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SPAIN GOURMETOUR

Food, Wine & Travel Magazine

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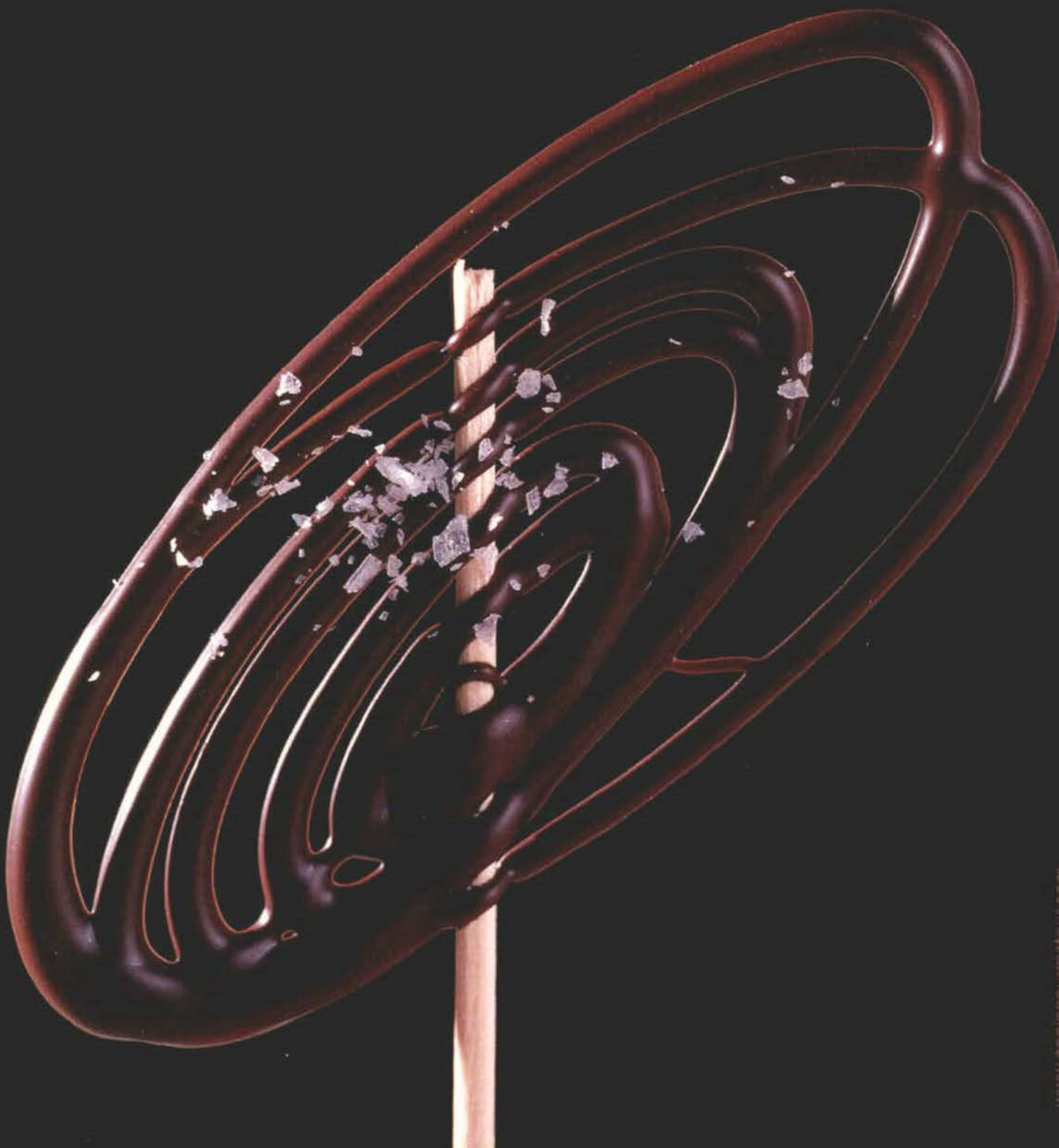
The Wines of Don Quixote's La Mancha

Culinary Schools. Getting the Spanish 'Toque' of Class

Staying Sharp: The Spanish Levante and its Lemons

Chocolateros: Spain's Chocolate Maestros



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1243: Lemon trees first cultivated in Spain. **1325:** Port of Lequeitio founded. **1585:** First consignment of cacao arrives in Seville. **1605:** *Don Quixote* first published. What connects all these dates? Just the fact that in 2004, Spain—an old European country that has now been part of the modern world for over half a century—still knows how to capitalize on its past in ways relevant to the 21st century.

Today, chocolate is clad in and filled with the most exotic ingredients (saffron, sunflower seeds, pepper, olive oil): the area around Barcelona is where to find it at its most exciting. Catalonia is also one of our gourmet shopping destinations, as are the Balearic Islands and Valencia. Nearby, a little further south, is the lemon-growing area of Murcia, while to the northwest is La Mancha, Don Quixote territory, today the scene of cutting-edge wine-growing activity.

This issue's Big Names in Wine is Álvaro Palacios; he carries his faith in ancestral values as far as using Roman methods to work his León vineyards. Another of Spain's local traditions, *tapas*, is being spread farther afield courtesy of Lizarran's franchises in Mexico, Germany, Italy and, soon, France.

We do feature one new 21st-century phenomenon, though: Spanish cookery schools, which are starting to be taken seriously on the international scene. And we close with a look at albacore tuna-fishing and a distress flare from an anonymous—or at least unsung—fisherman.

Cathy Boirac
Editor-in-chief

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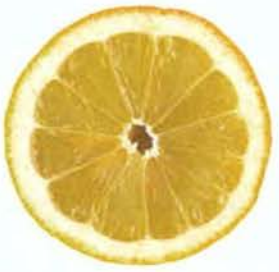

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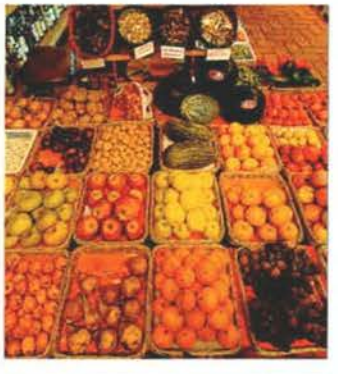

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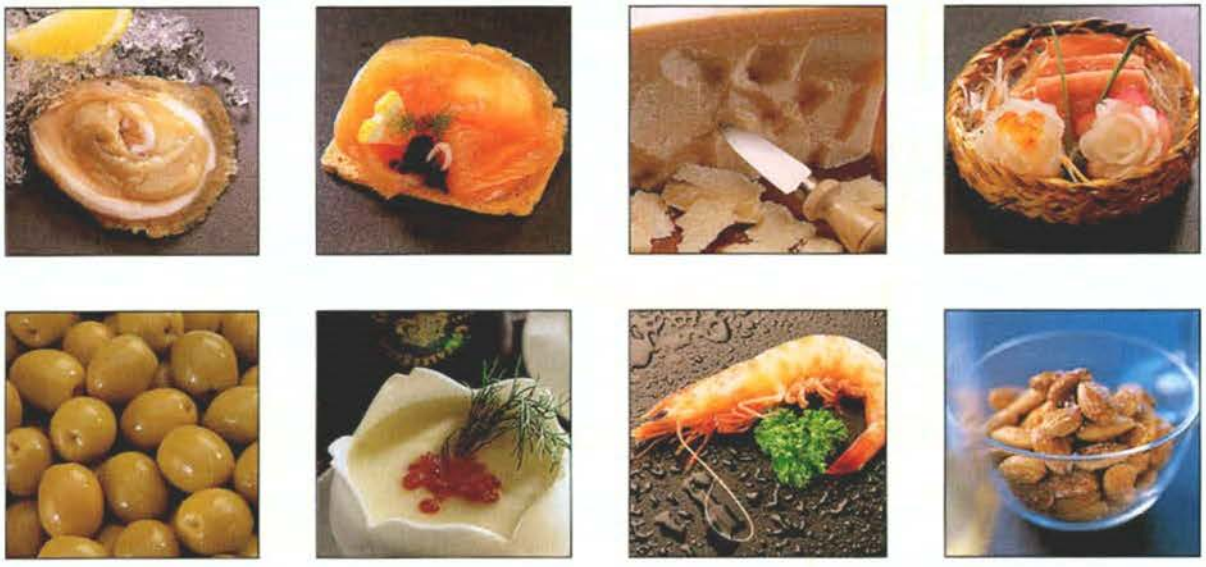

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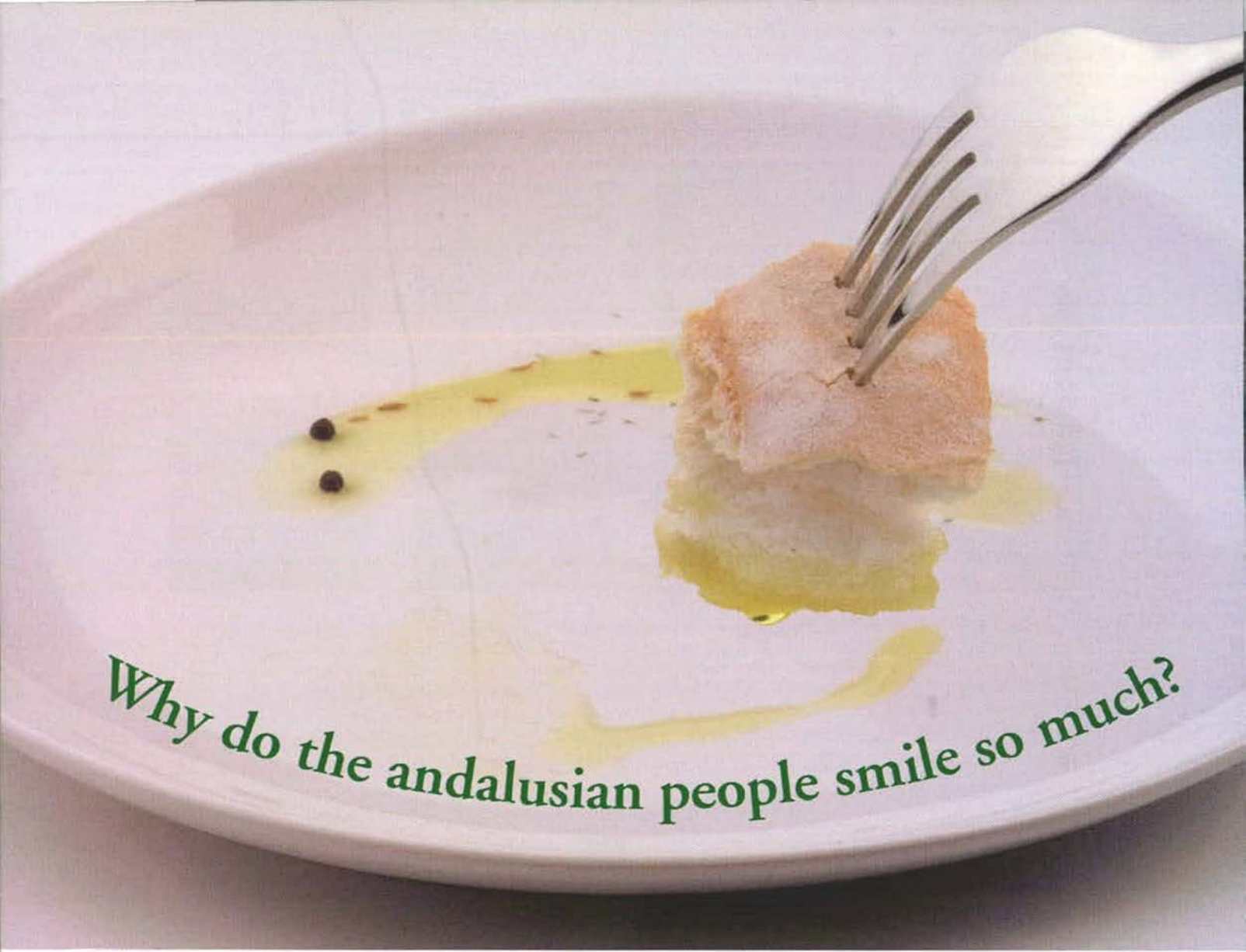

Andalusia is the southernmost region of the Iberian peninsula and the main exponent of the Mediterranean diet, rich in healthy and natural products: fruit, vegetables, fish, olive oil, garlic, cereals... and notable wines such as Sherry, Montilla-Moriles, and other no less important from Huelva and Malaga. 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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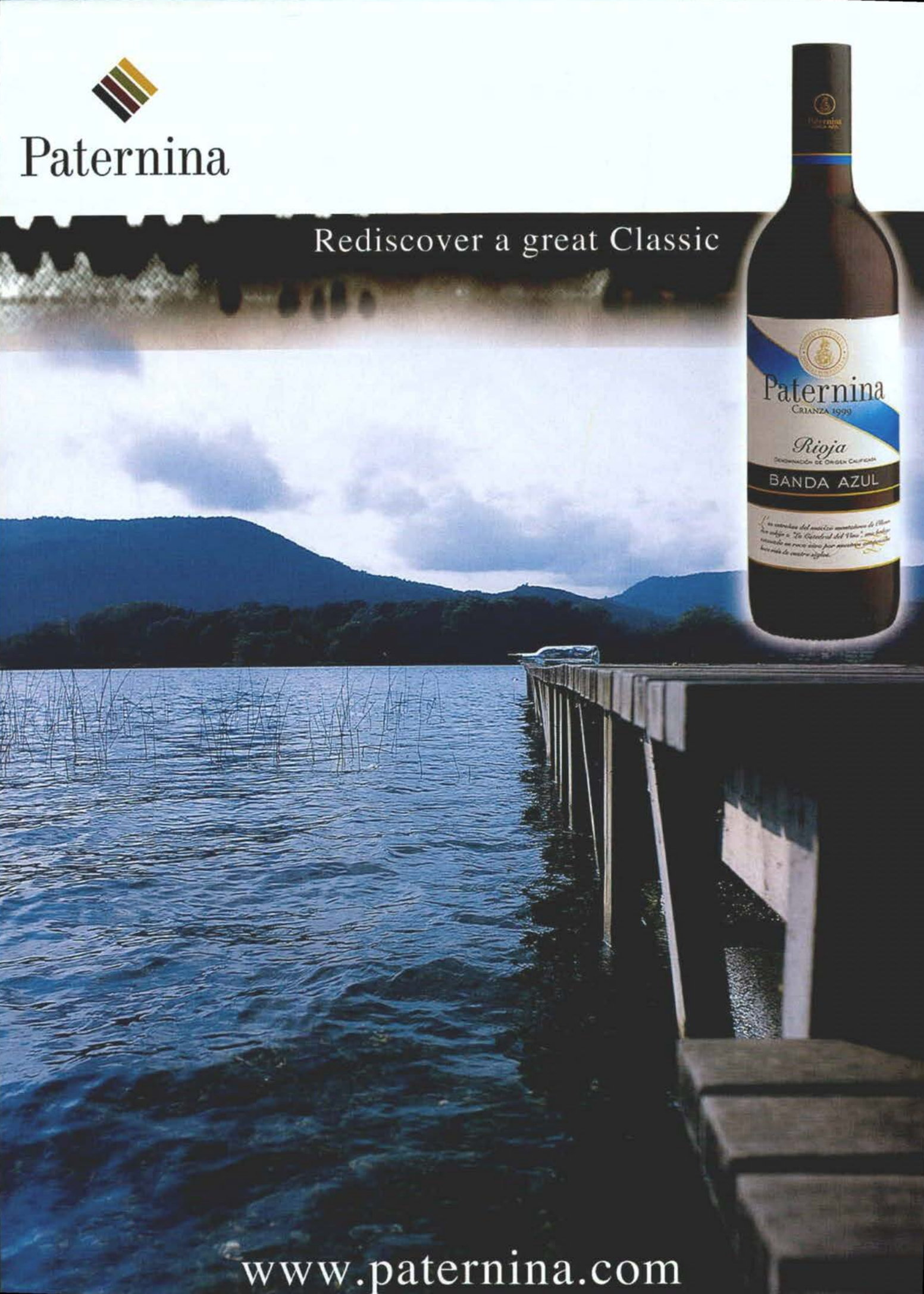
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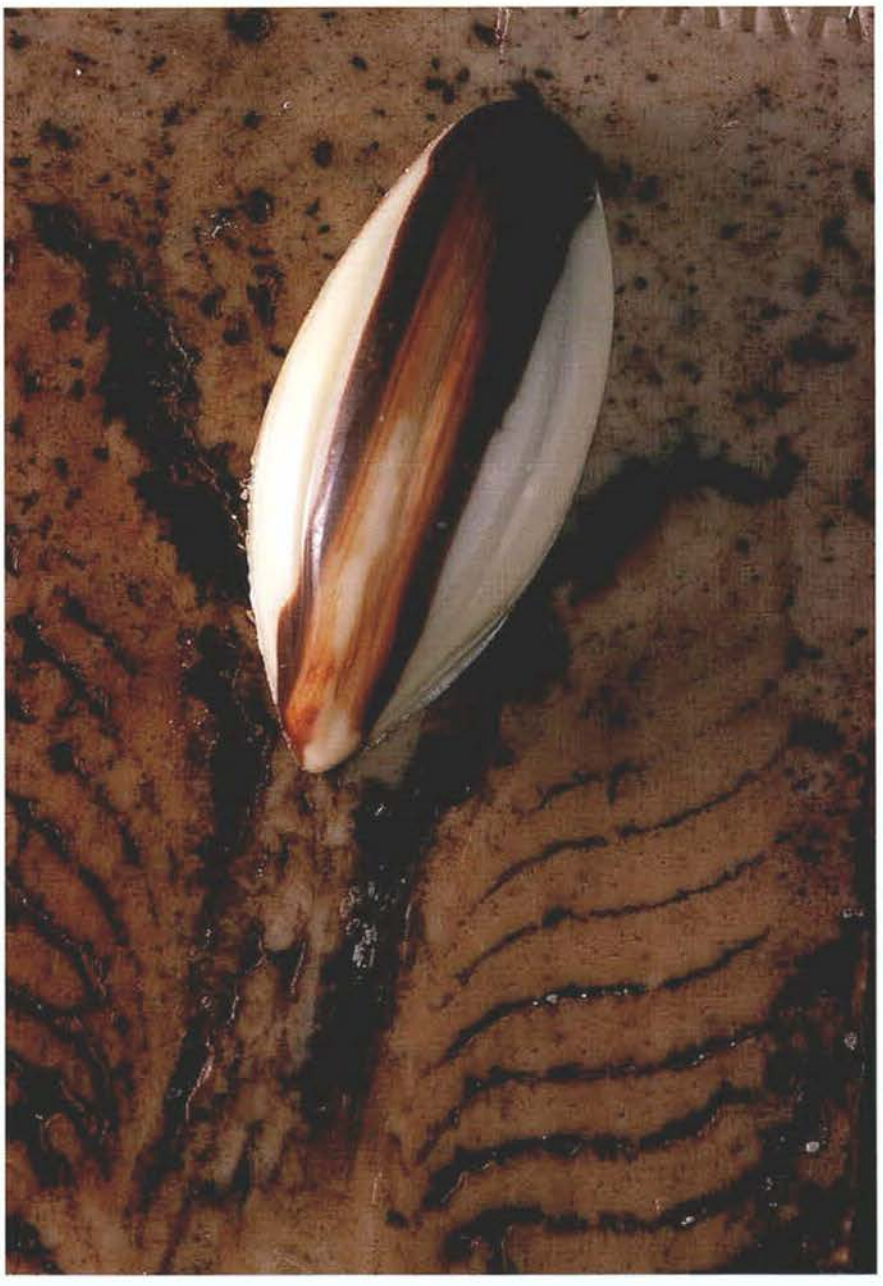
Spain's Chocolate Maestros

If one had to pinpoint where modern Spanish chocolate-making began, it would be in Barcelona, where *pâtissier* Antoni Escribà pioneered new approaches between the 1950s and 1990s. He zoned in on chocolate at its creative best: 70-80% cocoa-content chocolate, gourmet diabetic chocolate, low-fat cream fillings and wacky chocolate design. Escribà was ahead of his time. "In Paris they told me I was ten years ahead," he said in 1992, "but it turned out to be twenty-five years". But his ideas did ripple around Spain, among artisans and industrial makers, and now, as a new generation of chocolate-makers pick up on his approaches, his importance is recognized. Earlier this year, Ferran Adrià called him "the first avant-garde figure of Spanish cooking".

CHOCOLATEROS

Text
Vicky Hayward

Oriol Balaguer's streaked chocolate and pear liqueur bombon



Come the hour, come the man. Escribà was a one-of-a-kind talent, but he was also the product of Europe's oldest chocolate-loving culture. Shipments of cacao to Seville, its commercial entry point into the Old World, began in 1585, eighty-three years after Columbus sighted beans on a Mayan trading canoe in Guanaja, in the Bay Islands near today's Honduras. During that time the Spanish colonists, including monks and nuns, learned how to adapt the Mayan and Aztec drink—cold and bitter—into a hot one laced with New World cane sugar, cinnamon, vanilla and allspice. This leap to sweet spiciness was to give chocolate sweeping success in Spain.

