungarian market.
Danrice and Danpasta specialize in the supply of pre-cooked frozen rice and pasta to companies that prepare ready-made meals, including some of the major players in the European pre-cooked food business, especially in Germany, Scandinavia and Northern France. Spanish rice exports in general are therefore expected to experience a boost this year, since Danrice's raw materials used to be imported from the United States, but the company will now turn to Spanish rice fields for their supplies.

Date of foundation: 2001
Activity: Manufacturing, elaboration, commercialization, research, export and import of a wide range of food and dietetic products.
Workforce: 7,058 employees
Turnover in 2002: 2.16 billion euros
www.ebropuleva.com

Hojiblanca Becomes Largest Olive Oil Co-op in the World

The general assemblies of the Hojiblanca and Cordoliva cooperatives have approved the merger of both societies, creating the largest olive oil cooperative in the world. Annual oil production of the new company, which will be operating under the name Hojiblanca, will reach 80,000 tons, a full 8% of total Spanish production and 3.7% of global production. The firm is expected to generate 200 million euros in sales per year, and has invited other cooperatives to join them in this new venture.
A further boost for the company comes from actor Antonio Banderas' decision to join in its future ventures. Banderas, through his own company Mediterranean Brands, has

taken a 10% participation in the commercializing subsidiary of Hojiblanca. According to Hojiblanca's general manager, Antonio Luque, conversations with Mediterranean Brands began because "It was crucial for us to get someone so famous to help spread awareness of our product and of the qualities of extra virgin olive oil". The successful fruition of these negotiations provides the company with one of Spain's most internationally recognized personalities who, in Mr. Luque's words, will be "the global ambassador of Hojiblanca".

Date of foundation: 2003
Activity: Production and distribution of olive oil
Workforce: 100 employees
www.hojiblanca.es

Grupo Calvo Expands to El Salvador

Punta Gorga, in the Department of La Unión (El Salvador), can boast since September of being the site of one of the largest tuna processing plants in Latin America. Grupo Calvo, which has invested 16 million euros in this project, will be able to process up to 60,000 tons a year, destined mainly for consumption in Spain, Latin America and Eastern Europe. The plant is only part of the investment made by the group in the region, since 34 million euros went into the construction of two fishing ships, the Montelucía and the Monteromero, which will supply the plant with tuna from the nearby yellowfin banks.

Date of foundation: 1947
Headquarters: Carretera Coruña-Finisterre, Km. 34.5, 15100 Carballo (La Coruña)
Activity: Production of fish preserves
Workforce: 1,800 employees
Turnover in 2002: 244.1 million euros
Export quota: 43%

Paellador Lands in Mexico

Meritem, a catering franchise whose flagship brand is Paellador, has begun expansion into Mexico through the presence of its products in 12 establishments. The company expects that its Paellador *paellas* (traditional rice-based Spanish dish) and *fideuás* (traditional Spanish dish similar to paella but pasta-based) will be present in an additional 100 locations within a year's time. Although the company's main objective business areas are in Europe, especially Portugal, France and Italy, the company is present in no less than 11 countries (Andorra, Argentina, United States, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Puerto Rico, the UK, Venezuela and, most recently, Mexico). Teresa Sánchez, responsible for the company's export department, highlighted that the key to their success resides in the simple fact that their products are "of the highest quality, typical of the Mediterranean diet and have a very favorable reception on the international market".

Date of foundation: 1988
Activity: Paella, fideuá and crunchy pizza catering franchise
Workforce: 60 employees
Turnover in 2002: 8.19 million euros
Export quota: 10%
www.paellador.es

More news
www.spaingourmetour.com

Text
Bettina Krücken

Translation
Synonyme

Photos
Tayo Acuña/ICEX

Arteoliva

or how the olive oil came into the Tetra-Brik

The transportation of fine olive oil and the best packaging for this purpose is a matter that has always worried connoisseurs of this typical Mediterranean product. The beauty of the ancient amphora was undeniable, but transport was far from easy and it could not guarantee prolonged preservation of the oil in perfect condition. However, the ancient Romans were probably less clearly aware of this than the modern consumer, who sets a high standard for today's products. This demand for quality has now been recognised in Andalusia, where olive oil is being filled in modern Tetra-Briks, which protect the pure juice of the olive from light and air.

Between the amphora and the Tetra-Brik, you will say, there is also the airtight glass bottle, attractive with its colorful labels, allowing buyers to see the marvelous, shimmering product within. But this is exactly the point: to see there must be light, and light is harmful to olive oil, just as it is to milk. This was the thought that seven years ago led Francisco Martín-Consuegra (at the time sales director of the Pascual Group, one of Spain's leading dairy concerns) to realize that olive oil would probably be best filled and stored in an opaque and airtight container.
What the ancient civilizations observed has finally been confirmed by modern science: virgin and extra virgin olive oils, high in polyunsaturated fats and vitamins A and E, are extremely healthful and play an important role in the prevention of heart disease, one of the scourges of modern Western society. Extra virgin and virgin olive oil are the only two types of oil that do not undergo any chemical or physical processes during production, but rather are obtained simply by pressing the olives and collecting and filtering the juice. As a result, they retain the full organoleptic and therapeutic properties of this ancient foodstuff and remedy. Oxidization and photo-oxidization, however, break down key components of olive oil within a short time. Vitamin E is lost after only a few days' direct exposure to light, and in contact with both light and air, the wonderful fruity aromas and taste of extra virgin olive oil take on a hint of gherkins. The oil gradually becomes rancid.
To preserve the excellent properties, as important for health as to the gourmet, and bring them unchanged directly to the consumer is now the noble task of Tetra-Brik, that ugly duckling among the beautiful vessels in which olive oil may be found in shops everywhere.

A business idea put into practice

With this basic idea in mind, Martín-Consuegra and Carlos Molina Fernández de los Ríos, also a food professional, founded the firm Compañía Alimentaria del Sur de Europa, S.A. in 1998, in the town of Palma del Río in Córdoba Province. It was not long before other Spanish shareholders joined the venture. Spain is the world's largest olive oil producer, ahead of Italy and Greece, and most Spanish oil is produced in Andalusia. ArteOliva is, therefore, ideally located to package the olive oil from the numerous local producers.

Testing is done on olive oil samples from some 200 oil mills after every harvest and the best are selected from among the Picual, Arbequina, Hojiblanca and Picudo varieties for blending into ArteOliva's fruity, aromatic and slightly piquant extra virgin olive oil.
Before production could begin in 1999, however, it was necessary to guarantee optimum conservation in the packaging. In this matter, ArteOliva turned to studies by the Instituto de la Grasa (Institute of Fats) in Seville, one of the world's most respected olive oil research centers, which recommends packaging that protects the oil from light, air and heat.
The optimum package was obtained by upgrading the standard Tetra-Brik, which is lined with six layers of card, aluminium and plastic, to include a total of ten protective layers. This guaranteed a completely light and airproof container. The modern filling lines installed by ArteOliva at its 14,000 m² (45,931 sq ft) plant, also guarantee that no air enters the Briks with the oil, which is initially stored in enormous stainless steel tanks under inert gas. This further prevents any possibility of oxidization or photo-oxidization during storage, ensuring that the extra virgin olive oil conserves its full range of beneficial qualities for health and flavor.
The special properties of Tetra-Brik also allow packaging of other food products without the addition of preservatives, as the product does not come into contact with either air or light. This was the idea behind the expansion of ArteOliva's product range.

Taste in a Brik

In September 2000, ArteOliva broadened its range to preservative-free mayonnaise and ketchup, following its success with the use of the Tetra-Brik for virgin olive oil. This meant setting up specific, purpose-designed production and filling lines. ArteOliva followed up soon after with *sofrito*, a typical tomato sauce using extra virgin olive oil, as well as other sauces such as *ali-oli* (garlic mayonnaise), cheese sauce, cocktail sauce, béarnaise sauce, hollandaise sauce and tartar sauce. All of these sauces, as well as different types of olive oil, such as PharmaOliva (olive oil sold in pharmacies), ecologically produced Bio-ArteOliva olive oil, as well as standard and extra virgin olive oil with added vitamin A and E, are packaged in Briks of different sizes in order to appeal to different consumer segments ranging from catering firms and restaurants to families and, at the same time, to ensure that the contents do not remain in contact with light or air for too long after the package is opened. A further innovation in the packaging format was introduced specifically for the French market in July 2003. This was the 1000 ml (1 3/4 pt) Tetra-Prisma with a special design and screw-top. In October 2003, this new packaging was awarded the ANUGA 2003 Top Innovation Prize at the ANUGA food fair held in Cologne. ArteOliva currently has satisfied customers in 27 countries worldwide, mostly within the EU, but also in the United States, South and Central America, Russia, Japan and certain Arab countries.