The first three centuries

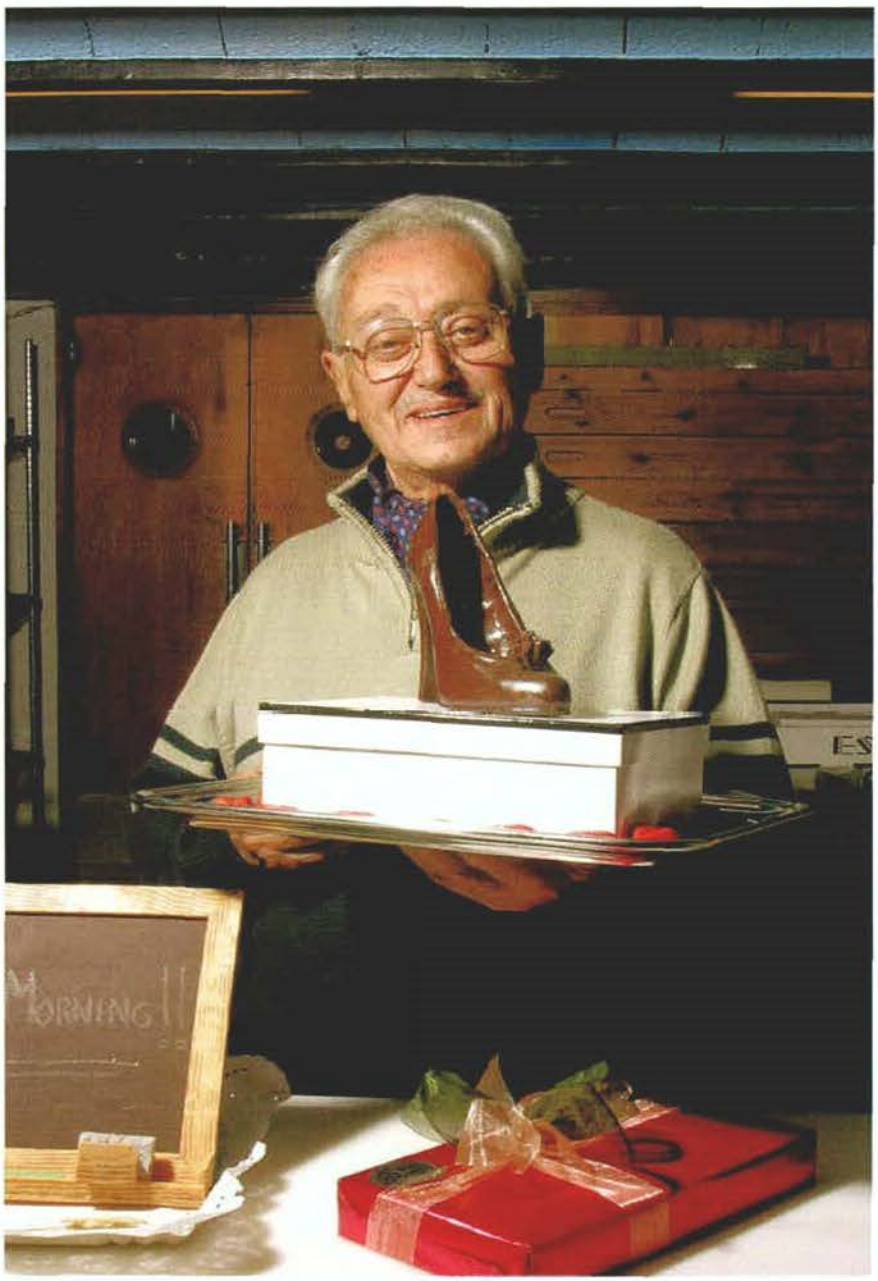
By the early 17th century, muleteers were transporting sacks of cacao beans around the country while craft chocolate-workshops sprung up in towns with monasteries or other wealthy clients—for example, Oñate in the Basque Country, Astorga in León, and Madrid.
Sometimes sold as a ready-made hot drink, for example from the capital's street-stalls, and sometimes as a paste—Santiago pilgrims carried it this way to dissolve in hot water—chocolate provoked heated debate. Where did the best cacao come from? And was drinking it a medicinal bonus or a moral vice? Either way, according to dramatist Agustín

Catalan pâtissier Antoni Escribà revolutionised Spanish chocolate making in the 1950s. He studied at Barcelona's School of Arts and Crafts before working in the family shop, now run by his three sons. Fresh chocolates include a cherry liqueur encased in red chocolate lips.

Moreto (1618-69), writing in his social comedy *No Puede Ser* (It Cannot Be), *"el chocolate en Madrid se usa ya como tabaco."* Chocolate was already being used like tobacco.
Spain's love affair with chocolate spread to the Mediterranean during the 18th century as free-trade with the New World was opened up from Seville to include first Cádiz, and then, by 1798, Barcelona, Valencia and six other Spanish ports. Cacao and sugar imports multiplied, prices fell, taxes were kept low and craft *chocolateros* set up workshops in cool basements in villages, towns and cities close to the ports. At the same time importers of quality colonial products themselves became chocolate-makers—Amatller, Catalonia's oldest brand, was born this way in 1798—and pastry chefs began trying out chocolate as an ingredient in sponges, marzipans and sugary sweets. One such pâtissier, who set up shop in Barcelona in 1905, was Antoni Escribà's grandfather.

Childhood chocolate

Most of the Spanish chocolateros continued working by hand long after Dutchman Conrad van Houten patented the cocoa press in 1828 and Swiss maker Rodolphe Lindt announced in 1879 that he had discovered how to conch chocolate—that is, to beat it between heavy rollers, round out the flavor



Paco Torreblanca's signature style–visual elegance, natural ingredients and flavor contrasts–extends through his small and large cakes, mousses and chocolates. He has chosen to remain close to home, in Alicante province, but his fresh chocolates are sent out all over Spain.

DRINKING IT: CHOCOLATE IN A CUP

Spaniards first fell in love with cocoa as an ingredient of a hot, sweet, spiced drink—and they have never really fallen out of love with it. "The ordinary way of making it is so common," wrote Juan de la Mata, royal pastry cook, in his 1747 *Arte de Repostería* (Art of Confectionery), "that we shall omit it... there is no part, or house, even in the most rustic hamlet, that does not know it." Travelers such as Alexander Dumas, Théophile Gautier, John Adams and Richard Ford endorsed that. Ford, writing in the early 1840s, reckoned that chocolate was to the Spaniards what tea was to the English and coffee to the French. Even today Spaniards consume just under a third of their national per capita chocolate consumption in the form of soluble cocoa. But modern chocolate powder, stripped of its cocoa butter, gives a quite different drink to the first foam-topped drink whipped up in *chocolateros*, fat-bellied lidded pots with swizzle sticks called *molinillos* that appear in old Spanish still-life paintings. And today's drink is also very different from thick, glossy *chocolate a la taza*—literally, chocolate for the cup—a Spanish invention made from solid chocolate with rice flour and cinnamon. Originally an economy measure, the thickness is now part of the drink's character. "*Las cuentas claras y el chocolate espeso*," runs one proverb—that is, accounts should be clear and chocolate thick. And that is how it is still drunk at Valencian weddings, Andalusian fairs and in Madrid's all-night chocolate cafés. If you buy chocolate a la taza for home consumption, choose between old-fashioned cakes and rolls *(brazos)* of dark chocolate, wrapped in simple twists of paper, or modern bars, or gourmet versions like Enric Rovira's *amargo* (bitter) 66%-cocoa chocolate a la taza granules. Catalan *pâtissier* Carles Mampel has also been revamping the recipe. He melts chocolate couverture, thickens it with cream or cornflour and adds either a modern note of contrast—such as carrot syrup or passion-fruit caramel—or the original cinnamon, vanilla and allspice so typical of early 17th-century recipes.

and aerate or emulsify the texture. Their technology was simple: a heavy curved granite stone on legs, similar in design to the original Mayan *metate*. This was heated from below by hot coals while the nibs, or shelled cacao beans, were laboriously ground to a soft paste on top. Pounded cane sugar (later, beet sugar), cinnamon and rice flour were added to give a rustic product named after the stone on which it was made—*chocolate a la piedra*. Originally designed for dissolving in hot milk or water, it was sold as solid small cakes or bars by the chocolateros, who traveled from door-to-door around large areas of the country by mule. At the same time, it was becoming more popular, served not only at wealthy private parties, but also at public fiestas and even during harvesting as an energy drink. One craft-making center, Villajoyosa, a small almond-growing

port in Mediterranean Alicante, grew into Spain's chocolate capital as it expanded production to feed the growing demand. Later the makers slowly mechanized. At Fargas, an elegant old shop in Barcelona's old town, you can still see one of the first-generation mills, called a *malacata*, in working order. Now powered by electricity, it was originally turned by a donkey in the basement.

Dark but sweet in taste, granular and hard in texture, unsoftened by added cocoa butter and undiluted by milk powder, this chocolate was to remain many Spaniards' first taste of the stuff until well into the 1960s. "We'd eat it for tea after school with bread and olive oil or sometimes with wine and sugar," says Alicante-based master pâtissier Paco Torreblanca. "Unforgettable!"

Alicante's maestro

Torreblanca, European 'maître pâtissier' of the year in 1990, followed in Escribà's footsteps as a chocolate maestro. He trained as a teenager in Paris, working for nine years with a friend of his father, pâtissier Jean Millet, Meilleur Ouvrier de France, then returned to his homeland in 1974 to set up business in Elda, a small town inland from Alicante. Here he forged a clearly personal style. "What interests me with chocolate," explains Paco, "is designing taste".

Paco Torreblanca's apricot, almond and white chocolate mousse

At Torreblanca's pâtisserie, Totel—meaning dawn sunlight in Japanese—his chocolates, small and rectangular, are unadorned by whirls or flourishes. Their simplicity sets off strikingly big complex tastes: native saffron, exotic ginger with pepper and cinammon, fruity plum, mild vanilla, piquant four spices (cinnamon, cardamom, Jamaican and Sarawak peppers), liquid citric lemon tea, soothing milk with honey…

How, then, does he design taste? "A scale of textures, flavors and contrasts," he replies. "I never add spices directly to fillings. I might, say, put cinnamon on top of a cream filling so it strikes you at first, but does not linger. Crunch goes at the bottom."

And what makes a good contrast? "Maldon salt with toasted almonds, for example." These Mediterranean combinations, a huge influence in Spanish chocolate-making in Torreblanca's hands, draw on local inspiration and his travels to other spice cultures.

A second influential element of Torreblanca's style is his wizardry with natural ingredients. Currently he is experimenting with olive oil, and smoked olive oil, as a substitute for cocoa butter—not only for flavor, texture and nutritional value, but also as a way of extending the 25-day shelf-life of his entirely additive-free fresh chocolates.

SCULPTING IT: BARCELONA'S CHOCOLATE ART

"It is all imagination," comments Antoni Escribà of his chocolate sculptures, which have ranged from life-sized versions of Michaelangelo's David, cartoon star Miss Piggy and soccer player Diego Maradona to a ten-square-meter model of the Grand Canyon and a pair of giant red lips designed to celebrate an Almodóvar movie première.

Escribà revolutionized his craft in the early 1950s, when Easter egg molds and shaped cutters to make chocolate *monas*, or Easter figures, were hard to come by. "They were simply too expensive." So, working at the family pâtisserie, he taught himself how to temper chocolate—that is, to heat and cool it through a specific temperature curve to control the crystallization of cocoa butter's five oily molecules—and bend it on paper to make geometrical shapes. Using this as his artist's material, he built figures and scenarios. The final ingredient was his artistic eye, picked up at the Llotja, Barcelona's School of Arts and Crafts, where he had also become a friend of artist Joan Miró.

"I'd hoped to be a sculptor, but I was needed in the family business, so I adapted to new materials." Escribà's work soon acquired local fame alongside that of Joan Giner, another Barcelona-based chocolate-maker who used traditional stenciling techniques to build licensed Disney characters. Escribà and Giner lectured and demonstrated abroad from the late 1950s, at first together then later individually, when Escribà's spontaneous sculpting skills became legendary in professional circles.

Escribà's Easter figure, 2004: El Bulli's bulldog

Nicknamed "the Mozart of chocolate" by the French, his book entitled *Felices Pascuas* (Happy Easter), published in 1967, remains a classic work of reference today.

Since then Barcelona's chocolate sculpture has turned into one of the city's wackiest creative traditions. Shop windows still set the pace. The acknowledged young star is Enric Rovira, who spent some time working with Escribà. His egg sculptures play with different abstract concepts like balance, texture or geometry, and, for custom-made wedding cakes, he uses glass cases containing liquid white and black chocolate which swirl together as the bride and groom give their okay via remote control push-buttons.

MATCHING IT: THE WINE CONNECTION

Perhaps it was only a question of time before Spain's chocolate-makers, maestros in the art of flavor-matching, would make the link between chocolates' subtleties and those of wines. Paco Torreblanca was one of the first to do so when he launched his chocolates with balsamic Mediterranean wine centers in the mid-1990s.
New-wave chocolate shop Sampaka has followed up on that with its Collection N° 8—a box of chocolates with experimental fillings such as olive, anchovy and truffle designed to eat with a glass of *cava* or wine. Enric Rovira has gone a lot further, producing wine tailor-made to partner chocolate with the help of oenologist Silvia Puig. He makes his wine from Merlot grapes growing from an old vineyard in Priorato, Tarragona, allowing the days to tick past after fermentation before bottling to to keep just the right amount of residual sugars in a naturally sweet, balsamic, full Mediterranean red wine.

The classic match: chocolate and Cava

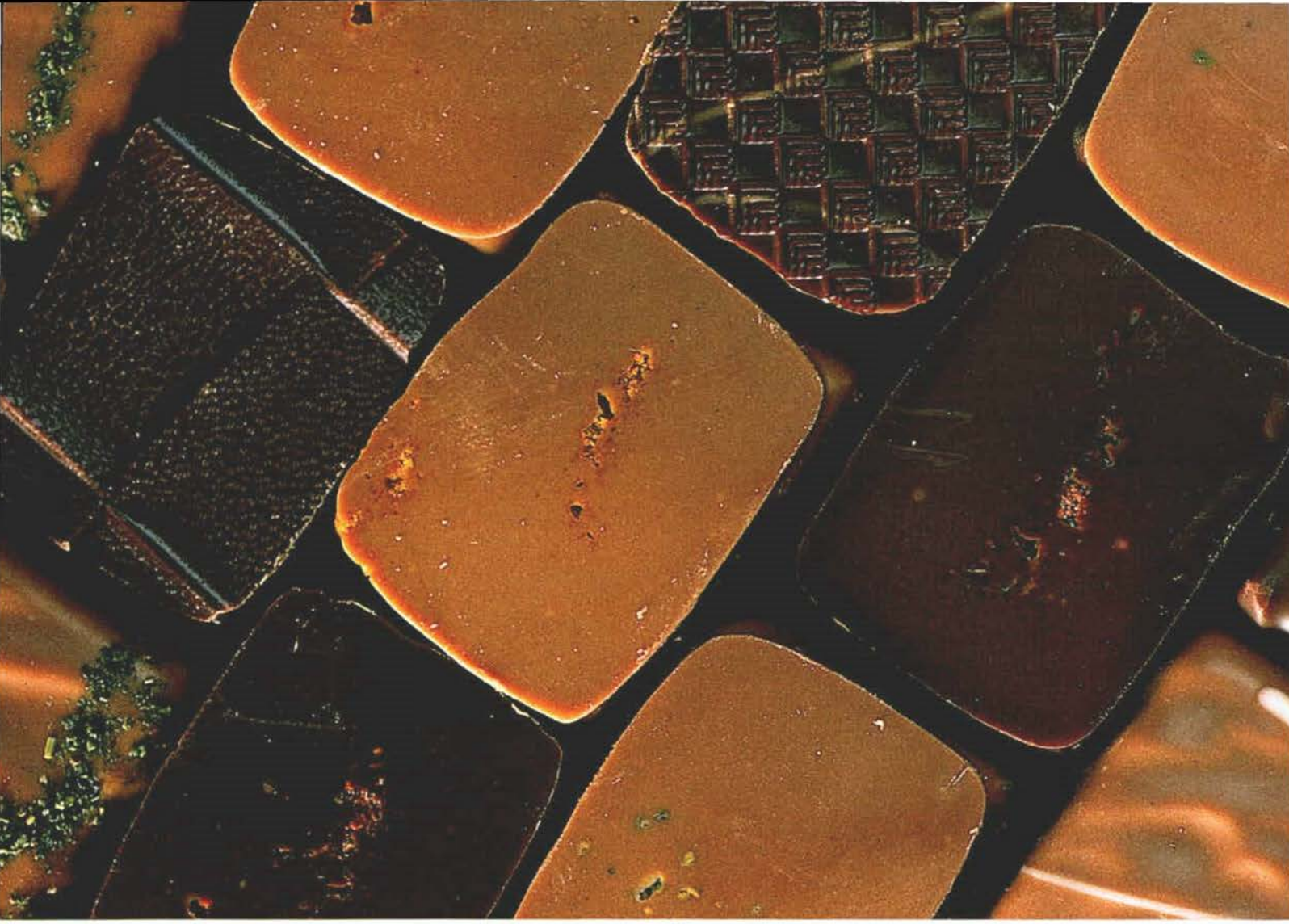
At El Bulli, Albert Adrià and sommeliers Lucas Payá and Ferran Centelles tried out their own matches in a systematic tasting—six chocolates and six alcohols. The winning combinations were white chocolate or 70% allspice chocolate with an aged Pedro Ximénez; 70% dark chocolate with young sweet red Monastrell wine; and *mistela* made from Garnacha grapes. Then there is the question of more precise matches for the new experimental flavors. Jordi Butrón of restaurant-school Espaisucre (Sugar Space) gives a few examples. "We serve a chocolate pudding flavored with Lapsang Souchong tea. Now, as a client I'd like to try that with a good vintage whiskey with lots of wood in it." How, then, about his black chocolate *petit four* with pepper and raspberry? "A young muscatel that has kept its acidity and does not have too much body—even a slightly sparkling wine, like Cremat de Limón." His milk chocolate bonbon with ginger and licorice? "Difficult because of the long persistent notes—I'd try either an older muscatel that has spent time in the barrel or a PX to pick up on the licorice." A local speciality, the Catania? "It has toasted almond and caramel notes as well as the cocoa, so I'd go for a Malvasía or Ratafía (a walnut based liquor) to echo the nuts and sweetness." Torreblanca's saffron chocolate? "Something dry with a little sugar, for example, an *amontillado.*" And finally, the dark chocolate and fresh mint leaf currently sold at Escribà's? "The mint is there to refresh, so just water. Nothing else."

Valor: old-fashioned craft making and selling

Torreblanca also made the sourcing of chocolate a part of his everyday work. Buying in top-quality couverture, that is, cocoa mass enriched by cocoa butter, made from different cacaos, he produces his own *coupages*, each one tailor-made for its use. "Java's chocolate is fruity. African cacao is aggressive and strong. Latin American is delicate and aromatic." These differences have now filtered down to become part of the labeling of main-street chocolate.

Smooth operators

As Escribà's and Torreblanca's ideas were taking off among Spain's fresh chocolate makers, old-fashioned craft companies were learning how to compete in the modern world of the mass-produced chocolate bar. One business, Valor, a Villajoyosa-based family company born in the



Paco Torreblanca's bombons: plain to the eye, but exploding with flavor

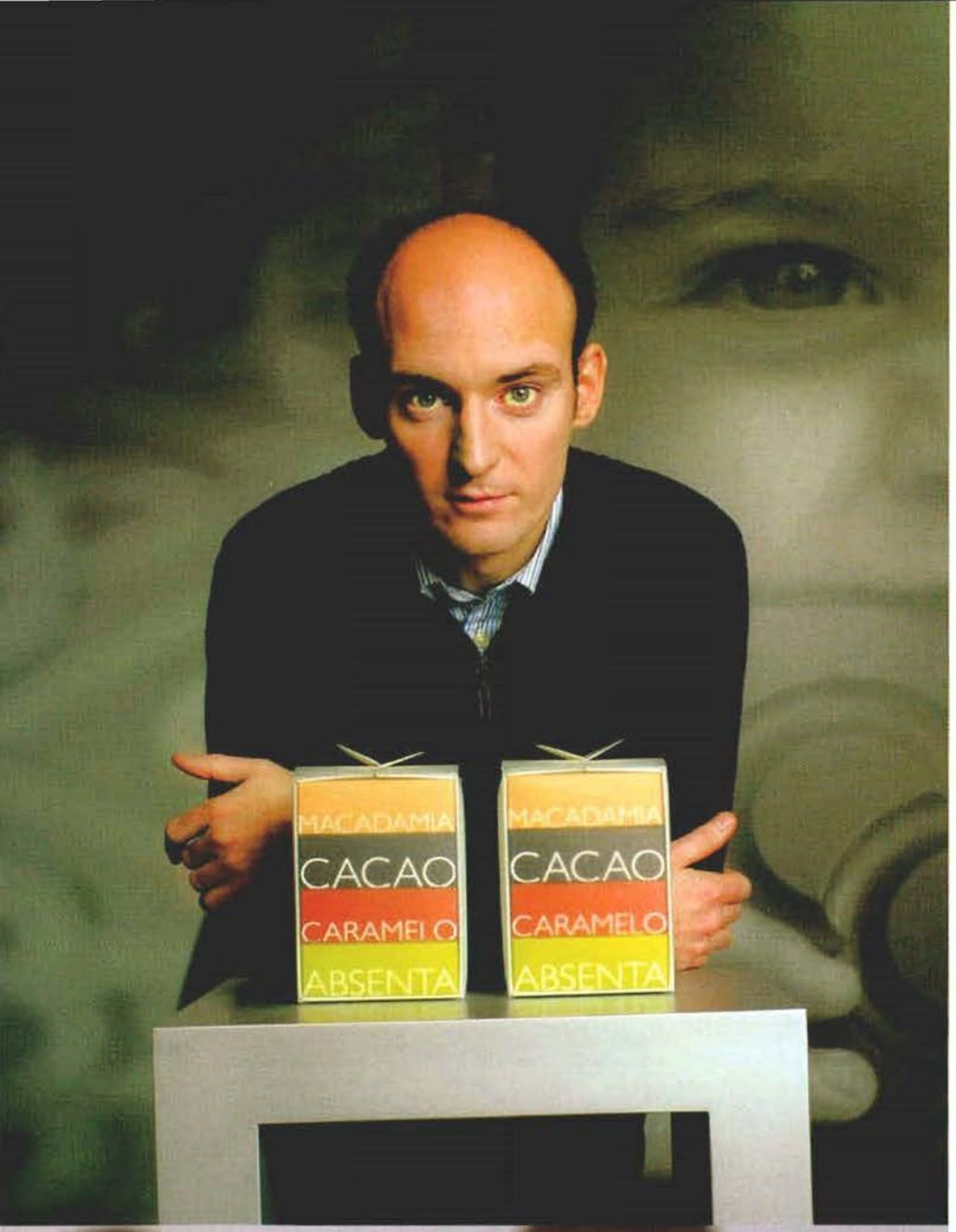
1870s, decided to stand by pure cocoa-butter chocolate, but give it a new velvety smoothness with state-of-the-art technology for pressing, conching, tempering and molding. It was a huge leap forward. Today's factory, installed in the 1980s, still wraps you in warm, intense chocolate aromas, like those of an old-fashioned workshop, but now the cacao beans are swallowed up by a series of vast high-tech tunnels and tanks from which the finished chocolate pops out at the end—shiny, molded, smooth and untouched by human hand.

So fast has been the evolution of modern Spanish tastes that Valor has also taken on key new ideas from fresh chocolate-makers: 70%-cocoa chocolate products, pure cooking chocolate drops, a diabetics' sugar-free chocolate range, twist-wrapped bonbons with modern flavors, plus a collection of fresh Mediterranean chocolates designed by Catalan maker Luis Morera. Meanwhile, the steady extension of their market, radiating outwards from Alicante province since the mid-1960s, has taken them to 25 countries, including, for example, Brazil, Korea, Belgium and Morocco as well as large areas of the United States, and upped their throughput of chocolate to 7,100 tons a year.

Other Spanish craft companies have made similar leaps in technology and scale. In Oñate, in the Basque Country, for example, Zahor, an old family workshop, has grown to a large factory with a daily output of 100 tons of toffee, hazelnut and praline-filled chocolate bars, nearly three-quarters of which are exported around Europe. Likewise, Lacasa, born as a family workshop in the Pyrenees in 1852, now has four factories around Spain—the main one in Zaragoza—specializing in children's chocolates and coated nuts, which are exported to 40 different countries. Significantly, though, there is one shared characteristic—all these companies have stuck through thick and thin with chocolate made from pure cocoa butter and no other added fats.

Gourmet craftsmen

Spanish specialist gourmet chocolates have also found a new life. Take, for example, the Catania: a toasted caramelized almond coated in nut and cocoa butter praline dusted with cocoa and icing sugar. Invented in Villafranca del Penedés, it was perfected by hand and baptized there in the 1940s by Josep Cudié, now aged 83. Today the Cudié company's recipe remains the same—only the best local Marcona almonds are used—but, thanks to mechanization, 40 tons of Catanias are sold a year



Twice a year Barcelona-based chocolate-maker Enric Rovira launches a new chocolate collection for sale worldwide. Vertical–a sleek three-layer box–was part of the spring 2004 collection. Other ideas, like his 'bombolas', rough-edged flavored dragées, are now perennial classics.

and, with the swing to Mediterranean foods, they are now taking off in health-conscious markets like Germany. A newer speciality, dynamite sugarless liqueur and spirit chocolates, are also exported.

Or take a second example, Blanxart's almond clusters—trios of toasted caramelized almonds stuck onto small pools of dark chocolate, dipped in more chocolate and finished off with piped fleurs-de-lys. Founded in Barcelona in 1954, Blanxart also thrive on tradition although their original half-dozen chocolates, of which the almond clusters were one, have now grown to a range of over a hundred. They still buy in their cacao beans, they use 62%-cocoa chocolate and they preserve old-fashioned handwork. Each almond cluster requires eight hand operations. The company's design flair has also held good. Its original 1954 logo, an imaginary medieval woodcut, picked up an award at the 1996 New York Fancy Food Fair and is now the brand logo in Europe, Japan and the United States.

A third example are Simón Coll's chocolate carrot-waving bunnies. The company grew directly from a 19th-century confectioners in *cava*-capital San Sadurní de Noya. However, the bunnies and corks as well as mottled life-size footballs, dinky umbrellas, orange-and-white goldfish, educational puzzles and cava-filled chocolate corks, all exported around Europe, are creations of the last thirty years.

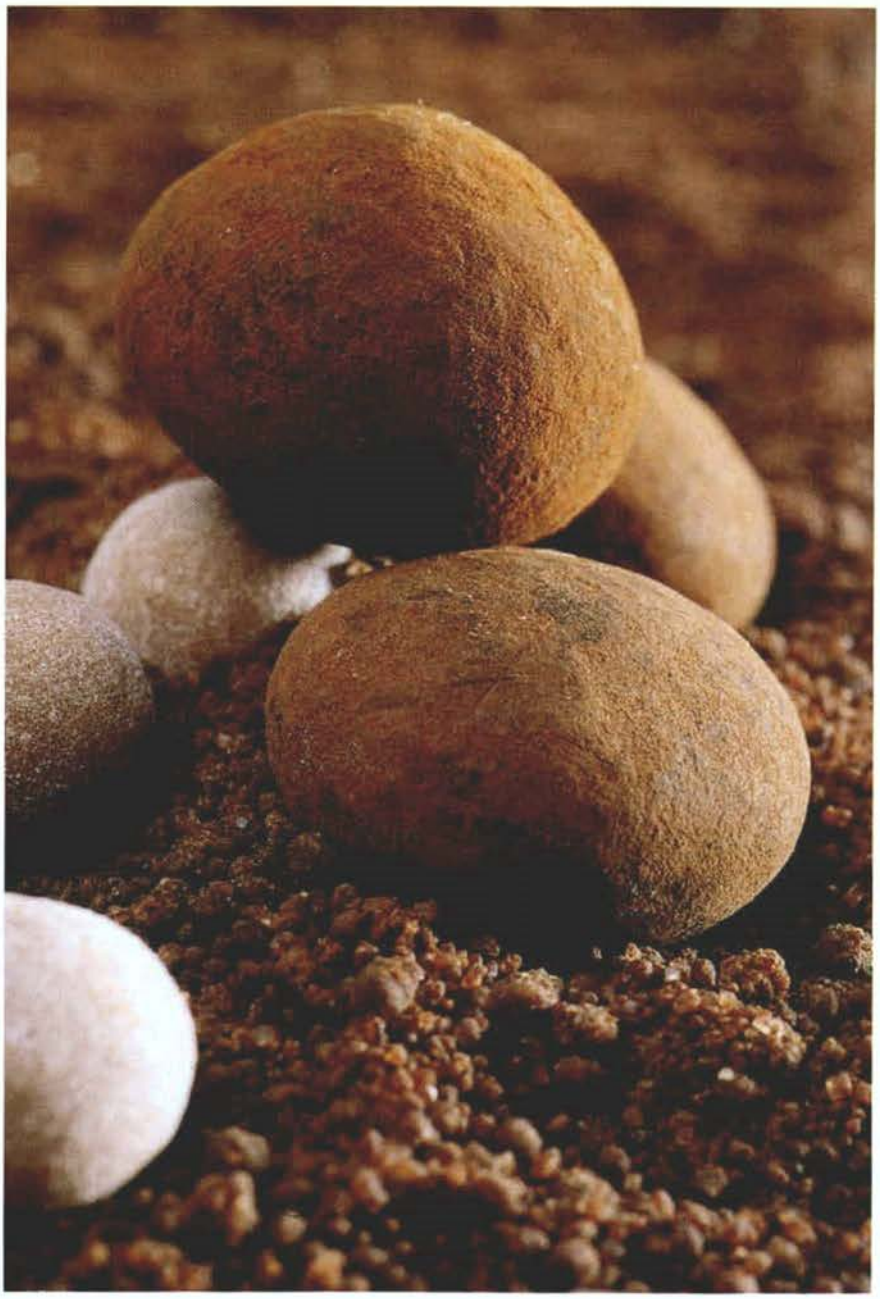
Seventh-generation managing director Xavier Coll is a technology fan—the company has just built a two-million-euro intelligent warehouse, but, for all the modernity, like Blanxart or Cudié, he still considers old-fashioned chocolate values are at the heart of the matter. "The challenge is to make artisanal quality with industrial machines."

These craft companies' creative individuality is on quite a roll. When Barcelona's Salón del Chocolate opens its doors for the first time next autumn, the range and diversity will be amazing: Ludomar's quality-guaranteed chocolates; Chocovic's trio of gourmet single-variety bars, cooking chocolates and coatings; Ramón Roca's raisin-and-nut specialities; Txokolatl's decorative accessories; Torras' organic chocolates; Pifarré's white and dark chocolage *dragées;* Caro's spicy dark chocolate bars from Aragon… and the list could go on.

Design guru

Who, then, are the gurus showing the way for the next generation? One name that broke through in the 1990s is that of Enric Rovira, aged 32. Like Escribà, he was largely self-taught at his father's Barcelona pâtisserie before he launched his own brand of stunningly designed handmade chocolates in 1993.

"I run away from ostentation and baroque luxury—the gilt and the bows," he explains of his style.



Jordi Butrón teaching at Espaisucre (Sweet Space), his school and restaurant in Barcelona's old town. The menu is built around desserts, such as–opposite–yogurt cake with rhubarb, white chocolate and mandarin, and smoked tea cream with yogurt, chocolate and black sesame.

Instead it is defined by zappy conceptual thinking. His Planetarium, for example, is a two-tier box of demi-spheres packed like a miniature galaxy, with a large sun and smaller planets. Pluto is a salted fried corn and almond praline in dark chocolate; Mars is an Earl Grey dark chocolate truffle in milk chocolate. Then there are his own favorites, his monoliths inspired by the film *2001: A Space Odyssey:* crispy pork (the past), ginger (the present) and air (the future) in dark chocolate. Other ideas are simpler—for example, the 'bombola', a chocolate-covered pellet flavored with orange zest, or Kenya or Costa Rica coffee, fried corn, or pink pepper.

Rovira has shown that it is possible to find a midway route between custom-made fresh chocolates and mass-manufactured mainstream products. Like Torreblanca, he starts with top-quality couvertures, but, like the craft companies, he adds GM-free soya lecithin to combat damp and acidity. "But," he stresses, "the real secret to a three-month shelf-life for filled chocolates is in balancing the ingredients—the alcohols, acids and herb infusions." This has allowed him to sell to gourmet spots in Paris—where Alain Ducasse is a customer—as well as New York, London and elsewhere, and he now has a throughput of a hundred tons of chocolate a year.

Back to the kitchen

Another name making waves is Barcelona-born Oriol Balaguer, aged 31. His Eight Textures of Chocolate dessert—the textures are provided by sponge, caramel, mousse, sorbet, crocant, custard, thin plaque of 70% chocolate and cocoa—won a worldwide prize while he was still working in Ferran Adrià's R+D laboratory in 2001. "That taught me a whole new way of thinking, creating, mixing flavors and trying new ideas."

The following year, he moved on to set up his own pâtisserie and chocolate workshop. Ring the bell next to the heavy metal front door with its inset glass case of cacao pods, a kind of modern shop-sign with a medieval air to it, and it will be swung back to reveal a lobby looking through to a workshop beyond. Here Oriol and team make fresh cakes to order—Eight Textures is still on offer, although it evolves and changes all the time—and here he develops his seasonal collections of chocolates. "It makes sense—chocolate is so seasonal," he explains. He has taken minimalism to its logical conclusion. The chocolates are indistinguishable from the outside—each is molded like a halved cacao-pod. But inside you may find mandarin truffle with salt and popping candy that explodes in your ears—his famous 'peta-zeta' chocolate—a tonka bean ganache, or oriental wasabi, soya and sake. There are over 30 types. "I like

crunchiness, salt and bitter flavors," is his own minimalist comment on his style.

Balaguer is only just beginning to hit his stride—maybe a symptom of something wider. "To me this moment feels a bit like the Spanish restaurant or wine-making scene ten years ago—something that is just beginning," he comments. "As the public learns to identify and recognize what we are doing, then the phenomenon will grow."

Other chocolate-makers are also picking up the more experimental approach of chefs like Albert Adrià, desserts ace at El Bulli, who plays with fragile textures, forms and flavors as well as temperature.

Another name to watch is Jordi Butrón. He switched from school teaching to professional cooking and designed his own training with Michel Bras, Pierre Gagnaire and Adrià—among others—before going his own way. First he tried out a desserts-only menu at Jean Luc Figueras' restaurant, matching it with wines (see p. 20), then he went independent and set up a restaurant-school, Espaisucre (Sugar Space). His fresh *petits fours*, cut and shaped by hand, play with sharp combos like milk chocolate with licorice and ginger or dark chocolate with Modena vinegar, raspberry and pepper. Where does he think things are going?

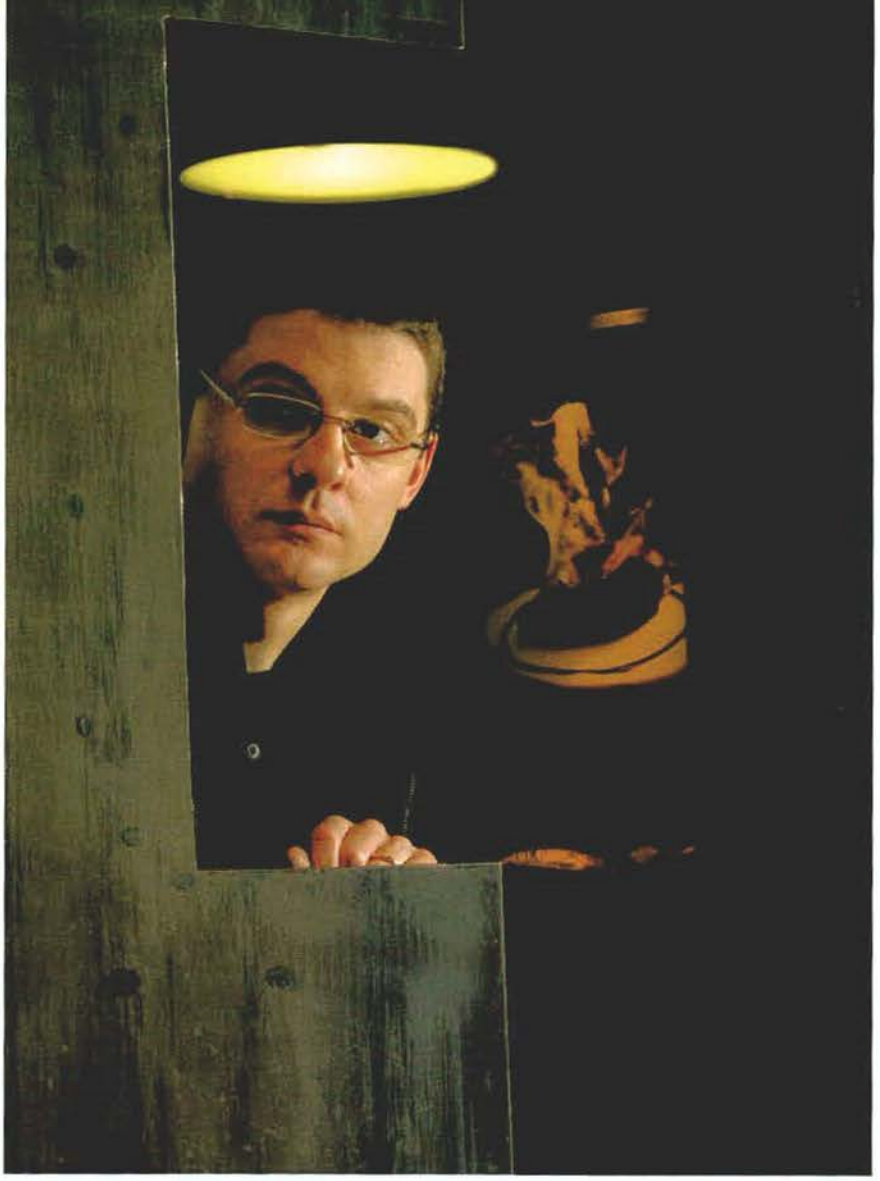
"Chocolate used to be thought of as a classic ingredient," he comments. "But now people are learning that although it's not only intense, it's also promiscuous. You can relate it to everything from alcohol and pepper to passion fruit, cheese and salt. Some of that thinking has filtered through from restaurants to shops, but there is a lot more to come."

Full circle

In fact, it is already happening at the chic branded chocolate stores (see p. 28) that started life in Catalonia in the 1990s and are now spreading fast around Spain. In "Chocolatemanía", an article published in *El País* Sunday magazine at the end of last year, the author explained that every Spaniard now consumes an average of 3.5 kilos (8 lbs) of chocolate a year—a statistic that, despite variations, generally recognizes a rise of at least half a kilo in just ten years.

Production is also rising gently. In 2002 it hit over 186,000 tons, a fifth of which is exported—and, within that, quality chocolates are on a roll. "The market is so big that we are not really competing with each other," comments Oriol Balaguer, who is already selling into Japan, and hopes to open shops around Europe. In fact, each maestro has his own idea: Juan Escribà, who has taken over from his father, is planning a strictly-fresh chocolate boutique in Barcelona; the Torreblanca family, who sends chocolate out around Spain in temperature-controlled vans

Oriol Balaguer moved sideways from the role of dessert chef in a restaurant kitchen–El Bullì–to set up his own pâtisserie and chocolate workshop three years ago. His designs, like Mundo Mundial, made up of five chocolate spheres, are increasingly minimalist.



and knocked up this year's royal wedding cake, are looking to open flagship shops worldwide; and Luis Morera is planning to produce one-of-a-kind chocolate shapes for children in Aragon. Meanwhile Enric Rovira is trying to cut back his annual growth from over 50% to under 20%—but demand is so strong that he is finding it difficult. Equally striking is the renewed taste for old-fashioned Spanish craft chocolate. El Campanar, an old-fashioned craft confectionery company in Alicante province making *chocolate a la piedra* in a 1930s *molinera* and *afinadora* system (mill and refining mangle), sell their handshaped domed chocolate shapes to a Spanish gourmet club. Just to the north, in Sueca, Chocolate Comes makes 500 kilos a week of delicious 50% and 70% cocoa sugar-cane chocolate at their museum-workshop (see p. 29) and have successfully revived *cascarillas de cacao,* flaked roasted cacao-pod shells, once called poor-man's cacao—a must for pure chocolate freaks.

And that brings us to a full turn in the wheel of taste. The newest things in Spanish gourmet chocolate are unadorned 100% cocoa products, very dark and intriguingly intense, bitter but, at their best, fruity. Or rather, they are the newest thing to us—but let's not forget the Mayan and Aztec chocolateros. They got there a very, very long time ago.

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

Recipes page 88, Exporters page 122, Photo Credits page 140

THE CHOCOLATE LOVERS' TRAVEL GUIDE TO SPAIN

Barcelona

Barcelona, Spain's chocolate-making capital, is home to dozens of great chocolate shops, a museum, a unique restaurant for those with a sweet tooth and the Salón del Chocolate, a new annual event to be launched in October 2004. The best time to visit is in the run-up to Easter, when pâtisserie and chocolate shop windows are decorated with monas, *or chocolate sculptures. For dates and full details of the* ***Salón del Chocolate,*** *contact the Instituto del Cacao y el Chocolate (www.chococao.com).*

Casa Amatller (Paseo de Gracia, 41. Tel: (+34) 934 961 245) makes a good starting point for chocolate lovers to explore the city. Marvel at the Modernist architecture paid for by the profits from Catalonia's oldest surviving chocolate brand, set up in 1798. There is a small gallery and shop on the ground floor. You can go further back in time at the **Museo del Chocolate** set up by the Gremio Provincial de Pastelería (Provincial Pâtisserie Guild) inside an 18th-century convent (Comerç, 36. Tel: (+34) 932 687 878, www.museudelaxocolata.com). Primarily audovisual, the museum includes examples of Catalan chocolate sculpture—chocolate on sale too.