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

WEB SITES

www.arteoliva.com
The ArteOliva web site features a wealth of information about the various products and production processes, the company, health issues, a recipe section and contact details. Some interesting links about olive oil are also available, as is a dictionary of culinary and olive-related terms.
(Spanish)

www.pharmaoliva.com
The PharmaOliva web site stresses the benefits of olive oil as a health tool and consists of four sections: a presentation page, a page listing the beneficial properties of olive oil and the positive effects of the Tetra-Brik as a means of storage, a page with the company's press releases and, finally, a contact form and contact details.
(English, French, Spanish)

Joaquín Gallego

Unsung Heroes

The Sheltering THATCH

They rarely hit the headlines. They don't run companies, write learned papers or deliver lectures. We know next to nothing about them, because they work at waning occupations... shepherds, olive-pickers, fishermen... This new series is about them. In Spain, many people still do these tough, thankless and often dangerous jobs, yet we never give them a thought as we cut into a cheese, dress a salad or open a can of fish. Humble, ordinary people they may be, yet they are experts in their fields. And they are repositories of skills and know-how which society today–so modern, yet in some regards so ignorant–grossly undervalues. We launch the series with a visit to Joaquín Gallego, the last *chozo*-builder in La Serena, a *comarca* (sub-region) of Extremadura where nobody watches the clock.

TEXT
CARLOS TEJERO

TRANSLATION
HAWYS PRITCHARD

PHOTOS
MATÍAS COSTA/ICEX

Though he never went to school, Joaquín is a learned man. In fact, he is one of the most knowledgeable people I've ever met. So it isn't easy to understand what he's saying. One needs to know the jargon of his field of expertise, and I–a committed townie–know nothing about life in the countryside. And that's the sort of life that Joaquín has led: tending pigs, shearing sheep, milking goats, building chozos (shepherd's huts), making cheese, manufacturing charcoal, growing produce, harvesting olives... In the process, he has acquired a wealth of knowledge and skills that are not easy to discuss with someone whose only country lore has been absorbed second-hand through the works of Miguel Delibes (b. Valladolid, 1920; highly regarded novelist whose works portray the rural life of Castile).

And even then, Joaquín's vocabulary is not what I'm used to. The terms he uses for straw, a pigsty, the crude flavor of a badly-made cheese, are not the usual ones but Hardyesque equivalents. Joaquín speaks quickly and with a strong Extremaduran accent, a characteristic of which is to aspirate the (usually silent) letter 'h' slightly and to drop the 's' that occurs at the end of so many words. We are in La Serena (Badajoz), an area which–perhaps fortunately–does not feature on the average tourist itinerary, more focused on the fine historic buildings of Mérida, Guadalupe, Trujillo and Cáceres.

The charm of La Serena

La Serena is an enormous, undulating expanse of pastureland overlying a rocky subsoil which stubbornly refuses to concede defeat to vegetation and determinedly punctuates the terrain with rocky outcrops. These granitic protuberances, though generally smooth and lobular, sometimes stick up out of the ground like pointed fangs, giving the landscape a fantastic cast. This comarca is rich in wildlife, its many marshy areas providing nesting sites for an astonishing variety of birds–eagles, bustards, vultures, storks, cranes... What you might call an ornithologist's paradise. There is very little industry here: just a few cheese and charcuterie factories and oil mills. If the inhabitants of La Serena worry about anything, it is perhaps that things are that bit too quiet. Life is lived at a different pace here, amid holm oak and olive trees stirred by an oregano-scented breeze.

It's December, but it could be spring. The recent rain has turned the grass bright green. Brimful streams wind their way towards the sheep-folds, and the sun shines gently down on the Sierra de Guadámez from a clear sky. At the foot of this range of hills lies Higuera de la Serena, a village of some 1,000 inhabitants and birthplace, in 1933, of Joaquín Gallego, by occupation a... well, it's not that easy to put one's finger on, actually... let's say a countryman; to call him a *chocero* (a man who builds chozos) wouldn't cover the half of it, for that is not how he has earned his living. It has been an important aspect of his life, though, for Joaquín has spent 27 of his 70 years living in chozos.

A tough life and hard work have left their imprint on Joaquín's melancholy face. He was born at a time when Spain was a backward country, particularly so in Extremadura, whose land was then still divided into enormous estates owned by a few, often absentee,

Joaquín only builds miniature chozos now.

aristocratic landlords for whom the lower orders were condemned to work for a pittance. They were not paid enough even to cover basic necessities: "I was thirteen when I got my first shoes," recalls Joaquín. He couldn't walk in them: "They hurt, so I took them off, tied the laces together and slung them over my shoulder".

Joaquín had no childhood: he had to work. Survival took precedence over learning the alphabet. His father taught him the tasks involved in shepherding: "I know everything there is to know about goats and sheep". He also taught him to build chozos, a required skill for living in the hills at a time when the only ways of getting around were on foot or astride a donkey. Distances are vast in Extremadura. The region covers an area similar to that of Switzerland, and (today) has only a million inhabitants. Estates are huge, and in the old days getting to the workplace, perhaps 10 or 12 kilometers (6 or 7 miles) away, from home every day was simply not feasible. So, despite having a permanent home in the village, a shepherd would have to spend long periods living in chozos: "I lived in one for seven years just after getting married".

No, his children weren't born in a chozo. Joaquín and Juliana had nine children, of whom only five survived. "When my wife fell pregnant, I used to send her back to the village and live on my own"; which meant that the workload doubled, and Joaquín would be dropping with fatigue by the end of each day. "Mind you, living in a chozo is quite comfortable." Doesn't it get cold?: "Not at all; in fact we'd sometimes have to douse the fire because it got too hot inside the chozo". And what about hygiene?: "For emptying your bowels, there's the whole countryside to choose from". Yes, but with no running water...: "Spring water runs, doesn't it?" And food?: "Goats' milk, cheese, *migas* (fried bread)... and whatever you could shoot". Joaquín used to shoot hare, rabbit, partridge, and so on, with his single-barreled shotgun. But life was far from idyllic. Joaquín knew what it was like to go hungry, as did most of Spain in the grim period after the Civil War (which ended in 1939). He remembers times when he had only acorns to eat, and how his belly ached afterwards.

Complex construction

But back to the chozo. For readers who don't know what a chozo is, this type of shepherd's hut is a genuine achievement of vernacular architecture. And it needs to be because, as Joaquín points out, a 'manned' chozo, one that is lived in and maintained, can last as long as 40 years. Though Joaquín describes the building process, I find it rather hard to follow in the abstract. What we need is a practical example, so we set off for Las Pedrizas farm, site of a chozo that Joaquín built years ago. Olive trees predominate in the landscape of this part of Extremadura. Although the province is generally wooded with holm oak and cork trees, this is an olive-oil producing area, and its production is covered by PDO (Glossary p. 127) Monterrubio (which takes its name from a nearby village). Despite his age, Joaquín is not the type to sit in the sun on the *plaza* doing nothing, so he spends part of December harvesting olives. "These are ready for *verdeo* (picking as eating-olives)," he says, pointing to branches laden with fruit. Joaquín calls the different

olive varieties by local names: here, Manzanilla becomes *manzanile* and Picual becomes *picúa* (with the stress on the 'u').

We reach the chozo at last, and the first thing that surprises me is its size. Circular in shape, it measures about three meters (8 feet) in diameter and perhaps two-and-a-half meters (10 feet) high. But Joaquín has built bigger ones, some even two-storey and with hipped roofs. Its roof and walls are made of straw so that, viewed from a distance, the chozo looks a delicate building, susceptible to the weather, but this turns out to be far from the truth.

"First, you place the *piernas*" (Joaquín uses the word piernas, which usually means 'legs', in the broader meaning, less familiar to urbanites, of 'a thing which, in conjunction with others, forms or composes a whole'). In this case, they are the long sticks that give the structure its shape. Thirteen vertical piernas are arranged in a circle and made to arch inwards to form the roof. Other piernas are placed horizontally to form three or four rings from base to roof, which perform the function of stabilizing the framework. "Eucalyptus branches are best," explains Joaquín; "they're more flexible".

The walls and roof are made of tightly tied bundles of straw attached to the framework with pita-fiber twine. No wire or metal elements are used at all: the bonds are all secured with cord. The end result is a cladding about a palm's width in thickness which, thanks to the impermeability of the straw fiber, completely insulates the dwelling against wind and rain. In fact, I observe that the straw inside the chozo, which has not been exposed to the elements, is still its original yellow color, as if recently harvested. "If there's no straw, you can also use *anea*" (a type of rush) "but that's not so good because it breeds bugs; straw is cleaner." The chozo's door, about a meter wide and a meter (3.3 feet) high, is made by the same method: a wooden frame is constructed out of branches and covered in straw so that it fits almost hermetically into the opening left in the structure for that purpose. The finished chozo is, then, a sound, weighty shelter which needs no foundations at all: "It rests on the ground". Might it not get blown away? "If it's round, never, because the wind slides over it; but it can happen to four-sided ones"–because the flat surfaces offer resistance to the wind.

Chozos have no windows, nor an opening in the roof for smoke to get out. Yes, indeed, a chozo would have a fire for heating and cooking. But what about the smoke, I ask naively: "It stays at about this height," explains Joaquín, holding up an arm at imagined smoke level, some meter-and-a-half (5 feet) above the floor. Precisely because there is no outlet, the smoke stabilizes at that height. Shameless in my metropolitan ignorance, I labor the point. But that means that you can't stand up: "Of course you can't! When the fire's lit in a chozo, you have to be sitting down!" replies Joaquín, clearly astonished (rather as if I had asked an astronaut if you can walk around in a space station). Shepherds used to build several chozos–one big one, in which they lived, and other smaller ones for storing tools and utensils. If they had to move to a different part of the estate several kilometers away in the hills, the chozo would not be dismantled. "It was less trouble to build another one in the new place that to move the old one." It would take three people who knew what they were doing four or five days to build a chozo like the one described.

A man of the people

Though Joaquín's life has been full of hardship, he is a contented man today. He lives quietly with his wife, Juliana (known as Nana to her nearest and dearest, and declared "the best cheese-maker in La Serena") and his gang: Juan de Dios (a.k.a. Juande), a pensioner; Modesto, who keeps the bar on the plaza; and Paco,

an agricultural technician. Paco is technical secretary of the Regulatory Council of La Serena cheese's Protected Designation of Origin (PDO Quesos de la Serena)–which covers one of Spain's finest cheeses–and he takes Joaquín along with him to some of the activities he stages locally. At a recent show of Extremaduran products organized by Paco in Castuera, he got Joaquín to explain how to build a shepherd's chozo to local children. "There are no choceros left now," laments Modesto, adding, "Nobody's interested in learning how to make them and when Joaquín goes, that'll be the end of it".

We're in Bar Curro. I know it's called that, because Paco told me so, but there is no sign to that effect outside. Not even one saying 'Bar'. Bar Curro occupies the ground floor of the Town Hall (yes, really!), right on Higuera's *plaza mayor*, opposite the church. It's a classic village bar. All Spanish villages have lots of bars, each with a name, but if you ask for "the village bar" there is one specific one to which you will invariably be directed, and that will probably be on the main square. It's not that it's the best, just the one with the longest pedigree, 'the bar that's always been there'. At Bar Curro, Modesto and his wife Angela have prepared lunch in honor of our visit. We are very late: taking the pictures took us longer than expected, and Joaquín and Angela tell us off because she's making *paella*, and the rice, as we all know, has to be freshly cooked. And what's more, the little room we are occupying has to be vacated by five o'clock "because this is the pensioners' bar and the old men can't be put off their game of cards".

As you will doubtless have spotted, paella is not exactly a classic Extremaduran dish, but what does that matter? It is home cooking, food for a group of friends, made with the same maternal care that Angela would put into a Sunday lunch for her own family. And anyway, paella may have come originally from Valencia, but it has become so universal that it now qualifies as a national, 'Spanish', dish. Furthermore–and not many people know this–rice is one of the top products of Extremaduran agriculture. With its annual production of nearly 200,000 tons, Extremadura is well ahead of other regions more famous for rice-growing such as Murcia, the Valencian Community and Catalonia.

The paella arrives done to perfection: the grains of rice separate, light, and perfectly flavored. On the side, Angela serves a tomato salad dressed with garlic and oregano. It's a superb salad, because these tomatoes have flavor. It comes as a surprising reminder that this member of the *Solanaceae* family actually does taste of something in its own right. Discussing this point, Modesto observes that he could have added a few olives to the salad, which prompts Juande to contribute that Joaquín prepares delicious marinated olives. The conversation moves on before I manage to find out how he does them, but Angela brings us a bowl of them–she's got some right there, in the patio–to taste. I pronounce them "strong", though some might call them bitter. "But this is how I like olives," I say truthfully. ""Well of course you do! There's no flavor otherwise!" someone says, amid exclamations of agreement. "That's what tinned olives are for," says Joaquín, dismissively.

I raise the subject of *migas*. Migas (essentially, fried bread-crumbs) are a classic Extremaduran dish, albeit one shared with other regions of Spain. Like the good shepherd he used to be, Joaquín is an expert on the subject. "For migas to turn out well, you have to use good bread. Baked in a wood oven and a day old, no more." It's a simple process: you chop up the bread, then dampen the crumbs slightly, sprinkling on a few drops of water with one hand while

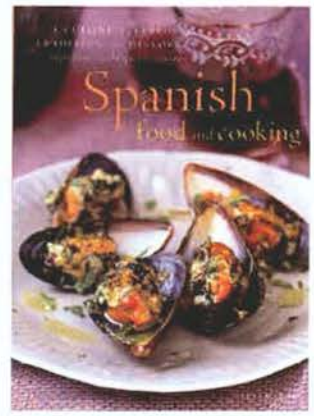
stirring them about with the other to get them uniformly moist; then you put some olive oil in an earthenware *cazuela* or a large frying pan, and fry a few cloves of garlic until golden (it's best to use whole, unpeeled cloves, but to cut an slit in the center of each so that they fry properly inside). Hang on a minute.... Olive oil? Extremadura is pig-rearing country–wouldn't you use good Ibérico lard? "You could, but if there's good olive oil about"–extra-virgin, of which there is plenty in this area–"then you omit the lard". You then remove the garlic cloves and fry the crumbs in the flavored oil, stirring them constantly and crushing them even smaller, until golden. And that's all there is to it. This is the basis of the many migas dishes of rustic pastoral cuisine, variable by the addition of whatever different ingredients are on hand to break the monotony. In Extremadura, migas are very often served with pieces of fried pepper which add a touch of sweetness and counteract the dryness of this dish (we are, after all, talking about spoonfuls of fried bread here). "You can also add pork scratchings, pieces of *chorizo*... some people add *pimentón* (a type of Spanish paprika) to the oil to give a bit more color, and some add grapes" (my personal favorite).

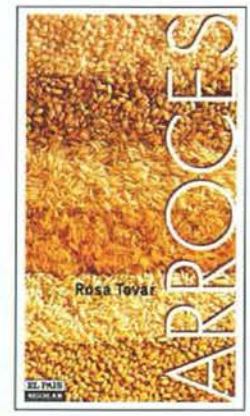
At this point, I notice that Angela is darting back and forth between kitchen and patio. I take it that there is more food on the way. Wafting barbecue smells announce that lamb chops are next on the menu. They are delicious, cooked to perfection, juicy and with a delicate hint of garlic. Anywhere else, chops as large as these, obtained from a different breed of sheep, would be less juicy and have a soapy flavor. But here in Extremadura, the predominant breed is Merino, a sheep of outstanding qualities as regards its wool, milk and meat. I congratulate the cook on her grilling skills, but Angela informs me that the man responsible is out in the patio. At this point, in comes Daniel–I had caught a glimpse of him earlier in the bar–and it turns out that he has been alone out there all through lunch, tending the coals and preparing the chops. Daniel, a man of few words, emigrated to the Basque Country for a while, and became keen on cooking while he was there: "A chop must be beef, and it must be mature," he announces, as if declaring an article of faith.

We have to stop as it's nearly time for the card game. Modesto gives us a present of a *garrafa* (demijohn) of the *vino de pitarra* (homemade wine, typical of this area) that has been such a satisfactory accompaniment to lunch. Juande invites us back for a meal of migas any time we like ("Shall we fix a date and time?" asks Paco) and Angela tells us to come back the following week, because the *matanza* (pig slaughter) starts then. A smiling Joaquín asks: "What channel will we be on?". "It's not for TV, it's for a magazine," Paco explains, perhaps a little late in the proceedings. And we set off for home, charmed by the warmth of their hospitality, and feeling that the day has been too short. We'll certainly be back.

Carlos Tejero *is a journalist and editorial coordinator of* Spain Gourmetour.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS





Text
Vicky Hayward

Relatively speaking, there are still few books about Spanish cooking published in English, so each one is notable. But even taking that into account, the English translation of **elBulli 1998-2002**, published just before Christmas last year, will surely stand out as a landmark (see *Spain Gourmetour* Nº 58 for a full review of the Spanish edition). This must be the first time that there is a worldwide audience, however specialized, which has been waiting to get full direct and accurate access to all the ideas in a Spanish cookbook.