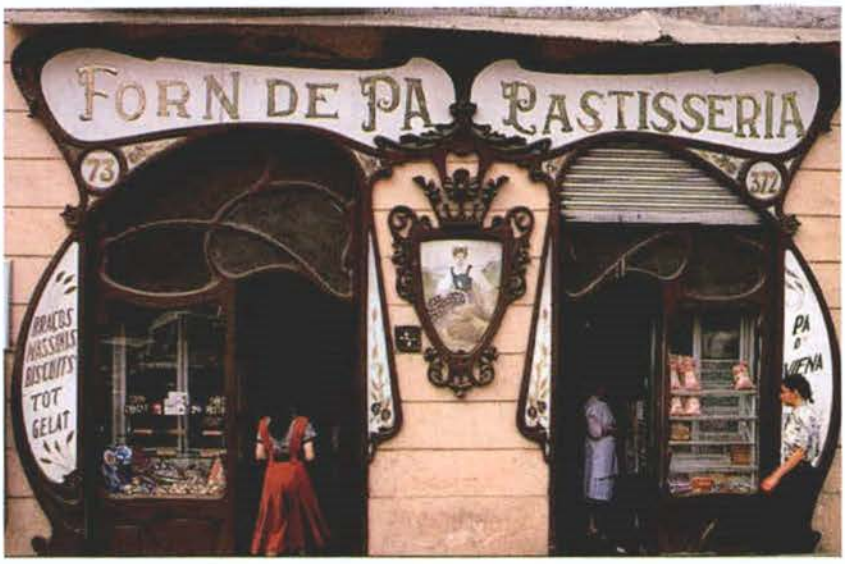
Ten minutes walk away, **Fargas** (Pino, 16. Tel: (+34) 933 020 342) takes you into the world of the old-fashioned confectioners. Dating back to 1827, the shop was refitted earlier this century, but it keeps its circular 19th-century chocolate-mill originally driven by a donkey in the basement and now powered by electricity. Also, try the homemade truffles.

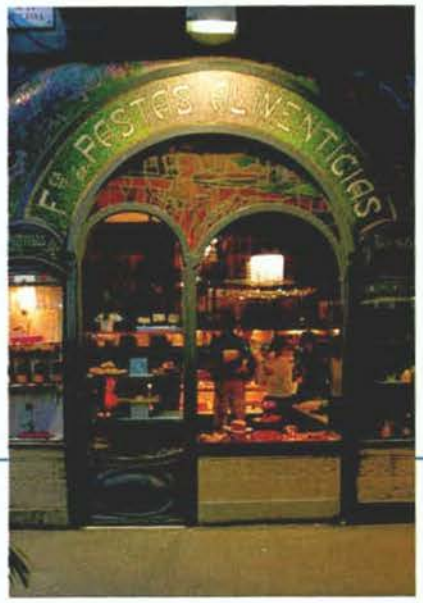
If you have time for just one visit then choose **Escribà** (the main shop is at Gran Vía, 546. Tel: (+34) 934 547 535, nuriacomas@escriba.es) or there is a smaller Modernist jewel (Rambla des Flors, 83). At the in-store cafés you can try red chocolate cherry-filled lips, fresh mint and chocolate leaves—an idea of Albert Adrià—, a cup of *chocolate a la taza* (thick hot drinking chocolate) or chocolate cakes.

The shops of the next generation's gurus—**Enric Rovira** (Josep Tarradellas, 113. Tel: (+34) 934 192 547, www.enricrovira.com) and **Oriol Balaguer** (Morales, 21-27, bajos B. Tel: (+34) 933 632 298, www.oriolbalaguer.com)—could not be more different. At Rovira's shop, you can see his complete conceptual chocolate-and-package ideas, like the famous Planetarium. Balaguer, ex R+D man for Adrià, keeps a calm craft workshop atmosphere behind a very discreet façade identifiable only by a glass case of cocoa beans set into a vast iron door. He makes beautifully executed cakes and puddings to order as well as collections of minimalist chocolates with experimental flavors.

Xocoa (Petritxol, 11. Tel: (+34) 933 011 197, info@xocoa-bcn.com), born from a tiny shop in the old town in 1996 and now with half a dozen other branches around town, has revolutionized Spanish mainstream chocolate retailing. Their products include bars with 25 traditional and new flavors (ranging from green tea to a 90% cocoa bar), plus newer creations like chocolate slabs binding raisins, nuts and crystallized orange and a macadamia nut snake in streaky chocolate. **Chocolat Factory** (Amigó, 53. Tel: (+34) 932 095 426, www.chocolatfactory.com) was set up by Belgian-born architect Michel Laline in 1996. Emphasizing well-sourced chocolate, he sells homemade, molded chocolates and bars with natural flavors and he organizes tastings.

Newer ventures are **Cacao Sampaka** (Consell de Cent, 292. Tel: (+34) 902 181 940, www.cacaosampaka.com), the first of a chain of cool city-center chocolate depots-cum-bars stocking books and culinary equipment as well as bars and themed chocolate collections created by Catalans Albert Adrià, Ramón Morató and Quim Capdevila. **Chocosaffron** (Poble Espanyol de Montjuïc. Tel: (+34) 934 234 006, gerencia@chocosaffronsl.com) is a





small shop selling its own fruit chocolates and a variety of quality brands.
Finally, book a table for dinner at **Espaisucre** (Princesa 53, local 2. Tel (+34) 932 681 630, www.espaisucre.com), Jordi Butrón's restaurant-school specializing in puddings, where you can also study techniques—or simply eat delicious avant-garde chocolate desserts and *petits fours*.

Around Spain

Here is a short listing of unique destinations—museums, schools and *chocolaterías*—that are well worth a special trip.

ASTORGA (León)

Museo del Chocolate
José María Goy, 5. Tel: (+34) 987 616 220
www.ayuntamientodeastorga.com
This museum focuses on chocolate's links with Astorga, whose muleteers took cocoa from the ports around Spain and back home, where a craft industry grew up. The collection and archive includes machinery, wrappers and advertising graphics.

BILBAO

Campeonato Mundial de Chocolate a la Taza
The first World Championship of Drinking Chocolate, held in May 2004, was organized by Bilbao's Club de Amigos de Chocolate, a group of expert enthusiasts who have a range of activities round the year. www.amigosdelchocolatedebilbao@jypunto.com

ELDA (Alicante)

Totel
Avda. José Martínez González, 103 and José María Pemán, 19.
Tel: (+34) 965 388 224,
www.torreblanca.net
Francisco Torreblanca's handmade pâtisserie and chocolate shop is a landmark. There are plain chocolate bars here as well as the famous bonbons with liquid, fruit or spice fillings. There are courses around the year at the workshop outside town.

MADRID

Chocolatería San Ginés
Pasadizo de San Ginés, 5.
Tel: (+34) 913 656 546
A traditional chocolate café serving thick chocolate and *churros* (fried dough-sticks) from late afternoon to early morning.

Museo de América
Avda. Reyes Católicos, 6.
Tel: (+34) 915 492 641,
www.museodeamerica.mcu.es
Europe's most important collection of Latin American folk art and fine arts—pre-Hispanic and colonial Spanish—includes ceramics and utensils used by the Mayans and Aztecs for making chocolate and codices containing illustrations of rituals.

OÑATE (Guipúzcoa)

Museo del Chocolate
(due to open 2005)
This private collection reflects a local chocolate-making tradition dating back to the 17th century, when Oñate was an important university and monastic town. The museum's contents will include complete 18th-century and 19th-century *obradores* and relevant documents dating back to 1631, of importance.

SEVILLE

Ocumare Café
Carmen 11. Fax: (+34) 954 380 841.
Café specializing in chocolate in all forms and shapes.

SUECA (Valencia)

Fábrica-Museo del Chocolate Comes
San Josep, 29. Tel: (+34) 961 701 942
www.chocolatescomes.com
A great, tightly packed collection of 2,000 pieces: molds, grinding stones, mortars and early industrial machinery, displayed in the home of a family-owned chocolate-making factory dating back to 1820. Delicious chocolate, cocoa and old-fashioned *cascarillas*, the crushed toasted cocoa-bean shells, are still made in the workshop at the back.

TOLOSA (Guipúzcoa)

Museo de Confitería
Plaza Zarra, 7. Tel: (+34) 943 670 727,
www.euskadi.net/zentroa/museos/gipuzkoa45_c.htm
This outstanding sweets and pastry museum dedicates part of its space to Basque chocolate-making equipment: 15th- to 17th-century grinding-stones and mortars and examples of the technology that developed over the following centuries, as well as *chocolateras*, the lidded drinking-chocolate pots.

VIC (Barcelona)

Aula Chocovic
Ctra Nacional 152a, km 71.3, Gurb.
Tel: (+34) 938 893 419, www.chocovic.es
Specialized chocolate and pâtisserie school with courses by resident and visiting teachers (Catalan, Italian and French) that cover every aspect of professional chocolate techniques.

VILLAJOYOSA (Alicante)

Museo del Chocolate
Pianista Gonzalo Soriano, 13.
Tel: (+34) 965 980 950,
www.valor.es/museo.swf
Laid out within an old country house, the core of this collection comes from Valor, S.A.'s old machinery, but it also describes the wider history of Villajoyosa's itinerant chocolate makers. In mid-August it takes part in the town's chocolate fiesta, Xocolatísima!

Museo del Chocolate Clavileño
Colón, 187. Tel: (+34) 915 890 778
Small local collection in a chocolate-maker's who also sells direct. Some interesting pieces.

MEDITERRA

Flavors

Culinary Shopping in Spain

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María Unceta

Translation
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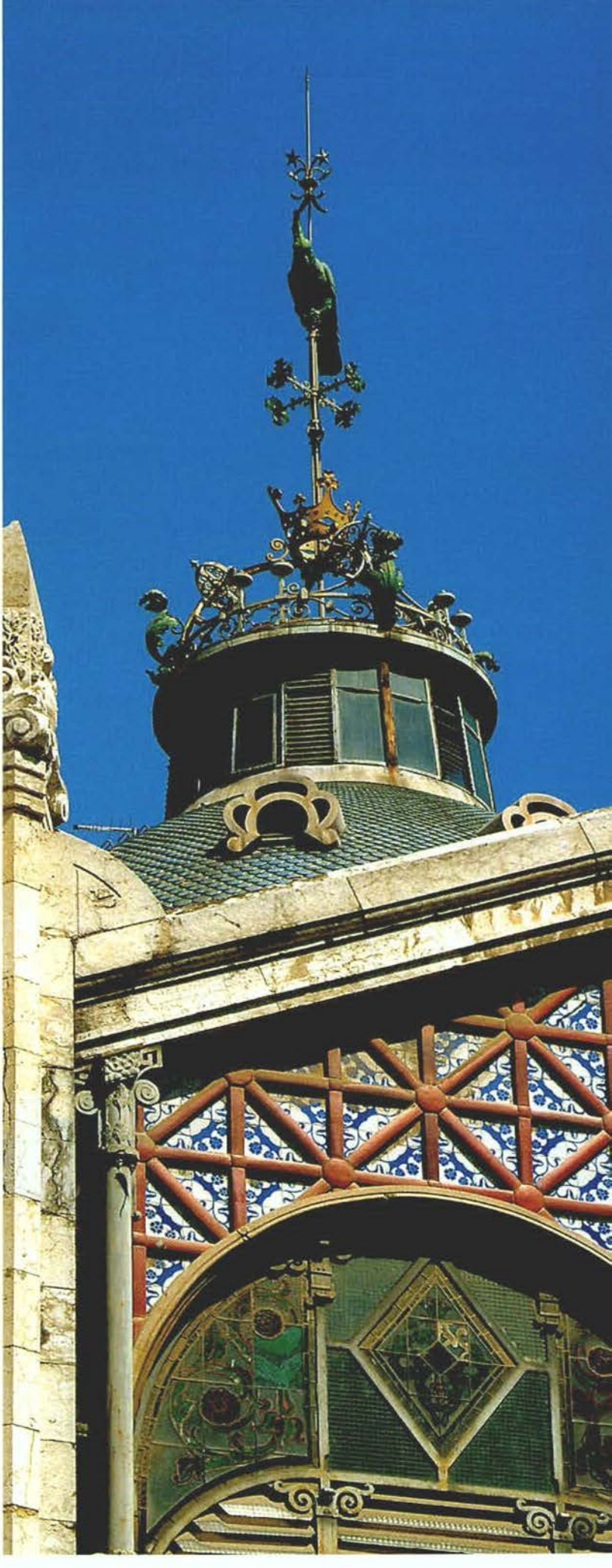
Photos
Rafael Vargas/ICEX
and Don Murray/ICEX

NEAN

The Mediterranean is synonymous with the good life, and this in gastronomy means a wealth of colors, flavors and textures. The eastern coast of Spain—with the three Autonomous Communities of Valencia, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands that we visited for this article—is a land full of light, vitality and exuberance, where flowers bloom in abundance and the sun shines almost endlessly. All of this is reflected in the regional gastronomic culture with its vivid colors and flavors and a trio of star products: salt fish, charcuterie and finally chocolate and *turrón* (a sweet based on almonds and honey).



Colmado Sto. Domingo, Palma de Mallorca

The production of salt fish, *salazones*—fish or parts of fish treated and preserved in salt—dates back to the early history of Spain (*Spain Gourmetour* N° 45). In ancient times, Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans came to the part of Spain's east coast called Levante in search of trading opportunities, minerals and, especially, fish. It was the Phoenicians and Romans, more than twenty-five centuries ago, who first applied the salting techniques still used today.

The classical writers Aristotle (384-322 BC) and Polybius (203-120 BC) both refer to tuna fishing, the preservation of fish in salt and the preparation of sauces, especially the Romans' favorite, *garum*. Salting techniques were used to enhance flavor in some cases and to make foods last longer in others. In the words of Vicente Leal, the owner of a salt fish stall at the Alicante market as well as a shop in the city, "Some salt fish, such as tuna or meager roe and *mojama* (salt tuna back), hint at the strong palates of our predecessors in ancient times, and are slightly shocking in our 'light' gastronomic culture. But," he adds, "they have a full, exquisite taste. This is a noble, top-quality product with a very well-defined personality and I'm quite sure it has a great future."

The most characteristic salt fish of the Levante are fish roe, mojama and fish preserved in brine. The process for salting roe (from tuna, meager, grey mullet, albacore tuna, hake, etc.) is a long one, starting with extraction and thorough washing. The roe is then pressed and immersed for several days in brine, which is constantly changed, then dried in sunshine in the open air for about 48 hours, and finally in a sheltered, shady place for at least a further 24 hours. The length and the special care in the process justifies the high prices these products fetch on the market—about 132 euros per kilo for top-quality tuna fished by the traditional, *almadraba*, fixed-net method. Mojama is made from long, narrow cuts of prime tuna, the equivalent of beef sirloin. These are covered with salt for one day, then washed to remove any excess salt in several changes of water and dried in the open air. Although not as pricey as roe, one kilo of top-quality mojama can cost as much as 118 euros. Both products are dry in texture and are served thinly sliced with just a drop of olive oil, or with salad. The fish most commonly preserved in brine are sardines. After soaking in a highly-concentrated brine, they are washed, laid out to dry and packed in wooden barrels for sale.

Better known on the international market are charcuterie products—always made of pork—of which the variety is infinite. Each region or district, and almost every town, has its own specialty, based on different cuts, with different spices or other flavorings, different casings, shapes, cooking or curing methods, etc. Some of the most characteristic are *butifarras* and *morcillas*—cooked—and *longanizas, salchichón, chorizos* and other cured sausages. All of these are to be found throughout Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands but under a multitude of different names—the cooked *bull, bufa, paltruch, cuixot*, and the cured *fuet, espetec* and many more. Special mention should be made of *sobrasada* (*Spain Gourmetour* N° 55), a typical preparation from Majorca made from chopped, raw pork flavored with sea salt and *pimentón* (a type of paprika from Spain) and left to dry in the humid island air. It is a bright orange color and the usual texture is like a thick *pâté* for spreading on bread.

Other typical products are chocolate and turrón, as well as a wide range of pastries and sweets at which the Levante cooks are masters. Almonds,

Market of Valencia

grown from north to south all along the Mediterranean coast and on the Balearic Islands, are the basic ingredient of turrón whatever the variety—Jijona, Alicante, *guirlache* (almond brittle), toasted egg yolk, chocolate, fruit or coconut. The quality of such sweets and pastries stems from the seven centuries of Arab presence in these lands which left an indelible mark. Chocolate (see article on page 12) was introduced into Spain from America, and is produced to very high standards of quality and innovation.
Finally, two classic products—wine and olive oil, which consumers will find in most of the shops mentioned. The quality of olive oil is excellent, especially in Catalonia, and the PDO Les Garrigues (in Lérida, Catalonia) was the first Designation of Origin (*Spain Gourmetour* Nº 54) to be applied to olive oil in the whole of Europe. Wines (as well as many liqueurs) are produced in Alicante, Valencia, Tarragona, Gerona and Majorca, and quality is getting better and better.

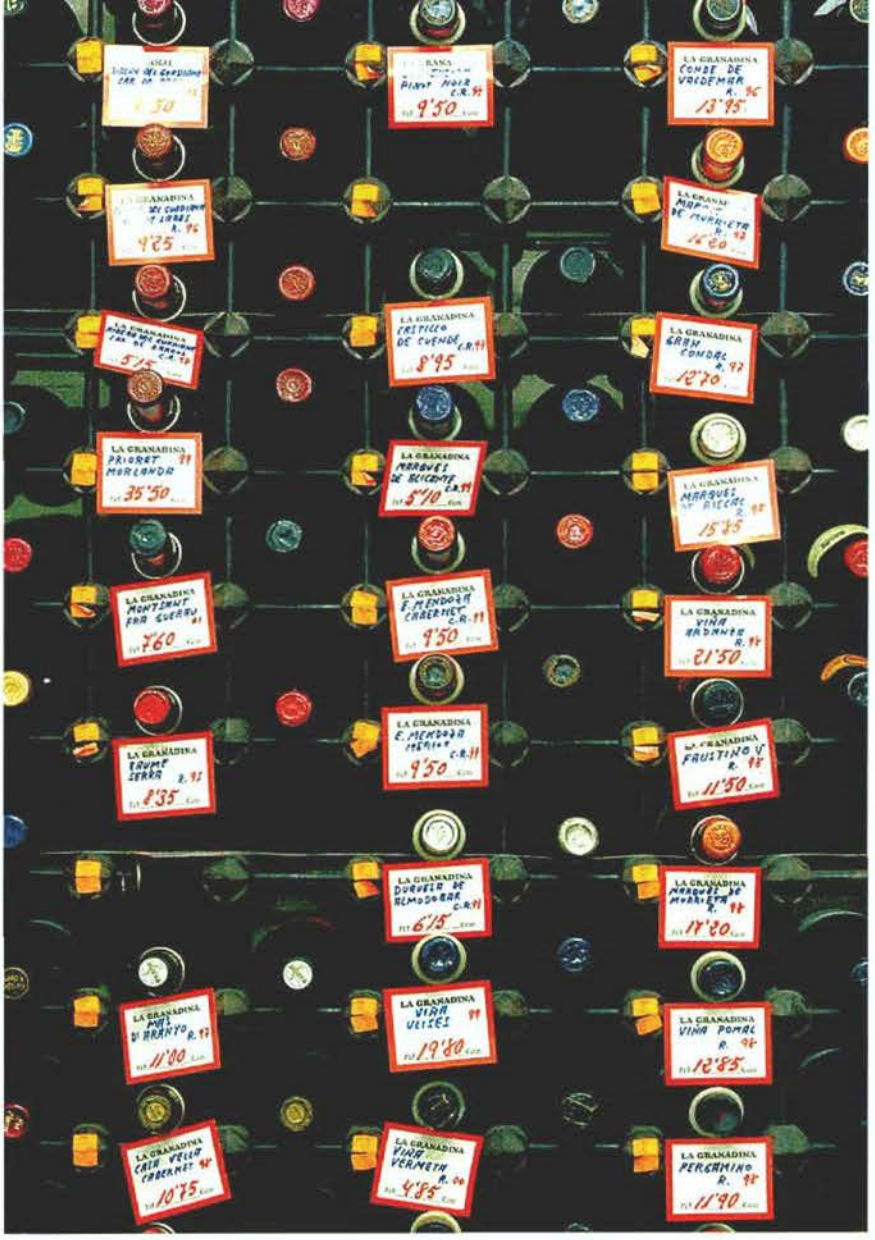
Alicante

We begin our visit in Alicante, in the Central Market. This is a 1920s, Modernist building, decorated with mosaics and constructed from a combination of iron, cement and glass, creating a warm, welcoming atmosphere. The spaciousness and the light filtering in from the sides and from above make it reminiscent

of a place of worship, although here the only ritual is a humdrum one, that of everyday shopping. The central nave houses the charcuterie shops and butchers. An astonishing array of pork products is on display, with different shapes and colors, ranging from white through brown, purple and red to black. Stall Number 217 on the ground floor is occupied by Salazones Vicente Leal. The owner comes from a family that has been producing salt fish in Alicante since 1892. "The essence of our products is in the raw materials used, with top-quality fish and sea salt, and in the totally artisan curing process resulting in beautiful colors, intense, fine aromas and strong flavors and sensations," says Vicente Leal. His establishment offers a wide range of products—roe of almadraba-fished tuna, meager, grey mullet, albacore tuna, ling, hake; dry fish (especially mojama, one of his star products), but also albacore tuna, cod and octopus. Leal's enthusiasm for his products does not prevent him from being realistic about prospects for growth in the market for salt fish. "Most of the customers who buy salted roe and mojama are from Alicante. Palates have to be trained to appreciate these flavors, so they're not very popular amongst visitors from other parts of Spain or from other countries, but all the Alicante bars offer mojama as a tapa. I can't see a very promising future for salt fish, but mojama and good-quality roe will keep their niche of connoisseur consumers."