And, happily, the English translation has turned out really well. The team at El Bulli has taken care to keep full control of the quality of translation and it's likely to give readers outside Spain a much truer image of Adrià's character and that of his work. For a start, at least, there'll be more echo of his wit: 'tuberchips', 'ceps slurps' and 'oysters on a trip' are some examples of dishes here and, for those who want to catch it, there's also plenty of humor threaded through the general text. At the same time, there's an obvious emphasis on the big conceptual thinking behind the techniques–and that's a breath of fresh air in a cookbook.

But perhaps what is most important–and also, fortunately, almost unmissable–is a generosity of spirit, a creative ethic and an absolutely clear admiration for the work of contemporary French chefs, who pop up time and again, quoted either directly or via dishes that are concocted as small homages to them, as gestures of affection and respect. Sorry if that comes as a shock for those who would like to present a different story, but the open sense of admiration and close historic links is here in black and white. And who should know better about the way these things have worked? In any case, with no more ado, a fantastic book packed with original thinking about food–and, as in the case of the Spanish edition, well worth the apparently hefty price.

(elBullibooks; www.elbulli.com and www.gourmandbooks.com)

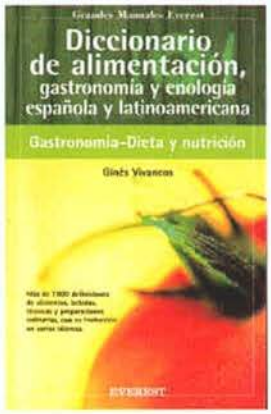
La bodega de Atrio 2003 (The Atrio Wine Cellar 2003) is also a fine art volume, best summed up as restaurateurs José Polo's and Toño Perez's view of life through a wine glass. It is an exceptional view–the core of the book is Atrio's wine list, which contains over 2,000 references from right around the world. Around that are hung carefully selected images, which range from works by Catalan artist Antonio Saura and Irish painter Sean Scully (the latter is wonderfully relevant) to photography by Tayo Acuña. The wine list is thankfully short on pretentious description, but the sheer bravery of Polo's exploratory buying for a small restaurant in Caceres, a historic town in western Extremadura, is really impressive. Take the book as inspiration to live out your dreams or simply admire it as a wonderful, wild way of spending restaurant profits.

(Restaurante Atrio; www.restauranteatrio.com)

Spanish food and cooking, by Pepita Aris, one of the first English writers to focus properly on Iberia, is, in a much more modest way, a welcome addition to English food writing on Spain. The big plus here is the lively illustrated introduction on ingredients, cooking utensils, *fiesta* dishes and so forth–these are packed with basics and appealing informational snippets. There is also an unusual slice through the Spanish repertoire–dishes like *coca* (the flat pastries), broad bean and potato soup, *chorizo* with chestnuts, charred artichokes and *guirlache* (caramelized almonds). In some cases, they are Spanish more in inspiration than anything else, but does it matter? The photographic styling, however, could do with a Spanish lift.

(Lorenz Books; www.lorenzbooks.com)

Two other new Spanish-language books on home cooking are full of life and spirit. **Arroces** (Rices), written by Rosa Tovar, is compact, but full of carefully researched and collected recipes and background cultural pieces, and it gives a panoramic view of rice recipes from around the world. However, nearly a third of the book is dedicated to Spain and this part is perhaps the most interesting. Largely traditional, the

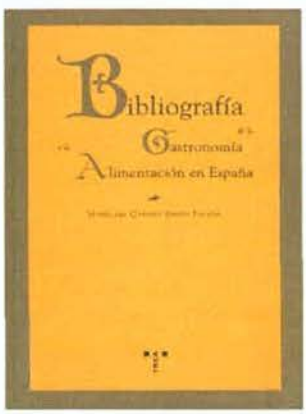


recipes are really well written up, with a combination of anecdote, history and a helpfully practical hands-on understanding of ingredients. *(El País-Aguilar; www.elpaisaguilar.es).*

Las cocineras de Sils is one of a mushrooming genre of cookbooks written collectively by Spanish 'grandmothers' intent on sharing their secrets on paper. In this case the book started its life in Sils, a tiny village in La Selva, one of the old *comarcas*, or districts, of Gerona province, Catalonia. There is a wonderful simplicity to the 200 recipes and yet at the same time a wonderfully sophisticated integrated understanding of produce and cooking that could only emerge from decades of hands-on work in the kitchen. *(RBA Libros S.A., 2003; rba-libros@rba.es)*

Two new books which will stand as essential works of reference for anyone working with Spanish food are Ginés Vivancos' **Diccionario de alimentación, gastronomía y enología española y latinoamericana** (Dictionary of Spanish and Latin American Food, Gastronomy and Oenology), published by *Editorial Everest (www.everest.es)*, and Maria del Carmen Simón Palmer's **Bibliografía de la gastronomía y la alimentación en España** (Bibliography of Gastronomy and Food in Spain), published by *Ediciones Trea S.L. (trea@trea.es)*. Ginés Vivancos' dictionary, with over 7,000 definitions of food and wine terms, is the first of its kind and Simón Palmer's work is even more remarkable, describing in brief over 5,500 books on all kinds of culinary and wine matters published between the 15th and the 20th centuries. Mercifully, the book is triple-indexed, by people, places and general subjects. (See also her article in this issue, page 64).

Finally, for epicureans, the two basic annual bibles to good eating around Spain are also once again on the market: firstly, Rafael García Santos' book **Lo mejor de la gastronomía 2004** (The Best of Gastronomy 2004), a highly personal but very well argued view of selected chefs both high and low, as well as wines and food products, and, secondly, **Gourmetour 2004**, which is less discerning and detailed, but gives far wider coverage of both restaurants and hotels. Buy both as a good and reasonably priced investment to follow what is really going on in Spain at the moment.



In Brief

FOODWAYS

Las cucharas de la tribu (The Tribe's Spoons) Juan Luis Suárez Granda's general look at social eating and cooking habits is mainly but not exclusively focused on Spain. Perhaps the single most interesting element is the chapter on 'Edible Texts', surveying works from the 11th century to contemporary writing, and which is worthy of expansion into a book in its own right. *(Ediciones Trea, S.L.; trea@trea.es)*

CHEFS' COOKING

Dieta del Cantábrico. Aprender a comer (The Cantabrian Diet. Learn to Eat) Asturian-born Jesús Bernard García, a distinguished specialist in nutrition and dietetics, has written a small and authoritative compendium detailing the health value of local produce. But for readers abroad the second part of this book is probably that of greatest interest. In it chefs from regions running along the Cantabrian coast–that is, Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria and the Basque Country–give recipes ranging from the traditional (for example, boiled ham with turnip greens) to the avant-garde. *(Ediciones Nobel; www.ed-nobel.es)*

Mis mejores recetas con rape y merluza (My Best Recipes with Monkfish and Hake) In the seventh of twelve cheerful step-by-step guides to stylish modern cooking, Íñigo Pérez turns his attention to two of Spain's best-loved sea fish. For each fish there is a first section of recipes designed to show off the best quality fish very simply—and then a second one of more dressed-up sauced dishes. They all make good reading, but some of them assume considerable cooking knowledge. *(Ediciones Nowtilus; www.nowtilus.com)*

Recetas prácticas para todos los días (Practical Everyday Recipes) Iñaki Oyarbide cooks at Principe de Viana, the Basque-Navarrese restaurant set up by his father Jesús in Madrid in 1963. But in his introduction to this anthology of 160 recipes he stresses his family's links to more down-to-earth cooking–and that, perhaps, is just as important in his very practical down-to-earth book designed for home cooks. The 35 fish dishes stand out for their straightforward flavors, and there are delicious puddings, too. *(Editorial Everest; www.everest.es)*

PRODUCE AND FOODS

La cocina del aceite de oliva (Olive Oil Cuisine) Spiral-bound, updated, edited and revamped, here are the olive oil recipes and the relevant introductory text from Lourdes March's and Alicia Rios' book *El Libro del aceite y la aceituna*, first published in 1989. As always with these authors, the recipes are reliably good. Although the dishes are drawn from right around the Mediterranean, many of them are Spanish. *(Biblioteca Espiral; www.alianza.com)*

REGIONAL COOKING

Delicias culinarias con nombre sorprendente (Culinary Delights with Surprising Names) Here we have *atascaburras* (female donkey constipator), *sopas de gato* (cat's soups), *feos de Benavente* (ugly ones from Benavente), *pedos de monja* (nuns' farts) and another 70 recipes picking up on Spaniards' down-to-earth sense of humor. The interesting thing is that the idea of a collection of recipes with funny names should have led the author to so many interesting old-fashioned dishes. So, for example, to run through the dishes above, we have, first, garlicked potato, salt-cod and olive oil purée; second, garlic soup; third, almond cookies; and, finally, fried choux puffs. *(Editorial Everest; www.everest.es)*