And he gives a figure to justify his relative pessimism. "Thirty years ago in the Alicante Central Market there were about fifty stalls selling salt fish. Now there are just twelve of us."
Outside the Alicante market is an eye-catching stall offering stacks of turrón bars of every imaginable variety—Jijona, frosted, toasted egg yolk, with candied fruit—and marzipan candy, crystallized fruit (pineapple, orange, pumpkin), a variety of chocolates, as well as candied almonds. This stall is run by Sebastián Sirvent, who belongs to the third generation of a family of confectioners from Jijona. His grandfather set up the first business and the products have been sold for almost 90 years under the brand name of Alberto Monerris y Sirvent which figures on a delightful,

Turrones Espí, Alicante

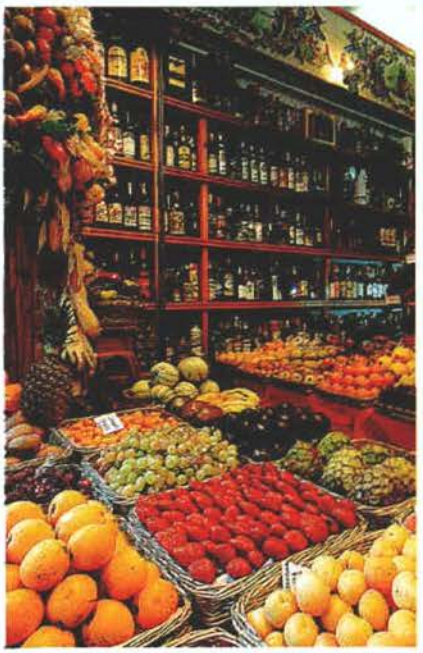


Left: La Granadina, Alicante;
right: Monerris Sirvent, Alicante

old-style label on the packs of turrón. "At the start," explains Sebastián Sirvent, "my family used to take their products to fairs, and always set up a stall on the Rambla de Alicante on market day. When the covered market was built in 1921 or 1922, my family had a stall on the front wall. Later they allowed us to set up a wooden kiosk which was replaced 12 years ago by a metal construction." Sirvent sells his products all year round to his regular customers and to occasional tourists and visitors. And the family business, which devotes every care to product quality—"the key to our prestige"—will continue, as two of the current owner's daughters are now running a new shop on Alfonso el Sabio street, very close to the market.

Now back to savory foods. Salazones Quintana is a large store, with a long counter piled up with charcuterie, cheeses and salt fish. Hams (from Jabugo, Cortegana, Cumbres Mayores, Guijuelo) hang from the ceiling and along the back walls. In addition to the shop in Quintana street, brothers Domingo and Jesús Juan and their cousin Jorge Juan Gas have another three shops in the city of Alicante and four others in the province. The elder brother, Jesús, spends his time traveling all round Spain selecting and buying prime produce. Local products on offer include Caprillice cheese, a mild goat's cheese made by hand in Elche; pork products from Jacarilla such as *morcón* (a large blood sausage), boar's head brawn, blood sausage, a type of boiled salami, etc.; and salt fish (tuna, ling and grey mullet roe, amongst others) from San Pedro del Pinatar. Salazones Quintana is busy on this weekday morning, with a long queue of customers waiting their turn at the counter in front of the cheeses and charcuterie from all the Spanish regions.

Another store close to the market is Turrones Espí. Run by Andrés Espí, from a Jijona family that has been producing turrón since 1892, it is one of a number of establishments set up in the 1920s in Alicante, some of them specializing in ice cream. The storefront is striking with its stark combination of noble wood and corten steel, a popular material amongst the latest school of designers and architects. "I had the alterations done three-and-a-half years ago," says Andrés, "on the advice of a decorator friend. I wanted a change but one that would still give the impression of old-fashioned prestige that is the mark of



Top: Charcuterías Manglano, Valencia; bottom: Tomás Huerta, Valencia

our firm and also hint at the artisan origin of our products." The centerpiece among the many varieties of turrón on display—with different flavors and colors—is what they call *turrón a la piedra*. "This is an exclusive product of ours, and I consider it 'the mother of all turrón'", he explains. "It is a cream of almonds that comes in small earthenware pots or boxes. In Jijona, where it comes from and where it is very popular, the locals eat it with a spoon." The name comes from the millstones *(piedras)* used to grind the almonds. The original process was done by hand, using a roller against a curved stone. "Turrón a la piedra is something of a 'primitive' product. It has no honey in it but is flavored with cinnamon and lemon, giving it a very different taste to that of classic turrón." Another specialty of this establishment are its wafer biscuits filled with turrón a la piedra.

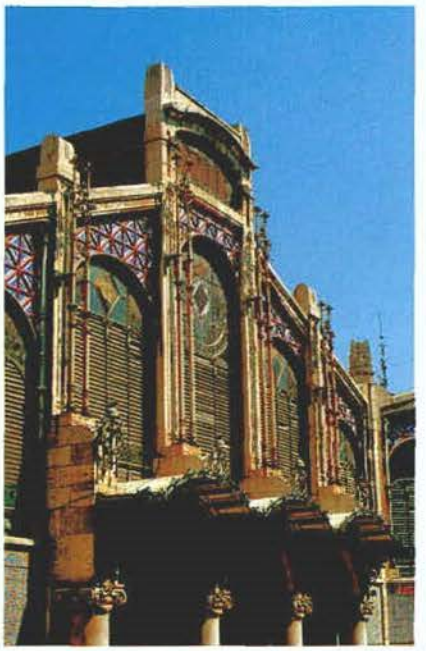
La Granadina is a small shop dating from 1915. Its tiny premises are located just around the corner from La Explanada, the seafront which borders the Alicante marina. The ware is exhibited in old-fashioned style on the counters and on shelves reaching up to the ceiling. The current owner, Nicolás Santiago, was previously an employee and bought the business twenty-five years ago.

Beginning with the wines, of which La Granadina has an interesting stock with over 100 references, including bottles from all the main DOs in Spain, Nicolás Santiago points out some regional wines: those from the Enrique Mendoza bodega from Villena and Alfaz del Pi and sold under the Santa Rosa brand; those from the Gutiérrez de la Vega bodegas, especially the Casta Diva sweet white wine, "rather like a Sauternes", with labels dedicated to Montserrat Caballé and the Italian composer Bellini; red wines from the Valle del Corche bodegas in Monóvar, and so on. "All these are popular wines at very affordable, medium prices," says Santiago. The salt fish on display comes from a couple of suppliers in Elda, and the turrón from Jijona. Amongst the Alicante cheeses is a fresh cheese from San Antonio with a picture of St Anthony on the label. Made in Callosa d'en Sarrià, Santiago recommends accompanying it with honey from La Romana.

Valencia

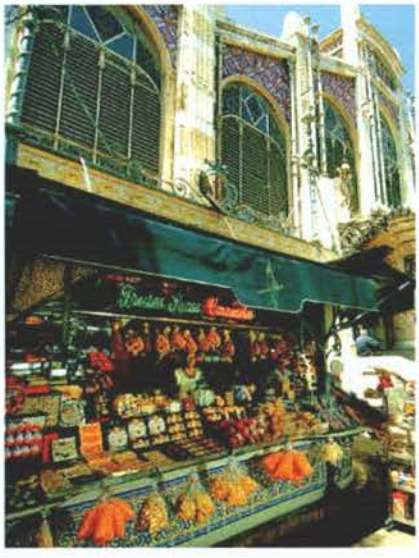
Now on to Valencia in the lead-up to the climax, on March 19th, of the *Fallas*, the region's annual festivities. With still a week to go before the *cremá*, when papier mâché monuments (called fallas) erected on the streets and depicting satirical scenes are burnt, many streets and squares are blocked off and stalls are doing a roaring trade in pumpkin fritters and hot chocolate, the classic snacks for these celebrations. Gourmet shops are especially busy because many Valencian families like to serve memorable meals to celebrate the festival of fire and fireworks.

On a central street is Las Añadas de España, an establishment set up in 1988 by José Bacete, who sold his chain of supermarkets to fulfill his dream of having a select gourmet store. Especially important is his wine and liqueurs section, with over 2,000 references from all over the world, in which wine-tasting sessions and wine courses are held regularly. We spoke to José Vicente



Left: Las Añadas de España, Valencia; right: Market of Valencia

de Perea, the firm's managing director, who feels that people underestimate Valencian wines. "Over the last five years," he says, "the making of Valencian wines—from Requena, Utiel, Alicante and others—has improved considerably. We have excellent wines such as those by Enrique Mendoza, Gutiérrez de la Vega, Celler de Roble, made from the native grapes." Las Añadas de España is a mecca for connoisseurs searching for quality products by the best Spanish and foreign brands, from the best Italian pasta to authentic *foie gras* from Dordogne, a wide selection of cooking salts (from Wales or France, for example) and balsamic vinegars from Modena. "Our products' success," says José Vicente de Perea, "has come together with the development of Valencia. Until recently, Valencia was a provincial town, but it now carries great economic and social weight. In gastronomy, we used to be little more than the home of *paella* (a rice-based dish) but we can now offer variety and top-notch cuisine. And this is mirrored in our business, with customers showing increasing interest in new, quality products." The foods on display include many Spanish products—cheese, charcuterie, salt fish, turrón and chocolate, honey, rice, and liqueurs (coffee, loquats, pineapple, etc.). José Vicente de Perea is especially proud of local olive oil: "The Valencian olive oils are now achieving high quality standards. The olives are hand-picked and taken to the mill immediately and the oil is produced with care. If you ask me to choose any particular area for oil production, I would opt for the Sierra de Espadán where the processors are really on the ball." During the celebrations of the Fallas, the City Council square is one of the liveliest—and noisiest—spots to be. But this year, the terrible news of the attacks in Madrid on March 11th cast a cloud over events. Many festivities were cancelled and excitement turned to consternation. But we continued with our visits and stopped at a small establishment on the square, Turrones Galiana. José Galiana Espí started making turrón in Jijona, the center of turrón production, in 1872. The small counter and the surrounding shelves display all the well-known varieties of turrón as well as other specialties such as turrón-filled almonds, marzipan candy with a sweet egg yolk or sweet potato filling,



From top to bottom: Frutos Secos Mercé, Barcelona; Turrones Galiana,Valencia; Horchatería Gelat, Valencia; Frutos Secos Mercé, Barcelona

polvorones (buttery lard cakes) or sweet potato delights. Also on offer are ice creams, at which the Valencians are experts.
The Valencian Central Market—a splendid Modernist building (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 39)—lies at the heart of the old center, opposite the Gothic exchange, or Lonja. The fruit and vegetables, cheeses and preserves, charcuterie, fresh meat, salt products and pickles look even more tempting against the stained glass windows, iron columns and highly-decorated arches. Many of the stalls attract our attention. Inside, Charcuterías Manglano has an amazing selection of pork products—white or black butifarras, with egg or other flavorings, hams,

blood sausages, longanizas and many more. Outside the market, on one side of the main entrance, Horchatería Gelat makes and sells *horchata*, a typical Valencian drink made from the juice of tiger nuts and served very cold (*Spain Gourmetour* Nº 48). On the other side, Frutos Secos Mercè offers almonds, peanuts and hazelnuts as well as dried and crystallized fruits, dates, figs and a large selection of turrón.
Next we turn to a colorful facade decorated with mosaics depicting sacks of flour, fish, hens, cans of preserves, wines, turrón and still lifes of food: the Tomás Huerta gourmet shop. The decorative front has been the image of this shop for almost 30 years. Before, from 1920, it was a small, classic food store, or *colmado*, with the owners living at the back, and run by the grandmother of the current owner, Tomás Huerta Grau. Tomás, a biologist specializing in food technology and his wife, Angelina Corregoso, a pharmacist, have gradually focused on select products and careful presentation. Among the very wide range of national and international products, Angelina Corregoso points to Aigua de Valencia, "a cocktail invented by the Madrid Bar here in Valencia based on sparkling wine and orange juice, and bottled". She shows us a bottle, with the label in Japanese, which won a design award. When we inquire about the autochthonous products

on sale, she explains, "We also sell Valencian *cavas* and wines, pork products from Requena, bottled *pisto* (a vegetable stew) from Alicante, virgin olive oil from north Castellón, and tomato, orange and lemon preserves made without additives by Aurelio Vallés, an artisan from Alcudia who works with his children".

In a street leading off the beautiful Marqués del Turia Avenue, we discover a feast for the eyes in the La Rosa de Jericó cake shop. Colorful cakes made from numerous different ingredients, shiny fruit preserves and candy of every shape and size accompany the key attraction, an exuberant, baroque display—which continues inside in the spacious, old-style store—of what are called *monas de Pascua*. These buns, typical for this region and for Barcelona, are described to us by owner Carlos Jericó Montoro as eggs or figures made in chocolate that people give at this time of the year to their godchildren. Some of them are monumental in conception—carriages pulled by animals, castles, doll's houses, dance scenes, etc.—and similar to the fallas but for the enjoyment of those with a sweet tooth. They are all made on the premises of La Rosa de Jericó, which also produces turrón, walnut cakes, *pan quemado* (a large bun made at springtime) and many other specialties. "Ever since my great-great-grandfather started this business in 1890 in Segorbe, a town in the

WEB SITES

La Masía, Boquería Market of Barcelona

Useful Information for the Tourist

ALICANTE

www.alicanteturismo.com
Municipal Tourism Board web site. Information on beaches, arts & culture, conferences & meetings, tourist routes and useful information for the visitor. Webpage includes videos, a news section and a series of webcams in the city.
(English, French, Spanish)

www.costablanca.org
Provincial Tourism Board web site. Resources on accommodation, transport, travel agencies, gastronomy, culture, leisure, health, towns, active tourism, beaches & nature. Also available are maps of the region, routes and detailed street maps.
(Dutch, English, German, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Valencian)

VALENCIA

www.turisvalencia.es
City of Valencia Tourism and Convention Bureau. Sections on transport, gastronomy, arts & culture, nightlife, outdoor sports activities, festivities, city routes and beaches.
(English, Spanish)

www.comunitatvalenciana.com
Autonomous Community of Valencia tourism web site. Information on beaches, golf, water sports, nature, theme parks, cultural agenda & festivities, trade fairs & congresses, gastronomy and routes. Useful information sections including accommodation, tourist information offices, travel agencies and how to get there.
(English, German, French, Spanish, Valencian)

BARCELONA

www.barcelonaturisme.com
City of Barcelona official tourism site. Sections on general information, transport, travel agencies, accommodation, gastronomy, culture & leisure, sports, trade fairs & business, routes inside and around Barcelona and a virtual tour. Links to Forum Barcelona 2004 and online booking of accommodation, tickets to events and tours.
(Catalan, English, French, Spanish)

www.catalunyaturisme.com
Autonomous Community of Catalonia Tourism Board web site. Page thematically split into nature, culture, activities & sports, health & leisure, and accommodation ranging from spas to campsites.
(Catalan, English, German, French, Spanish)

GERONA

www.turismegirona.com
Province of Gerona tourism web site. Three main sections on accommodation (with sub-sections on rural houses, hotels, campsites, hostels and spas), restaurants, leisure (including active tourism, aquatic theme parks, equestrian tourism, museums, nature, skiing, sailing and golf) and city councils.
(Catalan, English, Spanish)

PALMA DE MALLORCA

www.illesbalears.es
Tourism web site of the Autonomous Community of the Balearic Islands. Sections on art & culture, nature, sports, gastronomy, crafts & traditions, leisure, shopping, general information and history. Other sections include transport, accommodation, tourist office index and travel material.
(Catalan, English, French, German, Spanish)

www.a-palma.es
City council of Palma de Mallorca web site. Wealth of information on the city, including history, traditions, transport, maps, climate, webcams, museums and art galleries.
(Catalan, English, German, Spanish)

province of Teruel, we have endeavored to maintain the combination of top-quality raw materials, preferably from Valencia and with no chemical additives, with manual procedures and constant innovation."

Barcelona

From the hillside districts down to the sea via the Paseo de Gracia and the Ramblas, Barcelona boasts countless gourmet establishments. Our first stop is Semon. Having started out as a family-run establishment in 1965, it is now a chain of delicatessens, with a top-ranking catering division, a number of restaurants offering market cuisine and a smoked food production plant. Though the first shop was in Barcelona, there are now branches in Madrid and Marbella too. The stores therefore offer a showcase on the company which was invited to serve the wedding banquet for the Infanta Cristina as well as, 11 years ago, the banquet at the Madrid meeting of the International Monetary Fund. During our visit we were accompanied by Aïda Rueda, head of communication, who pointed out the genuine Catalonian products, such as the oils from Lérida (Borges, Dauro de L'Empordà, El Rifer and Antich Penedés), which stand alongside vinegar from Reggio Emilia by Ferdinando Cavalli, English jams by Fortnum & Mason, teas in charming metal cans bearing the French

Top and bottom: Fruits del Bosch, Boqueria Market of Barcelona

Mariage brand as well as supreme handmade cheeses from Spain and France. It is practically impossible to think of a delicatessen product that cannot be found in Semon, where the restaurant attached to the shop invites customers to taste its products in traditional or avant-garde presentations.
On a corner in the Ensanche district, opposite the Sant Antoni market is the Escofet Oliver shop, run by a well-known family of charcutiers. Brothers Jaume, Jordi and Josep Escofet studied law and business management as well as food chemistry and technology. They are in charge of production and of ten points of sale in the city of Barcelona. "We have always specialized in charcuterie, having been brought up making sausages," says Jordi, a young entrepreneur who states that the keys to their business are diligence, personal contact with customers and native products. "We make about thirty percent of the products we sell—white butifarra, black butifarra, mortadella, cooked ham, fuet, cooked pig's trotters, *pâté de campagne*—and these are some of our best-selling products, bought fresh for immediate consumption or vacuum-packed." The Escofet brothers pay regular visits to their suppliers to select the pigs, chickens or calves whose meat they then process by traditional methods into the goods they sell. "Our customers are regulars. They trust our products and are happy to follow the advice of our sales staff who are professionals," says Jordi Escofet.

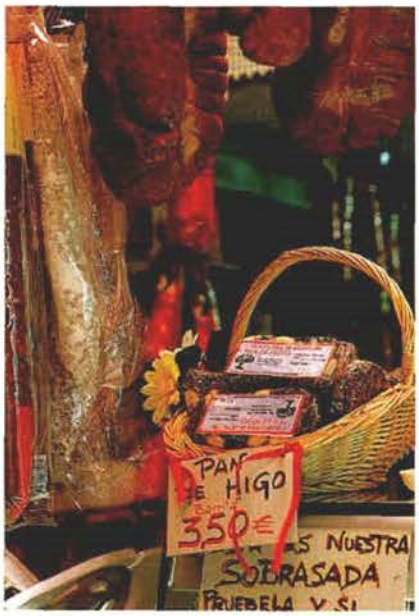
Ventura, Gerona

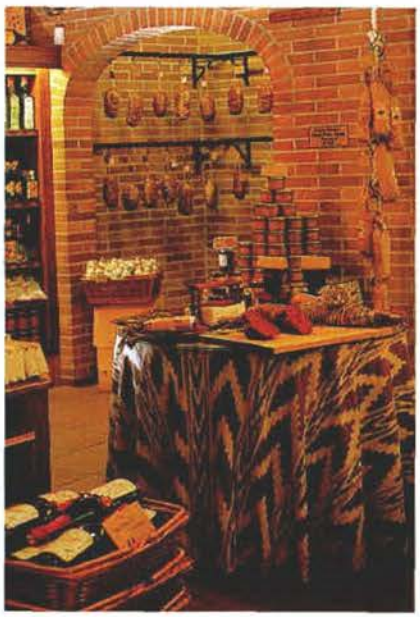
We now move on to the Boquería (*Spain Gourmetour* N° 38), much more than a market. The Boquería, officially the Mercat de Sant Josep, on the Rambla at the very heart of the city, offers an abundance of smells and colors. Its fresh produce is superb, and its salesmen and women unique. After an almost impossible choice, we stop at a stall at the back of this cathedral of fresh gourmet produce. Behind the display at Fruits del Bosch, the lively Llorenç Petras is happy to answer our questions. He is a veteran dealer in mushrooms which, he says, "used not to be so popular as they are today". After starting out in the town of Olessa de Montserrat, he has been in the Boquería market for thirty years and sells fresh mushrooms, dried mushrooms, mushrooms in oil or canned, frozen, or powdered. "Customers want mushrooms all year round so we bring them in from all over the world. Queen of them all, in my opinion, is *amanita cesarea*. Next on my list are porcini mushrooms (*boletus edulis*), known as *siurell* or *ceps* in Catalonia, followed by milky agarics and chanterelles. Mushrooms are at their peak in autumn," says Llorenç, who not only sells them but is also an excellent cook and author of the book *Cocinar con setas* (Cooking with Mushrooms). Fruits del Bosch also offers other forest produce such as herbs, edible flowers and snails. Colmado Quilez, on a corner of the stately Rambla de Catalunya, combines its traditional image with all the latest products. "Though we sell as many as 12,000 products," says manager Faustino Muñoz Soria, "we specialize in wine, cava and whisky. Then come the prime Spanish hams, select caviar from Iran and a wide range of products bearing our own brand." Just to give an idea of the variety, the latter include foie gras, coffee and saffron. Of the Catalonian products, Faustino points out the salchichón from Vic, by Casa Riera and Casa Sendra, wines from the Penedés district such as the Castillo de Perelada, anchovies from L'Escala by Conservas Illa, and the traditional Tupí cheese from the Catalonian Pyrenees, made with leftover ewes', goats' and cows' milk cheeses preserved in *eau-de-vie* and presented in earthenware jars. He offers us some exquisite chocolates made by Oriol Balaguer who, for years, was pastry cook at El Bulli, the famous restaurant run by Ferran Adrià, in Cala Montjoi, in Gerona. La Barceloneta quarter used to be considered far from the center but since the city was reunited with its seafront in 1992 for the Olympic Games, it is no longer a separate entity. Nonetheless, it has retained the character of a small town where everyone knows each other and outsiders are quickly spotted. José Pérez Nieto, Pep, is the *alma mater* of La Botiga d'en Pep and its neighbor La Taverna d'en Pep. The latter is a simple, welcoming restaurant that is frequented by seafaring tourists who berth their private vessels in the nearby Barcelona marina. "We have very little space in La Botiga but we try to stock a bit of everything—sausages from Aigua Freda, *mi-cuit* and *magret* of duck from Ampurdán, mojama, smoked salmon, trout and swordfish, cheeses and wines. Everybody knows us as the district delicatessen so we also have select Italian pasta and a good selection of hams, preserves and wines from all over Spain," says Pep. He adds proudly, "Now we've made a name for ourselves and we have plenty of customers but, when we started out in 1971, we took a great risk".

Gerona

Gerona is a small city, with about 75,000 inhabitants and famed for its high standard of living. The old town has kept the medieval layout of the Jewish quarter almost intact and boasts some magnificent monuments. On the other side of the Onyar river is the Ensanche, the main shopping area. On the Carrer Nou is Ventura, a shop with a modern appearance but featuring a 16th-century column, formerly part of a Franciscan monastery that once stood on the site. Narciso Ventura defines himself as "a traditional Gerona inhabitant and a traditional grocer". Alongside stacks of jams, oils, wines and preserves, he has counters with cheeses and foie gras, pâtés and salt fish, Ibérico hams and exquisite ready-made dishes. "This is

Left: Colmado La Montaña; right: Son Vivot, both Palma de Mallorca





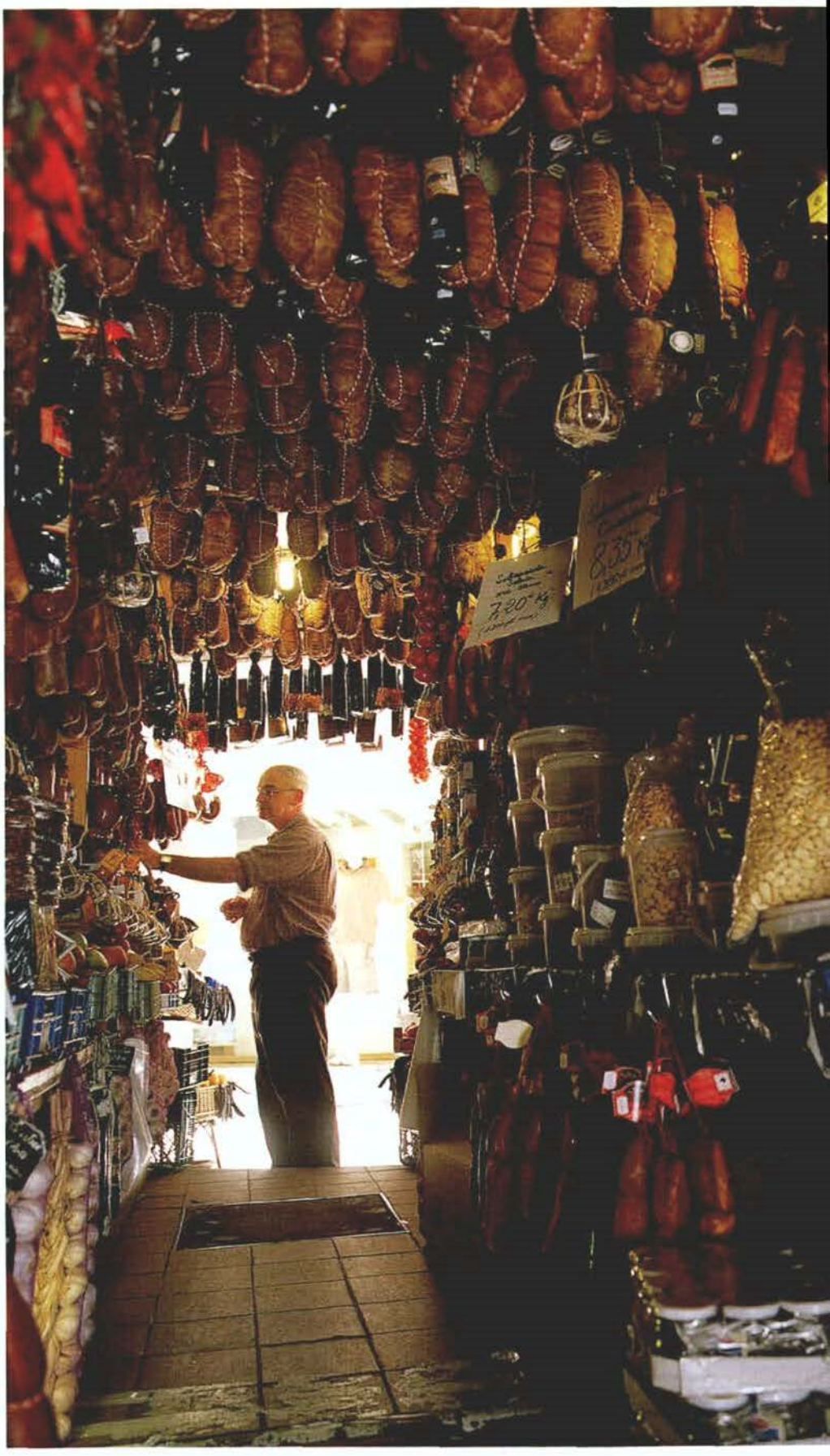
a complex business but, in a nutshell, what you need to know is how to buy, how to sell and how to throw away," says Narciso Ventura. "I'm like a tailor who makes meals to measure, making life easier for customers," he continues. "It's important to know what customers want, to offer them only the best, to keep a good stock of the classic Catalonian products and to introduce new products from all over the world."

Not far from here is Le Petit Paradis, a shop run by Tati Quera, a young woman who has already had a professional career as a sommelier. This is one of the fifteen establishments which belong to the 'Mestres Cellerers de Catalunya', an association of the best wine stores in Catalonia. The cellar embraces everything—all the Spanish DOs, as well as wines from France, Germany, California, Chile, Australia, South Africa, even kosher wines. Tati Quera loves her job. "I really enjoy seeking out products in their places of origin and meeting the producers, and I love to recommend wines, cheeses or pork products to my customers." In her roomy premises, she holds tasting sessions for caviar, cheeses, wines, ham, foie gras, as well as talks by specialists and wine-tasting courses.

Palma de Mallorca

Now off to the island of Majorca, the best-known Spanish island in the Mediterranean. And we talk about its most famous product, sobrasada, with Pedro Amengual Garreta, the owner of Colmado Santo Domingo and a member of the fourth generation of a family that has been in the grocery business for 125 years. His shop is in the very center of Palma, the capital. "The main types of sobrasada are from what we call black pork and white pork. And, as with ham, everything depends on the curing process which can vary between one month and a year," he explains. "We have always sold the same local products, following the same routine over the years." He also showed us the *butifarrón* and, "the most ancient of all the Majorcan handmade charcuterie products, the *camaiot*". He also has Majorcan cheeses of all sorts made from cows', goats' and ewes' milk, as well as cured and semi-cured cows' milk cheese from Menorca. Other products popular not only with Majorcan residents but also with Spaniards from the mainland and foreign visitors who, he says, "once they've tried them, come back for more", are the olive oils and liqueurs, most of them made from herbs. Everything on sale in the Colmado Santo Domingo is homemade. "We make the typical fig loaf and the jams. The other products are made by other branches of the family," says Pedro Amengual. For the last six years, Son Vivot, close to the Plaza de España, has been a landmark for gourmets living in Palma or visiting it frequently. Its hallmark are well-displayed, quality products against a rustic background of light-wood, bare beams. "We mostly deal in Balearic products, though we also have specialties from the mainland and a good wine cellar," says Miguel Mulet, manager of Son Vivot. A glance round his shelves shows several types of sobrasada (hot and sweet, black and white pork, various sizes, etc.), butifarrón, *carn i xua* (a sausage made of lean, spicy pork); Majorcan pâtés made from the native black pork or from a sort of wild mushroom the locals call *sclatassangs*. "Another of our prize products are jams, which are exquisite," says Miguel Mulet proudly, "made of raspberry, lemon, apricot, peach and many other fruits. Also our honey, either on its own or with nuts." The Son Vivot cellar specializes in Majorcan red and white wines (from the bodegas of José Luis Ferrer, Viña Toujana and

Colmado Sto. Domingo, Palma de Mallorca



Jaume de Puntiró, amongst others) and herb liqueurs from Majorca and Ibiza, although there is also a selection of the main Spanish DO wines. "All our suppliers are artisans, producing small quantities with care, and the orders we place with them are small," says Miguel Mulet. The chain between producer, trader and customer is thus maintained, a real guarantee.

Maria Unceta, *born in San Sebastián, is a travel writer. 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 140

Left: Escofet Oliver; right: Fruits del Bosch, both Barcelona

THE SHOPS

In many Spanish cities, the El Corte Inglés department stores offer a select range of regional products in their Club del Gourmet sections.

ALICANTE

Salazones Quintana
Quintana, 40
Tel: (+34) 965 214 842
Pork products, cheeses and a wide range of hams from all over Spain.

Salazones Vicente Leal
Alicante Central Market, ground floor, Stall No. 217
Tel: (+34) 965 125 919 and 965 217 837
One of the most prestigious establishments for salt fish, specializing in roe and tuna *mojama*.

Monerris Sirvent
Alicante Central Market (exterior)
A traditional store specializing in *turrón*, marzipan candy and crystallized fruit.

Seguí
Castaños, 45
Tel: (+34) 965 212 345
A classic cake shop with turrón, candy and assorted cakes and pastries.

Turrones Espí
Tomás López Torregrosa, 17
Tel: (+34) 965 214 441
Homemade candy and turrón. The specialty is *turrón a la piedra* from Jijona.

Province of Alicante

Pastelería Totel
José Martínez González, 103
Elda (Alicante)
Tel: (+34) 965 388 224
An excellent pastry shop run by Francisco Torreblanca, one of Spain's leading pastry cooks and chocolatiers.

Salaons Vicente Romà
Central Market, Stall No. 72, and Canalejas, 33
Villajoyosa (Alicante)
Tel: (+34) 608 246 754
The exceptional salt fish, especially tuna roe and mojama, is well-known in this seaside town.

Turrones Alfredo Mira Monerris
Vicente Cabrera, 56
Jijona (Alicante)
Tel: (+34) 965 611 370
Well-known specialists in turrón, in the birthplace of this almond and honey candy.

VALENCIA

Charcuterías Manglano
Central Market, balcony 1 and Colón Market, Conde de Salvatierra, 9
Tel: (+34) 963 829 198 and 963 528 854
Pickles, *foie gras* and *pâtés*, caviar, salmon and top-quality local pork products.

El Mostagán
Avda. Primado Reig, 135
Tel: (+34) 963 695 275
A wide selection of wines, cavas and liqueurs from Valencia and the rest of Spain.

Frutos Secos Mercè
Central Market, exterior, No. 11 and 13
Tel: (+34) 963 917 399
A wide selection of turrón, crystallized fruit, almonds and other nuts.

Horchatería Gelat
Central Market, exterior
Tel: (+34) 963 918 697
Production and sale of *horchata*, a refreshing Valencian drink made from the juice of tiger nuts.

La Rosa de Jericó
Hernán Cortés, 14
Tel: (+34) 963 524 545
www.larosadejerico.es
A pastry and chocolate shop selling homemade cakes, chocolates and *monas de Pascua*.

Las Añadas de España
Játiva, 3
Tel: (+34) 963 533 845
Wines and liqueurs from all over the world, and a good selection of pork products, cheeses, olive oils and other Valencian products.

Martínez
Ruzafa, 12
Tel: (+34) 963 516 289
An excellent, old-style pastry shop specializing in truffles.

Tomás Huerta
Maestro Gozalbo, 13
Tel: (+34) 963 954 693 and 963 958 009
This establishment offers a wide range of wines and liqueurs, hams from all over Spain and local charcuterie, cheeses and olive oils.

Tomás Viciano
Convento de Jerusalén, 13
Tel: (+34) 963 523 049
A traditional charcuterie, with a good selection of Ibérico products, smoked products, cheeses, preserves and local wines.

Turrones Galiana
Plaza del Ayuntamiento, 3
Tel: (+34) 963 519 698
Homemade ice creams and turrón bearing the José Galiana Planelles brand, set up in Jijona in 1872.

Son Vivot, Palma de Mallorca

BARCELONA

Escofet Oliver
Comte d'Urgell, 12
Tel: (+34) 934 525 528
A family-run establishment producing and selling top-quality native pork products, with several branches in the city.

Fruits del Bosch
Boquería Market
Tel: (+34) 933 025 273
A market stall specializing in mushrooms from Catalonia and the rest of the world. Also snails and herbs.

Halagos
Valencia, 189
Tel: (+34) 934 525 528
A variety of fresh and preserved, artisan duck products including foie gras, pâté, *mi-cuit*, etc. Products may be tasted in the store.

La Botiga d'en Pep
La Maquinista, 10
Tel: (+34) 932 217 732
A small establishment in the Barceloneta district, with a selection of delicatessen and local products.

La Masía
Boquería Market, Stall No. 970
Tel. (+34) 933 179 420
All sorts of pork products *(fuet, bull, butifarra,* etc.) produced in the La Masia facilities in Vic.

Quílez
Rambla de Catalunya, 63
Tel: (34) 932 158 785
A classic Barcelona store with a plentiful stock of Catalonian, Spanish and international products and an interesting range of wines and liqueurs.

Semon
Ganduxer, 31
Tel: (+34) 932 016 508
A top-ranking firm specializing in smoked products, international products and a selection of local foods. Also confectionery and ready-made dishes prepared in-house.

Valor
Rambla de Catalunya, 46
Tel: (+34) 934 876 246
This establishment serves and sells chocolates made by Valor, a well-known Alicante company.

GERONA

Ambrosía
Carreras Peralta, 4
Tel: (+34) 972 204 630
www.ambrosia-shop.com
A medieval-looking shop with a small display of homemade gastronomic products such as jams, fruit preserves, wines, etc.

Le Petit Paradis
Travessia del Carril, 1
Tel: (+34) 972 215 925
A large selection of over 3,000 wines and liqueurs from all over the world. Also pork products and handmade cheeses from Catalonia. Tasting sessions are held.

La Xixonenca
Argenteria, 8
Tel: (+34) 972 220 938
A homemade pastry and ice cream shop on attractive premises of Modernist design in the old part of town.

Ventura
Carrer Nou, 7
Tel: (+34) 972 200 024
Charcuterie, cheeses, wines, ready-made dishes and other quality products in a classic, but innovative shop.

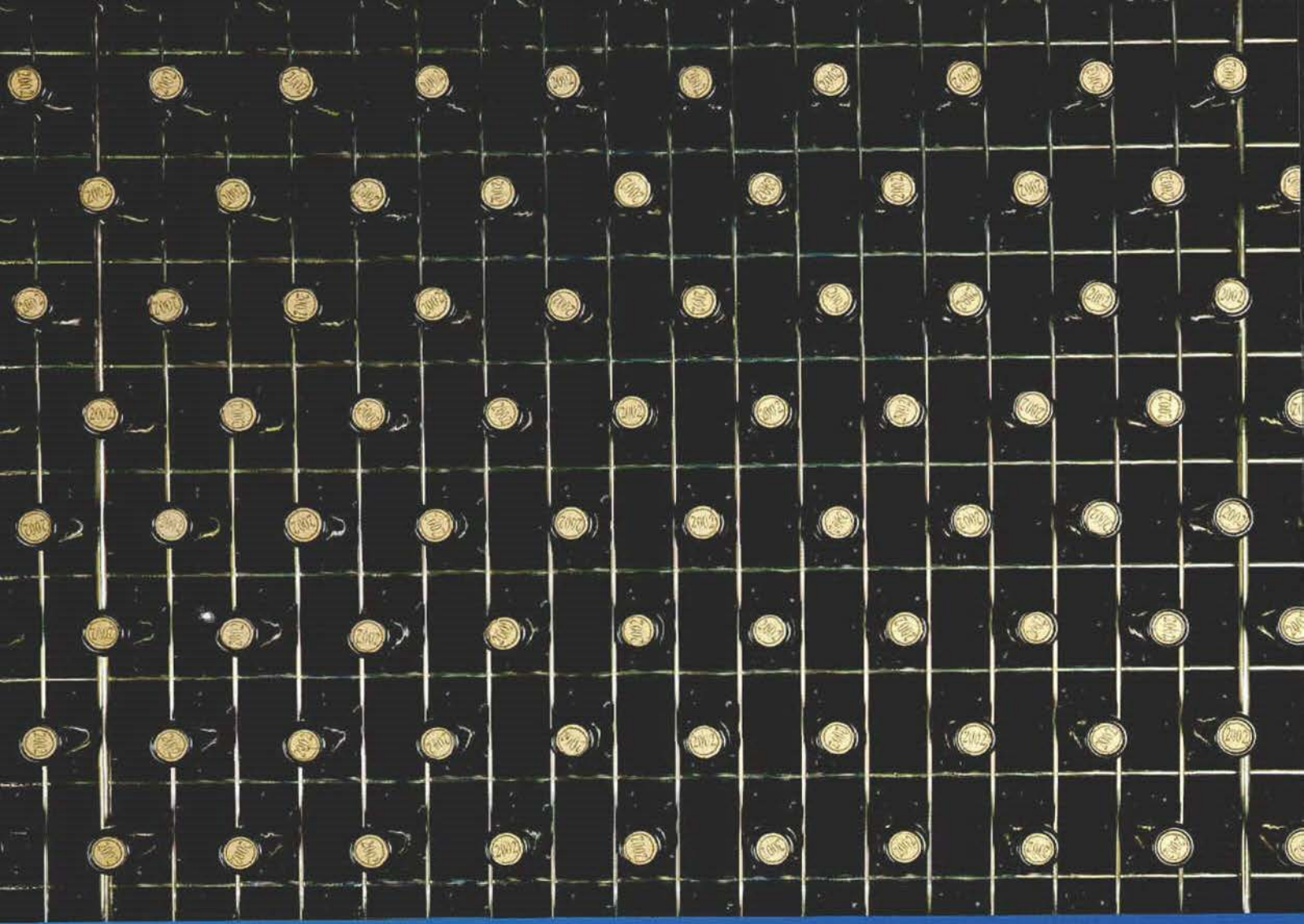
PALMA DE MALLORCA

Charcutería Delgado
Reina Esclaramunda, s/n
Tel: (+34) 971 719 736
Sale and tasting of cheeses, pork products, wines, cavas and liqueurs.

Colmado La Montaña
Carrer Jaume II, 27
Tel: (+34) 971 712 595
A traditional establishment selling Majorcan products.

Colmado Santo Domingo
Santo Domingo, 1
Tel: (+34) 971 714 887
A traditional establishment selling homemade Majorcan and Menorcan products such as *sobrasada, butifarrón,* cheese, etc.

Son Vivot
Porta Pintada,1
Tel: (+34) 971 720 748
A good selection of Majorcan products (sobrasada and other pork products, cheese, olives, jams and honey), as well as wines from the Balearic Islands and the rest of Spain.