El Gran Libro de la Cocina Española. Las 450 mejores recetas (The Big Book of Spanish Cooking. The 450 Best Recipes) The title says it all: here is a brick of a book, which compiles the best recipes from Everest's long-running series on Spanish regional cooking. Unfortunately the general introductory texts, often the most interesting part of the original books, have been dropped, but in any case this is a good overview since the choice drew on expert knowledge for each region and includes lots of lesser known dishes.
(Editorial Everest; www.everest.es)

El Libro de la Repostería Tradicional (The Book of Traditional Sweet Things) This recipe collection of distinctly Iberian sweet goodies such as candied egg yolks, lard-enriched yeastbreads, olive oil bread, *turrones* and marzipans, junkets, fried and baked pastries, and so on, identifies each one by region. There are god suggestions about what to drink with each of them and a good rundown on ingredients at the end of the book.
(Ediciones Robinbook; www.robinbook.com

WINE

Vinos de España. Ribera del Duero (Wines from Spain. Ribera del Duero) In the latest book of this series, oenologist Lluís Manel Barba turns his attention to Ribera del Duero, the Castilian vineyard DO that won recognition for its red wines in the 1970s. Barba's approach is usefully selective–this is the professional knowledge one really values–and gives details on key bodegas. Barba also sets his choice in a carefully painted context of culture and geography.
(Ediciones Robinbook; www.robinbook.com

TRAVEL AND GUIDEBOOKS.

Dónde comer bien en Cataluña (Where to Eat Well in Catalonia) **Dónde comer bien en el Pais Vasco** (Where to Eat Well in the Basque Country) This new series of pocket guides covers not just the menu, cellar and food specialities, but also the décor and the staff. It takes away some of the pleasure of personal exploration, but it also ensures wonderfully serious eating on either a holiday or work trip to Spain.
(Editorial Everest; www.everest.es)

Hoteles de esquí y montaña (Mountain and Skiing Hotels) An excellent guide to 60 hotels for skiing buffs–all are photographed in their setting and accompanied by basic data on the ski-slopes of different areas.
(El País-Aguilar; www.elpaisaguilar.es)

Las Tabernas del casco histórico de Córdoba (The Taverns in Cordoba's Old Town) This might sound like an eccentric topic for a guidebook, but it makes very good general reading, roaming between anecdotes about life in the taverns to the origin of tapas and the character of Cordoba's different old quarters.
(Ayto. de Córdoba; informacion@turismodecordoba.org)

35 Rutas de fin de semana por poco dinero (35 Low-cost Weekend Trips) Although this is billed as a guide for budget weekends away, it also gets under the skin of the different areas. Generally they have been picked as unspoiled areas of countryside and village, with a good balance of beautiful landscape and cultural sights.
(El País-Aguilar; www.elpaisaguilar.es)

Rutas del Sabor. Andalucía (Routes of Taste. Andalucia)
Rutas del Sabor. Cataluña (Routes of Taste. Catalonia) This series of guidebooks, with road routes that loop between the regions' cultural and gastronomic meccas, is unique in its combined coverage of food producers, fairs, shops and wines, and it also usefully links up lesser known villages to better known tourist spots. However, you need separate proper maps and there are some surprising gaps–so if you are using the books, ask

locally about other food producers.
(El País-Aguilar; www.elpaisaguilar.es)

Rutas por Castilla y León (Routes for Discovering Castile-Leon) Although most visitors to the northern Spanish plains spend all their time in its magnificent medieval cities, there is a lot more to discover–and the idea of this book is to pick out and link up highlights via road routes.
(El País-Aguilar; www.elpaisaguilar.es)

ALSO RECEIVED

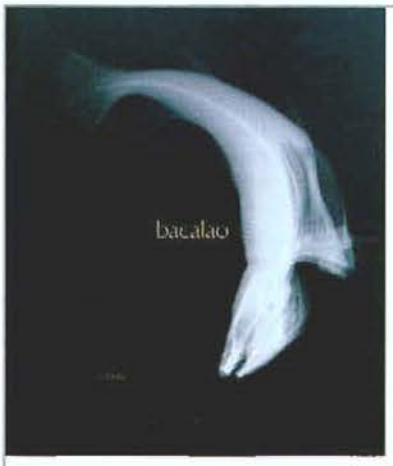
El Camino de Santiago a pie (The Road to Santiago on Foot) Step-by-step guidebook to walking the pilgrimage route to Santiago, republished for the Holy Year of 2004. See also review in *Spain Gourmetour* N° 47.
(El País-Aguilar; www.elpaisaguilar.es)

Guía grupo Mondial Assistance de Hoteles y Restaurantes de España (Mondial Assistance Guide to Hotels and Restaurants in Spain) New edition covering 2,500 hotels and 2,502 restaurants–the most comprehensive coverage of any guide on the market, although descriptions are basic. See also review in *Spain Gourmetour* N° 55.
(El País-Aguilar; www.elpaisaguilar.es)

Guía Peñín de los vinos de España 2004 (Peñín's Guide to Wines from Spain) Very comprehensive annual guide with brief notes and tasting marks for over 5,000 wines, and a list of the best wines of the year. See also review in *Spain Gourmetour* N° 55.
(Pi & Erre Ediciones; www.elvino.com)

Guía Proensa de los mejores vinos de España 2004 (Proensa's Guide to Spain's Best Wines 2004) The 2004 edition of this incisive small guide starts with a look back over events the past year and then goes on to review over 600 wines, organized by vineyard area and *bodega*. See also review in *Spain Gourmetour* N° 55.
(Andrés Proensa, S.L., proensa@telefonica.net)

Los 100 mejores vinos (espumosos) (The Hundred Best Sparkling Wines) A large-format paperback guide with pictures to a hundred of the best *cavas* and sparkling wines.
(Editorial Everest; www.everest.es)



Bacalao

The cover of the book says it all: the gracefully arched backbone of a fish bared for us precisely, scientifically and with an aesthetic delicacy that fuses past, present and future. And so it is, too, once you get inside this deeply satisfying anthology. Entitled *bacalao*, or salt-cod, it has been drawn together by a young Basque creative team called Navarrorum Tabula, led by Andoni Aduriz (*Spain Gourmetour* Nº 53), Santos Bregaña and Edorta Agirre. What makes this book impressive is not so much the central question–there have been quite a few Spanish books on salt-cod–as the depth of research behind the choice of contributors, some 33 in all, who happily hedgehop between history and science, geography and autobiography, cookery and the visual arts. Equally important are the book's central values and priorities. Take as an example the starting point: the sea, the ecology of cod fishing, and the lives of those who have gone to sea to catch and to salt cod. From here the book opens out to embrace other approaches in long and short essays written by an international range of authors among whom one might pick out–just to give a general idea–Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, Hervé This, Álvaro Cunqueiro and Mark Kurlansky. The scientific analyses of salting are also fascinating. Then come the recipes, over 70 in all, and here one can tell that the authors do not just work with food–they clearly live and breathe it, so careful is the choice and treatment of each recipe. There are traditional ones, contemporary ones in styles dedicated to chefs as small homages, and finally there are Basque, Catalan, French, Italian, Portuguese, Swedish and English recipes from restaurant cooks who have been invited to give recipes. All of these have been reinterpreted by David de Jorge Eceizabarrena, who cooked with Andoni at Mugaritz in its early years. He has added a really valuable contemporary cut and coherence in the writing-up of the recipes that makes complex dishes seem accessible outside the professional sphere. A final word for the design, beautiful, but also echoing the book's ideas and messages with its own typographic language. The good news also goes much further–this book is the first in a series of monographs on culture and gastronomy entitled *Tabula*. All in all, a book to be celebrated–and, perhaps, translated?
(Monteagud Editores S.A.; www.monteagud.com)

EXPORTERS

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

Food Products

Melón de la Mancha

Cooperativa Ceresco
Tel: (+34) 926 610 279
Fax: (+34) 926 614 936
ceresco@telefonica.net

Cooperativa Santiago Apóstol
Tel: (+34) 926 511 519
Fax: (+34) 926 514 126
stgapostol@ucaman.es

Source: Asociación para la Promoción del Melón de La Mancha (Association for the Promotion of Melón de la Mancha)
Tel: (+34) 925 210 921
Fax: (+34) 925 210 916
www.igpmelonmancha.com

Vinegars

Firms mentioned in the article:

Agustí Torelló
Tel: (+34) 938 911 173
Fax: (+34) 938 912 616
agustitorello-sa@troc.es
www.agustitorello-sa.com

Cellers Puig i Roca
Tel: (+34) 977 666 910
Fax: (+34) 977 666 590
avgvstvs@wanadaoo.es

Dionisio de Nova García
Tel: (+34) 926 313 248
Fax: (+34) 926 322 813
ta@agrobio.dionisos.com
www.agrobio.dionisos.com