The New Wines of Don QUIXOTE'S La Mancha

Text
Gerry Dawes

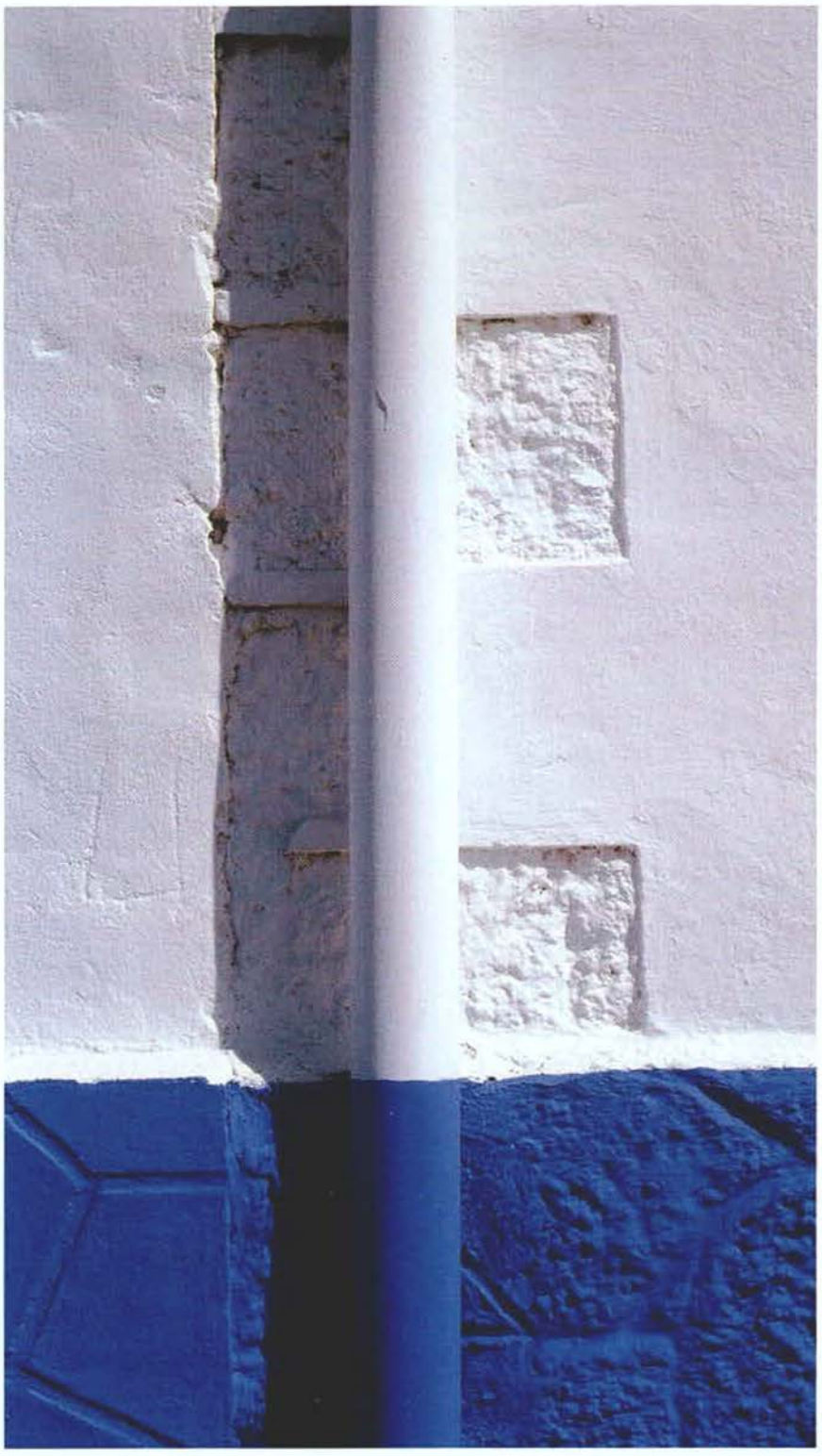
Photos
Javier Campano/ICEX

Being a Don Quixote-like figure myself—one who has peripatetically criss-crossed Spain for some thirty years—I have an affinity for the Man of La Mancha, but until I set out in January of both 2003 and 2004 to investigate the buzz about Castile-La Mancha's emerging quality wine movement, I had never had the opportunity to explore the region in depth. During my eye-opening trips through La Mancha, I visited more than forty wineries scattered across the core of this vast five-province region (Cuenca, Toledo, Ciudad Real, Albacete, and Guadalajara). I tasted some surprisingly good wines in revitalized existing wineries and saw several impressive new bodegas and vineyards that showed great promise.

La Mancha is an evocative land that in many places is a virtual recreation of Cervantes' (1547-1616) *Don Quixote,* which many literary scholars consider the first and greatest novel ever written. Many of the region's wine towns are the settings for Don Quixote's metaphysical adventures. Statues of the gaunt knight errant; his equally gaunt horse, Rocinante; his faithful rotund sidekick, Sancho Panza; and his imaginary love, Dulcinea, are ubiquitous. The famous windmills (the 'giants' Quixote attacked with calamitous results for himself and Rocinante) still stand sentinel above the plain at Campo de Criptana (where one of the best new La Mancha wines El Vínculo is being made by Alejandro Fernández), at Alcázar de San Juan, and at Mota del Cuervo. A high ridge overlooking the saffron-producing town of Consuegra is spectacularly crowned by ten windmills and a castle. In Puerto Lápice, the Venta del Quixote features a re-creation of the Knight of Sorrowful Countenance guarding his armor in the courtyard. The Venta has long been a favorite travelers' stop for lunch on typical Manchegan dishes and for local specialties at the *venta*'s shop: Wine, world-famous Manchego cheese, saffron, and olive oil. Charming El Toboso, the home village of Dulcinea, the object of Quixote's affections, still retains a distinctly Cervantine air.

The rain in Spain...

If one gives La Mancha a superficial once-over, it would be easy to dismiss it as a bleak, often windy, plain ringed by distant, often formidable mountains and thus, with its too-hot or too-cold temperature extremes, it would seem as inhospitable to the production of fine wines as this land often was to the intrepid knight errant and his ordinary wine-quaffing squire, Sancho Panza. Ironically, though, Castile-La Mancha has half the vineyard land in Spain (some 607,050 hectares / 1,500,000 acres of vines) and produces half of Spain's wine (an average of 1.892 billion liters / 500,000,000 gallons per year). The members of Tomelloso's Cooperativa Virgen de las Viñas own a mind-boggling 19,830 ha (49,000-plus acres) of vines, which includes—seemingly preposterous in a country known for red wines—more than 18,212 ha (45,000 acres) of the white grape Airén, or more vineyard acreage than the entire DO Ribera del Duero. The La Mancha Designation of Origin (Glossary page 139) alone constitutes the largest wine region in the world and the vineyards in Albacete province, which represent only 10% of Castile-La Mancha's total, cover more area than some 25 other Spanish *Denominaciones de Origen* combined. Almost everyone who writes about La Mancha is tempted to use "The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain," Eliza Doolittle's mantra from *My Fair Lady,* but in Spain the rain doesn't fall mainly on the region's high-altitude plains, most of it actually falls in the green Atlantic provinces of northern Spain. What falls on the plains of La Mancha—a word derived from *manxa,* Arabic for dry land—is a meager 30-40 cm (11.8-15.7 inches) of rainfall annually. And, though La Mancha averages 3,000 hours of sunlight per year (more than eight hours per day), Manchegan winters, during which the temperature can drop



below 0°C (32°F), are long and cold. Winters give way to very hot, almost rainless, relatively short summers, during which temperatures can soar to more than 43°C (110°F) and Manchegans pray (usually in vain) for "rain on the plain".

The intense summer heat is the biggest problem for viticulture in La Mancha because it often prevents the grapes from ripening evenly. Guadalupe Valdés, oenologist at Casa de la Viña—located near Alhambra (Cuidad Real) and one of the most picturesque wineries in Castile-La Mancha—told me, "In this region the proper ripening of the grapes is almost always difficult due to the high temperatures, because the grape pulp ripens much faster than the skin and seeds".

However, despite the rather harsh climate and stark terrain, in an epoch when concentrated, high-alcohol wines characterized by very ripe fruit are very much in vogue, La Mancha has become one of the hottest new regions in Spain. A modern wave of entrepreneurs and winemakers in Castile-La Mancha is determined to change the image of the region as primarily a producer of high-volume,

low-end red table wines and flaccid white wines made from the Airén grapes grown for brandy production. But this has not been an overnight development. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, standards in Castile-La Mancha began to improve as a significant number of wineries modernized their equipment and vinification techniques. In 1996, the La Mancha DO rules allowed officially the inclusion of foreign grapes, such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah, which had been permitted only as 'experimental' varieties until then. Even though the dominant marketing philosophy in Castile-La Mancha remains to produce large volumes of wine at low prices, to borrow a line from Bob Dylan, "the times they are changing" and changing rapidly.

Quality-minded producers

A serious movement is already well underway in Castile-La Mancha to establish the region as a major producer of international-style red wines. This new orientation towards quality, highlighted by the emergence of several single vineyard estates capable of producing world-class wines and major winery projects representing substantial new investments by outsiders from DOs like Rioja, Ribera del Duero and Jerez-Xérès-Sherry, now has Castile-La Mancha poised to make a serious impact in both national and foreign markets. And even the largest traditional high-volume bodegas are now paying serious attention to improving quality by turning out wines that are far better made, cleaner, more stable, fruitier, yet still quite inexpensive.

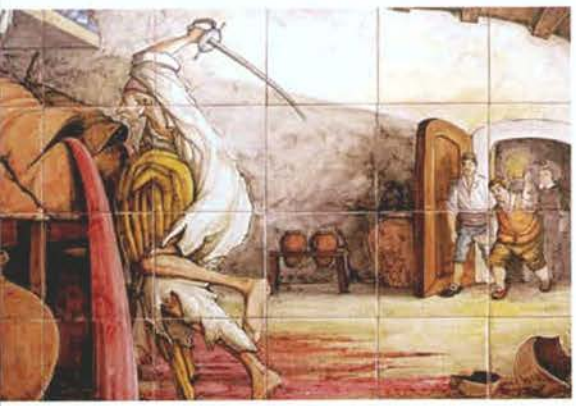
Scattered around the periphery of La Mancha, in the hillier areas of the provinces of Toledo, Albacete and Cuenca, are a handful of quality-minded producers who are members of the self-proclaimed Grandes Pagos de España (Great Single Vineyard Estates—read *Grands Crus*—of Spain, a few of which are in Castile-León), a group which began life as Grandes Pagos de Castilla. These Castile-La Mancha Grandes Pagos are the great hope of the region for international respectability. Along with several newcomers, both large and small, who have moved into the region to take advantage of its combination of relatively high altitude (most of the meseta is over 610 meters / 2,000 feet above sea level), dry, sunny climate, and chalk-laced soils, the Grandes Pagos group generally sells their wines as Vinos de la Tierra de Castilla.

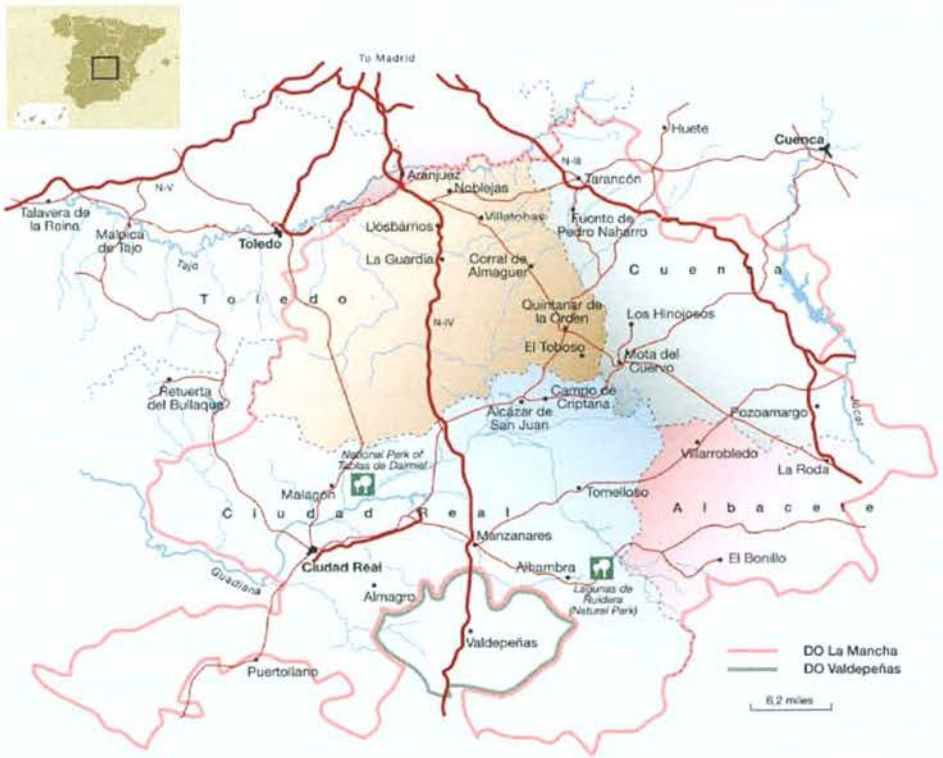
Member wineries of Grandes Pagos de España in Castile-La Mancha include modern Spanish wine pioneer Carlos Falcó's (Marqués de Griñón) Dominio de Valdepusa, now its own DO de Pago (Single Vineyard Designation of Origin) at Malpica de Tajo (Toledo); Uribes Madero at Huete (Cuenca); Dehesa del Carrizal and Pago Vallegarcía, both at Retuerta de Bullaque (Cuidad Real); Finca Sandoval at Ledaña (Cuenca) from DO Manchuela and Manuel Manzaneque's superb Finca Élez at

El Bonillo (Albacete), now also designated DO de Pago Finca Élez. In addition to the high-profile Grandes Pagos wineries, there are a number of other bodegas also producing at least some of their wines under the Vinos de la Tierra de Castilla designation. The El Puerto de Santa María-based sherry producer Osborne made a huge investment in their new 1,012-ha (2,500-acre) estate and 270,000-square-meter bodega near Malpico de Tajo, where they produce two Vino de la Tierra de Castilla red wines, Dominio de Malpica (100% Cabernet Sauvignon) and the bargain-priced Solaz (*Wine Spectator,* June 2004: 87 pts.), a blend of Tempranillo (80%) and Cabernet Sauvignon (20%). González Byass, another famous sherry producer, has also invested in Castile-La Mancha and has launched his own brand, Altozano. Other noteworthy wineries producing some wines under V T Castilla designation are Arva Vitis, Bodegas del Muni (Corpus del Muni), Bodegas Videva (Pago de Lucones), Bodegas y Viñedos de Barreda (Torre de Barreda), Bodegas Fontana (the exceptional, intense Quercus) and the Cooperativa Nuestro Padre Jesús del Perdón (Lazarilllo).

But, there were still more noteworthy wineries to visit in Castile-La Mancha, so, on a bright, chilly Monday morning I visited Finca La Estacada, a new winery near Tarancón (Cuenca), which was founded in 2001. Director Felipe Canterero and José Carlos Serrano, the oenologist, showed me around their new well-equipped winery, which is now producing 200,000 bottles with their sights set on 300,000 bottles (25,000 cases) within a few years. The wines are fermented in stainless steel tanks and are aged in 80% new French Demptos, Radoux and Ricard barrels. The grapes—Tempranillo (35-year-old vines), Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Mazuelo and Petit Verdot (eight-year-old vines)—come from their own 300 ha (741 acres) of vineyards. They produce the young, economy-priced Viñansar blends of Tempranillo and Cabernet Sauvignon and mono-varietales and a Finca La Estacada 100% Tempranillo semi-*crianza* (aged a few months in oak), a 100% Tempranillo crianza (12 months in oak) and their top-of-the-line Selección Varietal, which is a blend on all six grapes grown on the finca and is labeled Vino de la Tierra de Castilla. Finca La Estacada wines were first exported in 2003.

At my next stop, Finca Muñoz, in Noblejas (Toledo), I toured the vineyards with Bienvenido Muñoz, the young oenologist, who hopes to craft some good modern wines with grapes from their own vineyards, some of which are 100 years old, and popular-priced wines from purchased grapes. Finca Muñoz still has huge cement tanks and more than two hundred 10,260-liter *tinajas* (large, clay fermentation vats), some of which date from its foundation in 1947. They produce some 5,000,000 liters of wine, 80% of which is sold in bulk, and have an





astounding 12,000 barrels in the bodega. Muñoz makes both La Mancha DO wines and the Vino de la Tierra de Castilla Finca Muñoz Reserva de la Familia 2001 (250,000 bottles of 100% Tempranillo wine from 18-year-old vines aged for six months in 50% new American oak and 50% new French oak). This is Bienvenido Muñoz's decently balanced, quaffable first step forward in the transition from a classic bulk wine bodega to a modern-age winery.

Touring the vineyards

In a charming, old-fashioned, tinaja-filled bodega in the town of Dosbarrios (Toledo), 'flying winemakers' Gonzalo Rodríguez, technical director of Rioja's Barón de Ley, his wife Margarita Madrigal and their partner, German winemaker Alexandra Schmiedes, who advises such wineries as Rioja's acclaimed Remirez de Ganuza, have established Más Que Vinos, a modest, start-up operation. On a high, wind-swept plateau, they produced their well-received first efforts, a fresh young Ercavio blanco (from 40-year-old Airén vines, with 10% Sauvigon Blanc) from old vines Tempranillo and Cabernet Sauvignon; a delicious, young, unoaked Ercavio jóven 2002 (80% Tempranillo; 20% Cabernet Sauvignon) designated DO La Mancha; Ercavio Tempranillo Roble 2002 (actually a blend of Tempranillo and Cabernet that spends five months in one-to-three year-old barrels); Ercavio Reserva 2000, a blend of Tempranillo and 10% Merlot that spends 12 months in American oak). At Restaurante La Morera in Dosbarrios, we had *gachas con torreznos y chorizo* (gruel with fried porkbelly and chorizo; a dish straight out of Quixote) *con guindillas* (piquant yellow-green chili peppers) and a fabulous, artisan-made Manchego cheese cured five months in fine Spanish olive oil. With this typical food for lunch, Margarita and Alexandra served their exceptional, rich, velvety La Plazuela 2001, a Tempranillo / Garnacha (12%) blend that ages 18 months in 300-liter barrels, half of which are French, half American. They produce only 5,400 bottles from 40-year-old, low-yield, goblet-pruned vines.

Alexandra Schmiedes says they are trying to produce "a continental wine, not a country wine". La Plazuela should find a following on any continent.
At Bodegas Martúe La Guardia, a very impressive new winery surrounded by vineyards, I was received in the early evening by Fausto González, the director. With the winter sun setting over the plains of La Mancha and piles of the day's prunings blazing on the vineyard pathways and sending plumes of pleasant-smelling smoke into the cool evening, I toured the part of this property's stand of wire-trained Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah. The 44-hectare (109-acre) Campo Martuela estate was planted in 1990, the El Casar estate, planted in 2000, has the same varieties plus Chardonnay. The wines are made by Ignacio de Miguel, one of Spain's best-known traveling oenologists, who makes several other wines in La Mancha including Dehesa del Carrizal and Finca Vallegarcía. From Martúe's bright, well-appointed, new winery, I tasted Martúe Especial 2001, a rich, silky blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot

WEB SITES

Vinos de la Tierra de Castilla

Cuenca

www.fincalaestacada.com
Web site includes sections on the vineyard, the harvest, the winery, the wine offer, a virtual visit, information for the press and contact details.
(English, Spanish)

www.bodegasfontana.com
Information on the winery's wines, land, elaboration process, contacts and a press section.
(English, Spanish)

Toledo

www.osbornesolaz.com
Four main subsections describing the winery, the product, a history of the Osborne bull and links to international distribution outlets.
(Dutch, English, German)

Ciudad Real

www.bodegas-real.com
The web site offers a Flash and a html version. The former includes a visual presentation. Information on Bodegas Real, its winery, the wines it offers, cellar tours, contacts and a press dossier.
(English, Spanish)

DO La Mancha

www.elvinculo.com
Sections on the history of the winery, elaboration processes, the wines, contact details, graphic information, and a link to the communication section of Grupo Pesquera.
(Spanish)

www.bodegasgualda.com
Information available on the site includes pages on the geographical area where the winery is located, the winery, the wines, a virtual wine shop, winery news, contact details and a section for distributors and agents.
(English, Spanish)

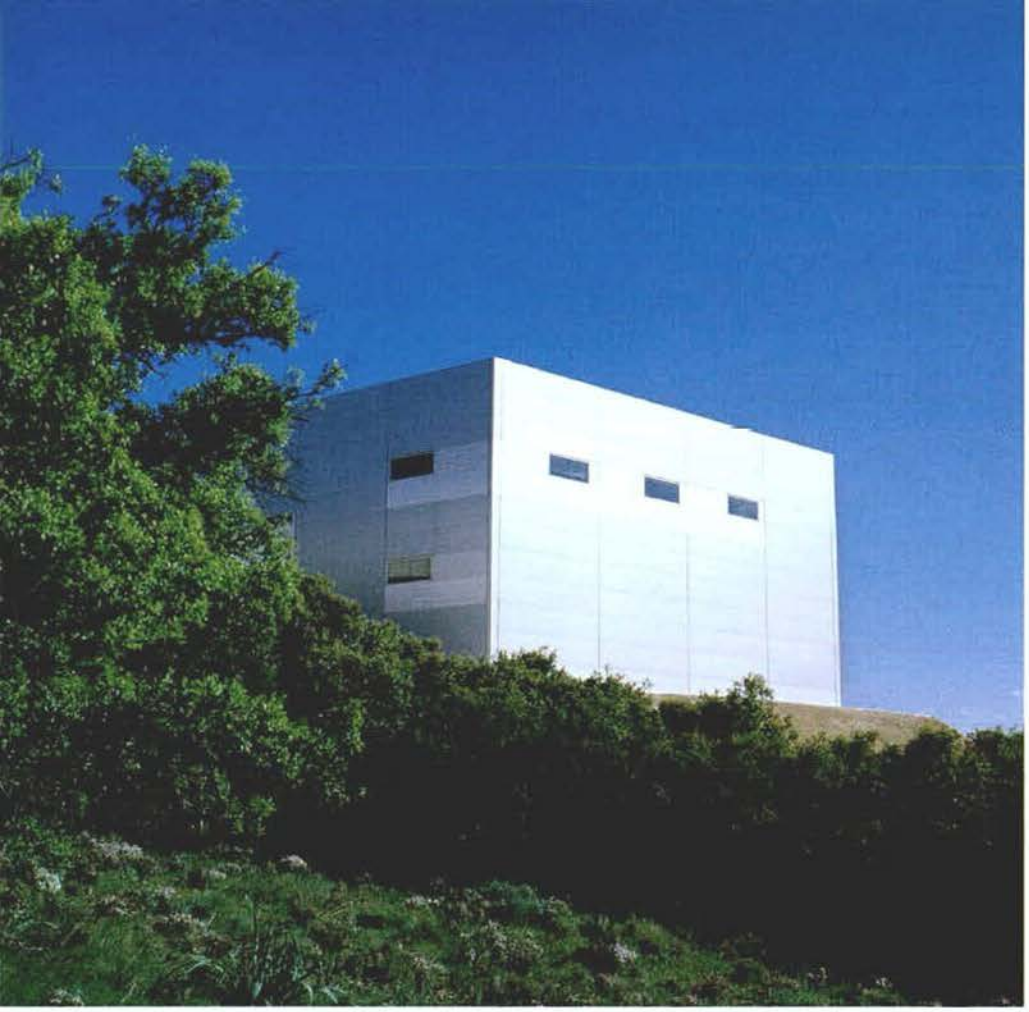
www.vinicoladecastilla.com
This winery's web site features a wide range of sections and types of information. Amongst them we can highlight information on the region of La Mancha, the winery's history, grape varieties and its wines, as well as sections on the elaboration, maturing and bottling processes at the winery.
(English, Spanish)

www.bodegasleganza.com
Web site is split according to four themes: The history of the winery, the vineyard, the wines and contact details. Link to Faustino group, where more languages are available.
(Spanish)

www.bodegasayuso.es
Three main headings group a wealth of information about this winery. Information in the Our Wineries heading ranges from history to soil description, Our Wines groups together the wines and prizes, and Wine Culture features a wine dictionary, and facts on local cuisine and news. Also available are a section for dealers and a suggestion box.
(English, French, German, Spanish)

DO Valdepeñas

www.arvavitis.com
General information on the winery and its philosophy, as well as pages with detailed information about the wines produced.
(English, Spanish)



and 40% Syrah, which ages eight months in French and American oak; the rich, but still tannic Bodegas Martúe La Guardia 2002, which also has 40% Syrah from nine-year-old vines; and the very intense, well-made, reasonably-priced Bodegas Martúe La Guardia Syrah 2001, which is 100% Syrah and spends 12 months in French and American oak.