Gallega de Bebidas, S.A. (Gabesa)
Tel: (+34) 981 600 069
Fax: (+34) 981 601 260
gabesa@gabesa.com
www.gabesa.com

Manuel Busto Amandi, S.A.
Tel: (+34) 985 891 197
Fax: (+34) 985 891 409
mayador@mayador.com

Veá, S.A.
Tel: (+34) 973 126 000
Fax: (+34) 973 126 225
info@vea.es
www.vea.es

Vinagres Ovilo, S.L.
Tel: (+34) 918 737 505
Fax: (+34) 918 746 161
ovilo@reova.com

Regulatory Councils:

Consejo Regulador DO Jerez-Xérès-Sherry y Manzanilla
Tel: (+34) 956 332 050
Fax: (+34) 956 338 908
vinjerez@sherry.org
www.sherry.org

Consejo Regulador DO Condado de Huelva
Tel: (+34) 959 410 322
Fax: (+34) 959 413 859
consejoregulador@vinoscondadohuelva.com
www.vinoscondadohuelva.com

Asociación de Elaboradores y Envasadores de Vinagres (Vinegar Producers and Bottlers Association)
Tel: (+34) 932 072 516
Fax: (+34) 932 071 611
vinagres@bonmarcor.es

Wines

Rosés

Bodegas mentioned in the article:

DO ALICANTE

Bodegas Gutiérrez de la Vega
Tel: (+34) 966 405 266
Fax: (+34) 966 405 257
gutivega@arrakis.es

Regulatory Council:

Consejo Regulador DO Alicante
Tel: (+34) 965 984 478
Fax: (+34) 965 229 295
crdo.alicante@crdo-alicante.org

DO ALELLA

Roura
Tel: (+34) 933 527 456
Fax: (+34) 933 524 339
japsa.paqui@terra.es
www.roura.com

Regulatory Council:

Consejo Regulador DO Alella
Tel: (+34) 935 552 854
Fax: (+34) 935 400 328
doalella@doalella.com
www.doalella.com

DO ALMANSA

Bodegas Piqueras
Tel: (+34) 967 341 482
Fax: (+34) 967 345 484
bodpiqueras@almansa.org
www.bodegaspiqueras.es

Regulatory Council:

Consejo Regulador DO Almansa
Tel: (+34) 967 340 258
Fax: (+34) 967 345 480

DO CALATAYUD

Bodegas San Alejandro, S. Coop.
Tel: (+34) 976 892 205
Fax: (+34) 976 890 540
bodegas@san-alejandro.com
www.san-alejandro.com

Regulatory Council:

Consejo Regulador DO Calatayud
Tel: (+34) 976 884 260
Fax: (+34) 976 885 912
comercial.crdo@efor

DO CAMPO DE BORJA

Bodegas Aragonesas
Tel: (+34) 976 862 153
Fax: (+34) 976 862 363
bodegasaragon@bodegasaragonesas.com
www.bodegasaragonesas.com

Crianzas y Viñedos Santo Cristo, S. Coop
Tel: (+34) 976 869 696
Fax: (+34) 976 868 097
info@bodegas-santo-cristo.com
www.bodegas-santo-cristo.com

Regulatory Council:

Consejo Regulador DO Campo de Borja
Tel: (+34) 976 852 122
Fax: (+34) 976 868 806
vino@campodeborja.com
www.campodeborja.com

DO CIGALES

Bodegas Frutos Villar
Tel: (+34) 983 586 868
Fax: (+34) 983 580 180
frutosvillar@eims.net

Bodegas Lezcano Lacalle
Tel: (+34) 983 586 940
Fax: (+34) 983 586 697
oficina@bodegaslezcano.com
www.bodegaslezcano.com

Regulatory Council:

Consejo Regulador DO Cigales
Tel: (+34) 983 580 074
Fax: (+34) 983 586 590
consejo@do-cigales.es
www.do-cigales.es

DO LA MANCHA

Coop. Ntra. Sra. del Rosario
Tel: (+34) 967 166 066
Fax: (+34) 967 165 032

Regulatory Council:

Consejo Regulador DO La Mancha
Tel: (+34) 926 541 523
Fax: (+34) 926 588 040
consejo@lamanchado.es
www.lamanchado.es

DO MÁLAGA

Friedrich Schatz
Tel: (+34) 952 871 313
Fax: (+34) 952 161 825
bodega@f-schatz.com
www.f-schatz.com

Regulatory Council:

Consejo Regulador DO Málaga
Tel: (+34) 952 228 493
Fax: (+34) 952 227 990
info@vinomalaga.com
www.vinomalaga.com

DO MANCHUELA

San Antonio Abad, Sdad. Coop.
Tel: (+34) 967 483 023
Fax: (+34) 967 483 536
antonioabad@ucaman.es
www.lamanchuela.net

Vitivinos Anunciación, S.C.L.
Tel: (+34) 963 483 114
Fax: (+34) 967 483 964
vitivinos@wanadoo.es

Regulatory Council:

Consejo Regulador DO Manchuela
Tel: (+34) 967 477 535
Fax: (+34) 967 477 505
domanchuela@wanadoo.es
www.do-manchuela.com

DO MÉNTRIDA

Cooperativa Condes de Fuensalida
Tel: (+34) 925 784 823
Fax: (+34) 925 784 823
condesdefuensalida@hotmail.com
www.condesdefuensalida.iespana.es

Regulatory Council:

Consejo Regulador DO Méntrida
Tel: (+34) 925 785 185
Fax: (+34) 925 784 154
d.o.mentrida@retemail.com

DO MONTSANT

Cellers Capafons-Osso
Tel: (+34) 977 771 793
Fax: (+34) 977 757 945
cellers@capafons-osso.com
www.capafons-osso.com

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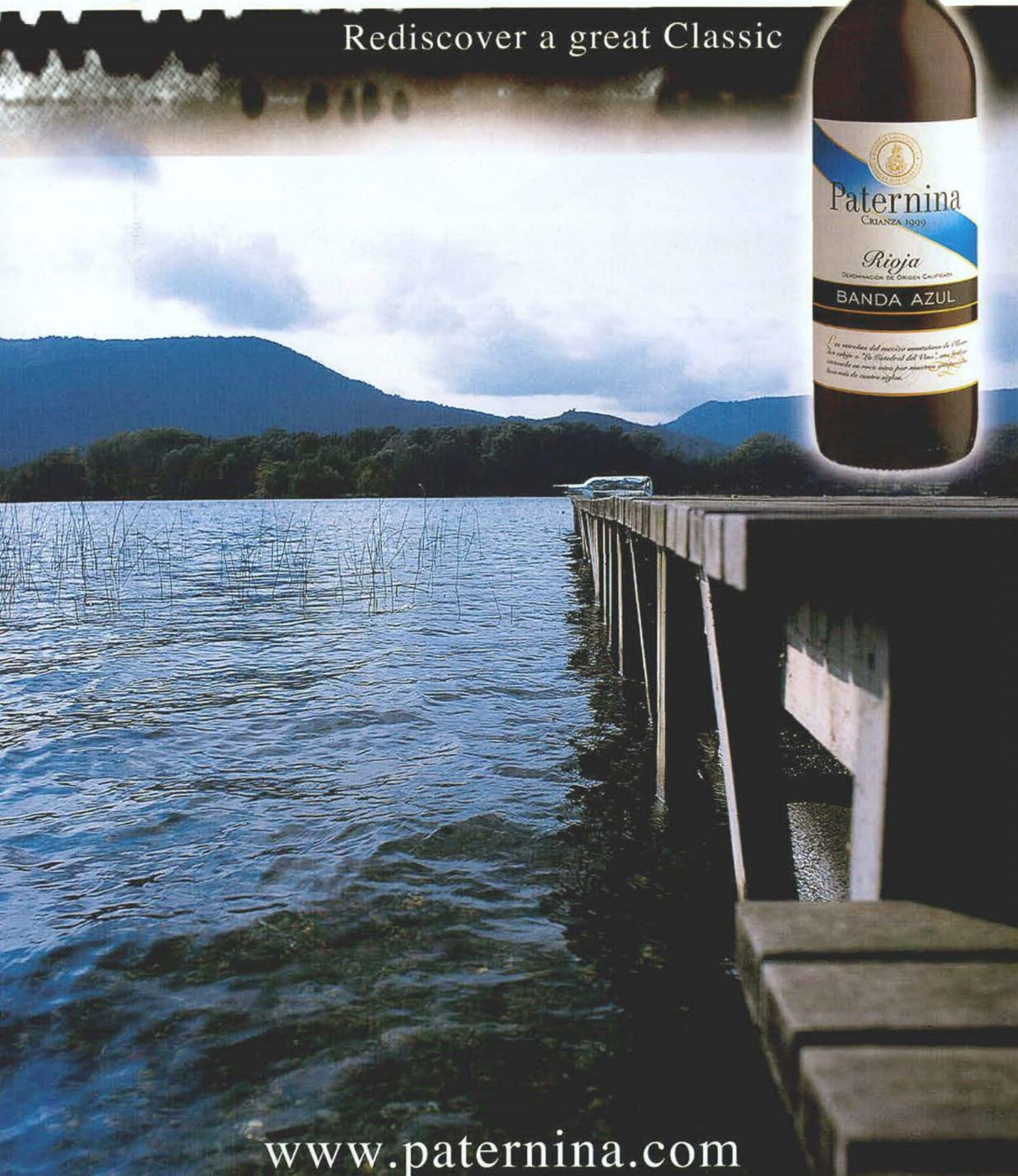

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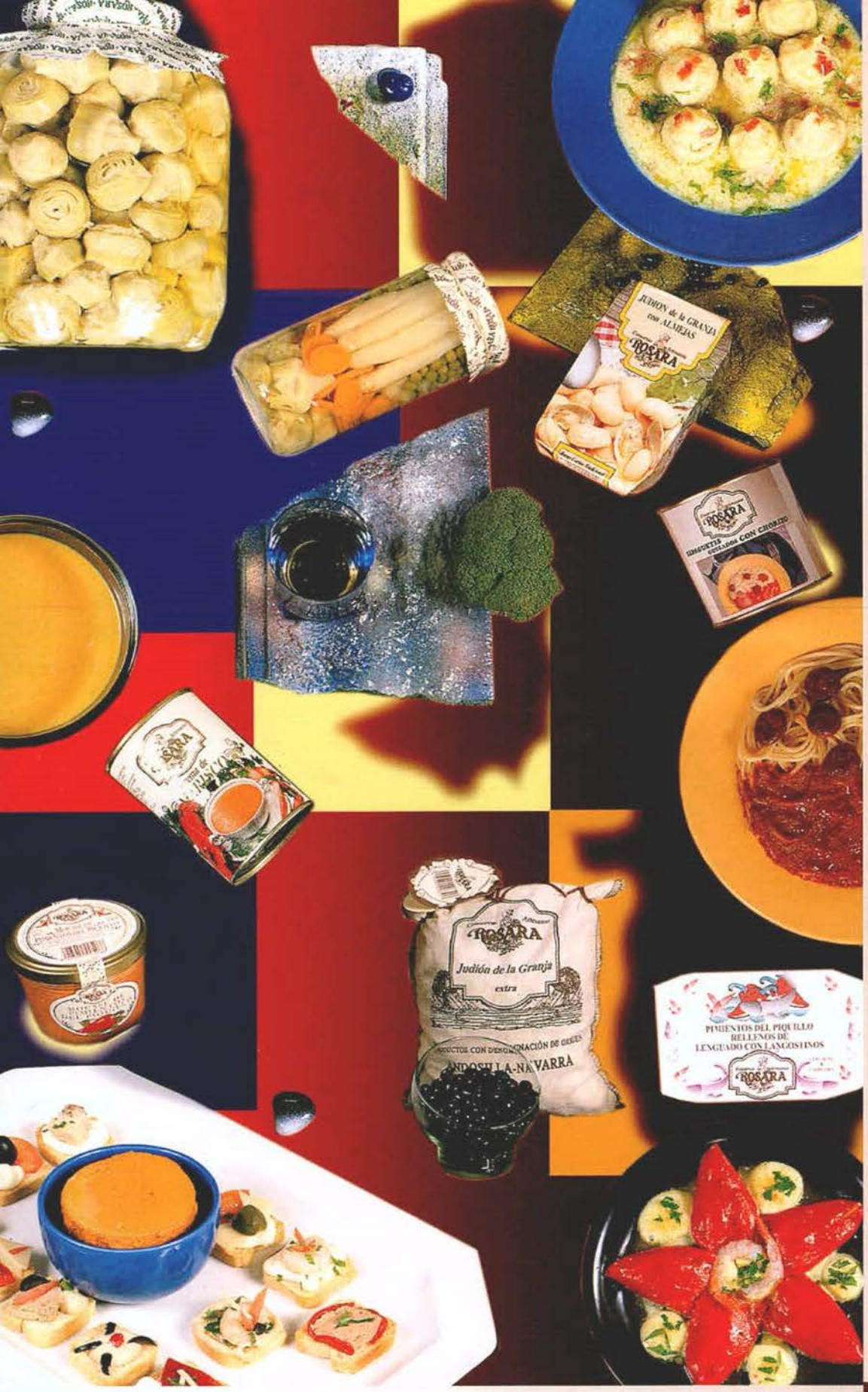

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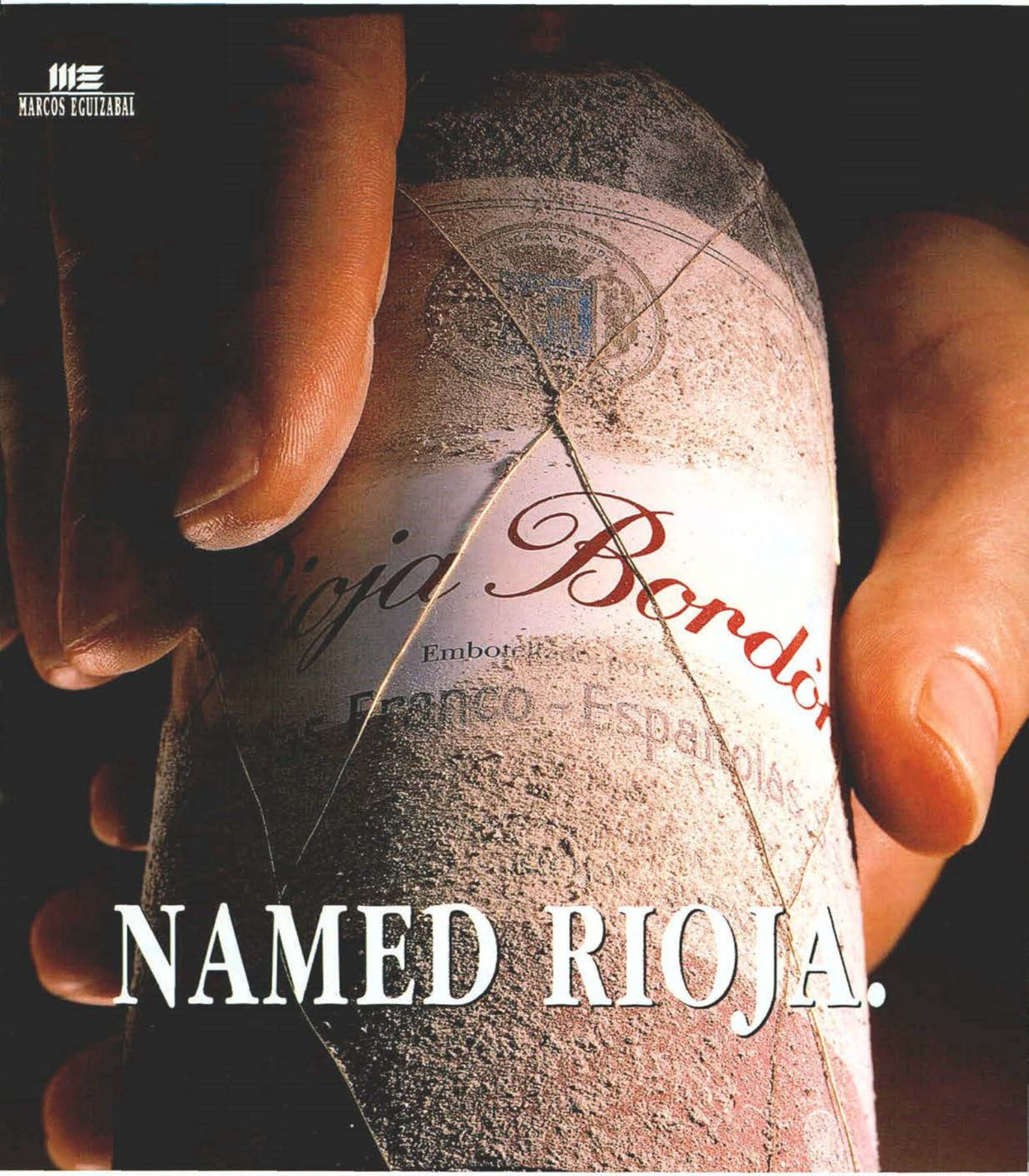

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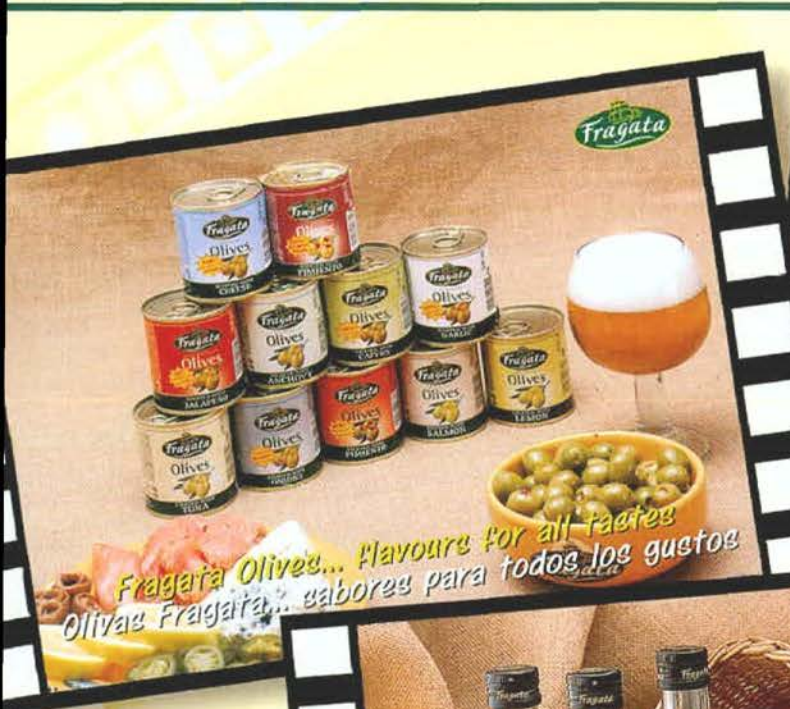

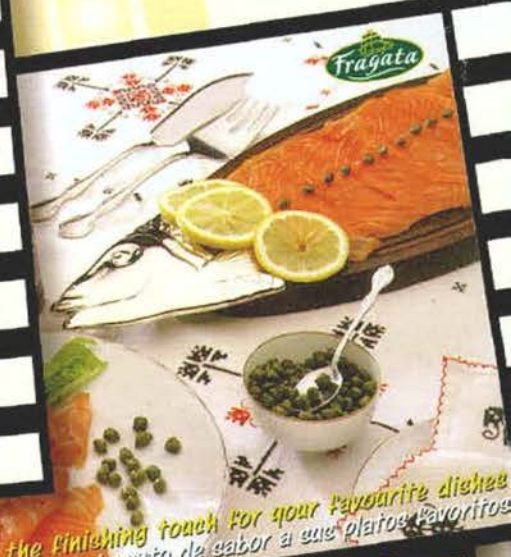

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This is the Designation of Origin for sparkling wines produced by the traditional method, that is to say, that the secondary fermentation takes place in the same bottle in which it is sold. The cava demarcated region is in several zones, the most important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

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 30% of the wine may be removed from the solera in any one year.

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 DOs 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.

Designation of Origin (DO) and Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)

Designation of Origin is the official Spanish denomination 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, manufacturing and aging methods. In recent years the term Designation of Origin (DO) has been replaced by Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) in order to adapt to EU terminology, but only when referring to food products. For wine the term Designation of Origin (DO) is still in use, because the terminology in this sector is not unified in the EU.

Qualified Designation of Origin (DOCa)

A DOCa is a Designation of Origin that fulfills the strictest requirements, among which should be highlighted the following:

The price of the grapes used in winemaking must be greater than 200% of the national average price.

Only wines bottled exclusively at the original wineries will be sold.

At least 90% of the vineyard dedicated to winemaking must be inscribed in the registry of DOCa vines; and in the registry of wineries, it must be stipulated that these carry out at least 90% of the wine production within the geographical unit.

Quality control of the vines must be carried out by the regulatory council, batch by batch and with a volume less than or equal to 1,000 hectoliters per batch.

At present, there are two DOCa for wine in Spain: the Rioja DOCa and the Priorato DOCa.

Protected Geographic Identification (PGI)

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

Each DO, DOCa, PDO or PGI is managed by a *Consejo Regulador* (CR) or Regulatory Council, which sees to the enforcement of the regulations.

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Illustration: Alfredo

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Erratum

In the last issue of Spain Gourmetour the photos on pages 61 and 66-67 were credited erroneously. The photographer is Amador Toril/ICEX.

The Taste Of The Mediterranean

The products of La Pedriza are fruits of a unique nature, that of the south of Spain. Selected one by one and enriched in the purest tradition of the Mediterranean. Specially made for those who wish to enjoy the best of a thousand years of a cuisine which is conquering consumers all over the world.

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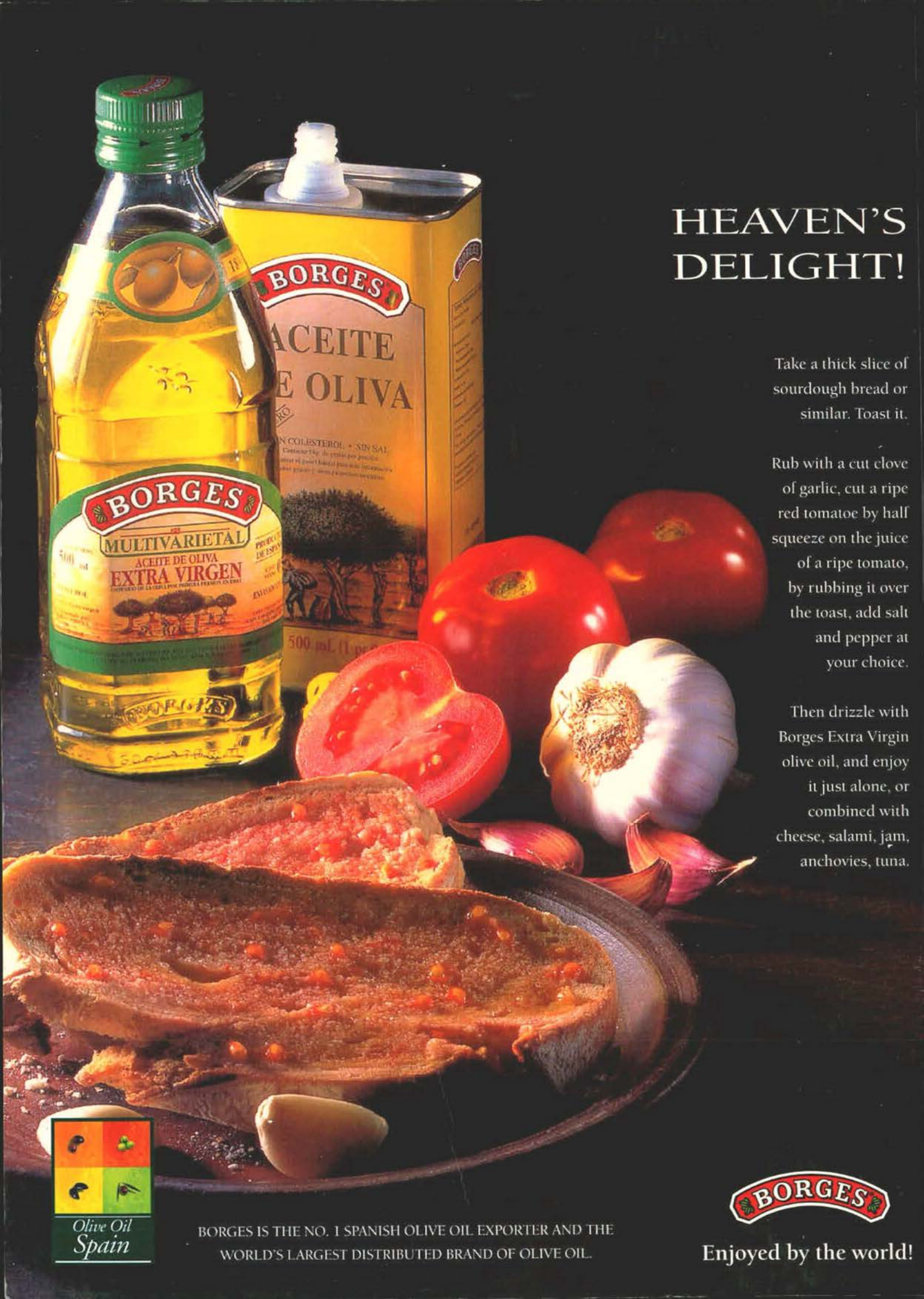

HEAVEN'S DELIGHT!

Take a thick slice of sourdough bread or similar. Toast it.

Rub with a cut clove of garlic, cut a ripe red tomatoe by half squeeze on the juice of a ripe tomato, by rubbing it over the toast, add salt and pepper at your choice.

Then drizzle with Borges Extra Virgin olive oil, and enjoy it just alone, or combined with cheese, salami, jam, anchovies, tuna.

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