After a long, full, but rewarding day, I drove on to another windmill-bedecked and Quixote-steeped town, Mota del Cuervo, where I checked into a guest house, the Casa de la Luna and, after, a few *tapas*, retreated from the cold, windy, Manchegan winter's night, read a few pages about the man of La Mancha and drifted off to sleep very much looking forward to the next day's adventures around Villarobledo, one of the largest wine-producing centers of La Mancha, and lunch at Chef Manuel de la Osa's Las Rejas, the greatest restaurant in La Mancha and one of the best in Spain.

By morning, the wind had died down and the day was bright and clear. As I drove from Mota to Villarobledo, I saw hundreds of hectares of low goblet-pruned vines

on rocky soil and old tinajas that were once used to ferment wine, now standing alongside farmhouses as water deposits. Villarobledo has an industrial feel to it, as befits a town which has historically been a huge producer of bulk wines and Airén-based wines for distillation into alcohol for making some of Spain's highly regarded brandies. My first visit was to Ayuso, founded in 1947, which is a huge winery with soaring, refinery-like storage tanks that hold millions of liters of wine, a filtering system that can process 100,000 liters of wine per hour, and a bottling train that handles 18,000 bottles an hour. The cellar has some 12,000 barrels. Ayuso produces the medal-winning, classic La Mancha brand Estola *reserva* and *gran reserva*.

Southeast of Villarobledo towards El Provencio is the beautiful 800-ha (1,977-acre) *finca* of Pago La Jaraba, a newly founded, single vineyard estate with an impressive, very well-equipped, three-year-old winery that produces some promising new wines. Owned by Albacete industrialist Gaspar Fernández Medrano, Pago La Jaraba has 80 ha (198 acres) of five-year Tempranillo,

Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot planted on pebbled, gravelly, alluvial soil on a gently sloping plain situated at 750 m (2,460 ft) above sea level. The vines are trained on wires with drip irrigation. Javier Pons, export director, and Pedro del Toro, the technical director and oenologist, showed me around and explained the winery's philosophy. They use organic fertilizer from their own sheep, practice careful vine canopy management and perform green harvesting, or cutting inferior green grape bunches from overloaded vines to promote better quality in the grapes that are actually harvested. They produce 500,000 kg (551.15 US tons) of grapes in an average year at yields of 6,000-8,000 kg/ha (2.677-3.569 tons/acre) and plan to produce a maximum of 400,000 bottles when the winery is at maximum production levels. They use a grape selection table to eliminate bad bunches and have sophisticated computer-controlled devices that control the movement of the grapes, must and wines through the winery. Like several other wineries, they have installed the cement, epoxy-lined tanks in which so many good Spanish wines were stored before the advent of stainless steel. They also have wooden Radoux upright, 5,000-10,000-liter capacity wooden vats for doing malolactic fermentation and holding operations. Pedro del Toro says that La Jaraba strives for grapes that are "a little bit beyond the point of ripeness," which he says, "assures that we always have ripe tannins. We want the wines to be warm, sweet and very drinkable." A tasting of the wines of Pago la Jaraba, despite the youth of the vineyards, showed excellent promise. The seriousness of this project is underscored by the fact that, although they are now producing wines, they do not intend to begin selling them in Spain until 2005.

More to come!!!!

Gerry Dawes, *a New York-based writer, has been traveling the wine roads of Spain for more than 30 years. In 2003, he was awarded the Premio Nacional de Gastronomia.*

Exporters page 122

Text
Michel Smith

Translation
Synonyme.net

WINES

Spanish

It was a beautiful evening in 1979 and **Michel Smith,** on assignment for the magazine *Paris Match* that had employed him for the past 12 years, was attending an introductory wine-tasting session in a Parisian wine cellar preparatory to writing an article on the subject. And quite unexpectedly, he found himself totally enraptured. The famous sommelier Christian Flacelière, from France's Burgundy region, was Michel Smith's 'professor' for the course, marking the beginning of a long and fruitful collaboration between the two, with Christian Flacelière contributing his impressive expertise to numerous articles by Smith devoted to France's wine-growing regions. Having made Perpignan his base since 1988, Michel Smith gradually honed his growing passion for wines, writing for the magazine *Saveurs* in France and also for *Slowine* in Italy. He is particularly interested in the various 'personalities' in the world of wine-growing, vigorously defending the country's different regional identities and ways of life. Already the author of several articles on the wines of Southern Europe, Michel Smith never misses a chance to advertise his "overwhelming" enthusiasm for the wines of Andalusia, as he himself qualifies it.

Selected and Tasted by International Experts

France


Sip by Sip

Winery: Pedro Domecq
Wine: La Ina
DO: Jerez-Xérès-Sherry
Type: Fino
Elaboration: 100% Palomino

Of course, we all appreciate the finesse of the divine *manzanilla* made by Emilio Lustau, or again the famous Tío Pepe, all wines redolent of Andalusia's festive spirit and fine gastronomy founded on the fruit of the countryside and its seacoast. However, nothing else in the world, except perhaps the great Champagne classics, works its magic on me as does La Ina. Just one sip is a cry of joy, a friendly pat on the back, a voice saying: "*Amigo*, you are at home here. Welcome to this country!" Is there a more universally appreciated drink on the planet? Served icy cold, this *fino* is superlatively crisp, lively, vibrant and honest. It is also amazingly regular and can be served right through from *apéritifs* to cheese, not to mention that exquisite moment when I light up my after-dinner *puro*.

Matching recommendation:
Breathtaking with shellfish, prawns and cold meats. Magnificent with Ibérico *bellota* ham. Enthralling with sheep's cheese. Refreshing with a Cuban cigar!

Winery: Pedro Domecq, S.A.
Tel: (+34) 956 151 500
Fax: (+34) 956 338 674
jerez@domecq.es
www.domecq.es

Winery: Marqués de Riscal
Wine: Marqués de Riscal, 1999 Reserva
DOCa: Rioja
Type: Red wine
Elaboration: 90% Tempranillo, 10% Graciano and Mazuelo

I have to admit that the retro presentation is what first attracted me to this wine, with its Bordeaux diploma and slightly retro gold thread. It's the sort of thing that only the Spaniards still dare to do today. As I sampled various vintages of this red wine, I came to realize that (perhaps due to the American oak casks?) it had a particularly typical classic Spanish flavor, an aristocratic quality that, it would seem, still has many fans among the patrons of Spanish restaurants. A rich-colored wine with a bouquet redolent of spices, tar, fennel and peppermint, fresh, elegant and generous on the palate with a hint of chocolate in the finish, it is a worthy representative of its Designation of Origin and is one of the most regular Riojas, together with the Beronias and Marqués de Murrietas.

Matching recommendation:
Superb with succulent roast kid or suckling pig, fresh farmyard chicken or duck. Still better with pan-roasted duck breast, pink in the middle and garnished with wild mushrooms.

Winery: Vinos de los Herederos del Marqués de Riscal
Tel: (+34) 945 606 000
Fax: (+34) 945 606 023
marquesderiscal@marquesderiscal.com
www.marquesderiscal.com

Winery: Celler de Capçanes
Wine: Lasendal, 2001
DO: Montsant
Type: Red wine
Elaboration: 100% Garnacha

As an ardent fan of the Garnacha grape and of the wines from the South in general, I inevitably fell for this wine. Warm and welcoming from the very first, it conjures up the Mediterranean scrublands that I loved to play in after a storm. In spite of its advertised 14% alcohol content, it does not numb the palate, and is, on the contrary, a pleasure to sip, leaving the head clear. It is a cosy wine, fresh, dense, juicy and well-balanced. But most of all, it's a simple, sincere wine, a wine of friendship, faithfully reflecting the people at this model cooperative who make it. I have drunk it regularly since Marie-Louise Banyols, the sommelier at Lavinia in Barcelona, allowed me to discover it at the right temperature. Thank you, Marie-Louise!

Matching recommendation:
The wonderful thing about this wine is that it is a perfect accompaniment to all Mediterranean cuisine, including fish dishes. I would personally recommend that it be drunk at around 15°C.

Winery: Celler de Capçanes
Tel: (+34) 977 178 319
Fax: (+34) 977 178 319
cellercapcanes@cellercapcanes.com

Winery: Arzuaga Navarro
Wine: Arzuaga, Crianza 2000
DO: Ribera del Duero
Type: Red wine
Elaboration: 90% Tinto Fino, 8% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Merlot

What makes this red wine particularly interesting is that no fewer than 380,000 bottles were produced. Not every vineyard can offer a wine of this superior quality in such a large volume, and at a reasonable price as well! I had already come down in favor of the 1996 vintage when compared with the great Pesqueras. The 2000 vintage is a rich carmine in color, with a bouquet reminiscent of fur and spices, sharp to the taste with a hint of blackcurrant, well-balanced and long in the finish, tannins present but not aggressively so: this is, for me, the archetype of a moderately oaky Ribera del Duero, leaving the wine room to express itself without excessive artifice (unlike what is often, sadly, the case in France as well as in Spain). It can be kept in your cellar between three and five years.

Matching recommendation:
After decanting, with a rare T-bone steak or, in five years time, with a roast leg of lamb.

Winery: Arzuaga Navarro, S.L.
Tel: (+34) 983 681 146
Fax: (+34) 983 681 147
bodeg@arzuaganavarro.com
www.arzuaganavarro.com

Winery: Garsed e Hijos
Wine: Clos Garsed, 2000
DOCa: Priorato
Type: Red wine
Elaboration: 45% Cariñena, 30% Garnacha, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Syrah

It was some time before I reluctantly tried a wine of DOCa Priorato. I was somewhat skeptical because I feared it might just be another one of those 'fashionable' wines, those often overly-woody and exorbitantly priced monsters. Together with the Clos Mogador, I would place the Clos Garsed at the top of my list of great Mediterranean wines. This 2000 vintage, for example, shows its somber color and superb bouquet, but without unnecessary ostentation. It harmonizes beautifully with its natural habitat, without artifice or subterfuge. Its bouquet releases minerals, ciste and a hint of rosemary, with plenty of variety and complexity. The texture is refined and enveloped within a dense structure. To the palate, it still betrays a slight excess of tannins and oak, but an altogether delightful underpinning of blueberries is apparent, resulting in an overall elegance. To be opened in five or six years.

Matching recommendation:
Grilled rabbit with herbs or small game birds, such as woodcock with truffles.

Winery: Garsed e Hijos, S.L.
Tel: (+34) 977 831 235
Fax: (+34) 977 830 238
garsedehijos@terra.es

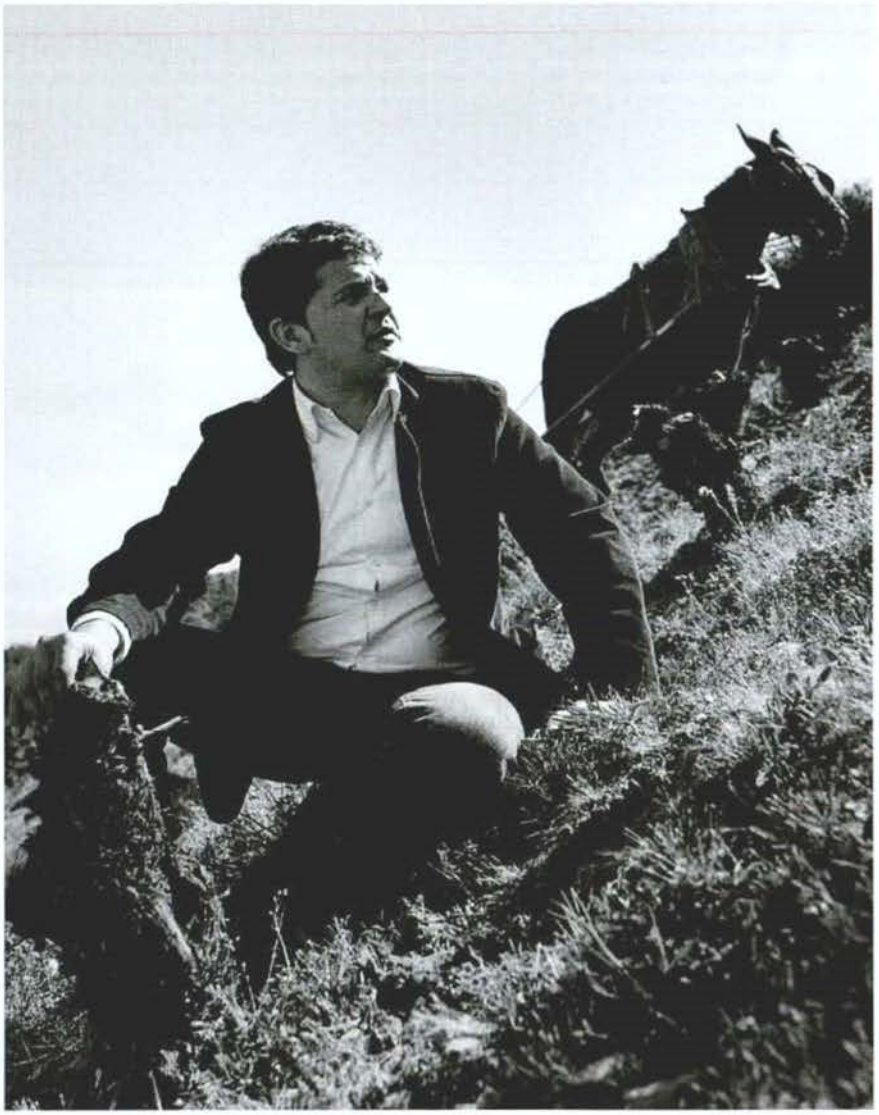
Winery: Abadía Retuerta
Wine: El Palomar, 1999
VT: Vino de la Tierra de Castilla y León
Type: Red wine
Elaboration: 50% Tempranillo, 50% Cabernet Sauvignon

Even though very close to Vega Sicilia, this vineyard cannot carry the Ribera del Duero label. This is unfortunate for Ribera de Duero, as these wines definitely have the caliber of the *grands crus*. El Palomar is a case in point, with its splendidly deep color and its elegant but reserved bouquet. A wine of great generosity to the palate, with a certain spirit and a full-bodied texture, sustained by a fine oakiness, clean and well-integrated like the fruit. And to finish, a matching lingering persistence. A great wine for the cellar.

Matching recommendation:
This wine must be decanted. Serve at 16°C with roast pigeon, guinea fowl, duck or kid.

Winery: Abadía Retuerta
Tel: (+34) 983 680 314
Fax: (+34) 983 680 286
abadia-retuerta@abadia-retuerta.com
www.abadia-retuerta.com

Álvaro PALACIOS



The genius behind Priorato wines has turned his attention to Bierzo, historically one of the final stages on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela, where he is reinstating the Mencía grape, a marvelous variety whose presence in the region dates back a thousand years. The resulting wines, which showcase characteristics derived from single vineyards, are aged by Burgundy methods.

Back to the Future

TEXT
LUIS CEPEDA

TRANSLATION
HAWYS PRITCHARD

PHOTOS
PABLO NEUSTADT/ICEX

Wine Spectator, the wine world's most respected and widely-read magazine, has just named you Vintner of the Year. Do attention and admiration matter?

Recognition is always welcome. Public recognition of this kind validates one's chosen path and also obliges one to be consistent. Having said that, however, wine is something that concerns me passionately on a daily basis, and that by its very nature spurs me on to new efforts, challenging methodology, weighing up new possibilities and, thank goodness, producing reward after reward in terms of personal satisfaction. Public admiration and awards can make you vain or load you with responsibilities. But I took on the responsibility—and developed a passion—for making good wine when no-one was looking.

And where does this passion spring from?

I was born into one of Rioja's prestigious winery families, Palacios Remondo, to whose fourth generation I belong. For many years, DOCa Rioja was the only significant qualifier in Spanish table wine, with notable exceptions such as Ribera del Duero's Vega Sicilia and a couple of others worth mentioning in Peñafiel. Natural conditions in Rioja's areas and its historical relationship with French wine culture propitiated both a certain finesse in wine-making and the emergence of a definite style: as a result, it pioneered commercial labeling, and thereby eclipsed what was actually going on in other historic regions. Although my father was heavily involved in the 'Rioja-centrism' of that period, he sensed which way things were going and sent me to Bordeaux to study oenology, giving me the opportunity to experience great wineries, encouraging me to travel to young wine destinations such as California, and to acquire an in-depth familiarity with markets as demanding as the UK's.

You worked with the legendary winemakers of Château Pétrus...

Of course, my experience with Pomerol's top names was marvelous. I was lucky enough to learn about their growing and wine-making processes, and had the opportunity to witness at first hand the sensitivity that goes into making top-of-the-line wines. The projects with which I was involved, and that I was very enthusiastic about, were mostly small-scale, very specific ones, but these sometimes tiny projects were very revelatory and taught me a great deal. In France, the tradition of preserving highly individual, local products, however irrelevant they might seem, is considered integral to culture as a whole. That's a lesson we should learn. Being there increased my respect for vines and how they are grown, I learned to value the strength of tradition and its relevance to the present, and to be obsessive about achieving the best possible results in everything one does. In short, that experience laid the foundations for my passionate determination to transmit wonderful sensations through the medium of wine, and I set myself the task of banishing that gap between grape and *bodega,* between grower and vintner, that is responsible for so much loss of character.

A sort of revelation which you preached by example in Priorato...

I discovered Priorato through my friend René Barbier, himself also a member of a traditional, in his case Catalan, wine-making family, and something of a prophet for that region. Historically, Priorato had been wine-growing territory but had fallen into oblivion, as did so many once-glorious areas left behind by modern roads and commercial circuits. It struck a chord with my fascination for ancient wine-growing regions, often monastically established, which endured for centuries: tortuous vineyards on steep slaty slopes, old-vine Garnacha whose long exposure to physical and

Álvaro Palacios

The DOCas Rioja and Priorato and the DO Bierzo are the fundamental focuses of his passion for old-vine viticulture and new-wave viniculture. In these core regions, he has reinstated Garnacha, discovered Mencía, and is trying out Tempranillo for untapped potential—all three of them noble varieties with a long pedigree. Now just past 40, he first appeared on the scene 15 years ago, aiming at unlikely goals and achieving them with a huge degree of success. He is a close-contact sparring partner who conceptualizes wines in the field with a kind of physical ingenuousness and an intuitive talent which he transmits with urgent enthusiasm. In the course of our intense, stimulating conversation, knowledge and opinions spill out of him. This is a man who loves exploring, and his built-in compass is sure to point him further in unexpected directions.

climatological stress has equipped it to absorb impossible substances from the subsoil. A variety on its last legs, demanding to be restored to its former grandeur.

By the age of 26, you had become Priorato's leading apostle, spreading the glad tidings about its wines.

Indeed, there was a mystical element to the whole thing. I focused on Priorato in 1986, inspired by the idea of reinstating a winemaking legend. I put my faith in a local variety that was used in blends in other regions and provided the basis for fragrant, young wines, such as Navarre rosés, but which was no longer considered a contender for monovarietal use because of its fragile characteristics. I was spurred on by my belief in the *terroir*, spurred on by setbacks and disagreements: it was a question of keeping faith and persevering. I wanted to make the best wine possible, stepping up growing output then homeopathically concentrating its essence and potency. And this was at a time when the boom in Spanish viticulture was generating massive, uncontrolled, opportunistic expansion in other regions. Luckily, these were also conditions in which difference and quality stood out.

It was a revolution: Robert Parker said that Priorato wines were the best Spanish wines he had ever tasted.

Priorato attracted worldwide attention. In 1991, we brought out Clos Dofí, a wine with a Garnacha base in combination with a proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah: a muscular wine, fruitily fresh, clean and mineral. It received the blessing of international critical opinion and opened up new markets abroad earlier than in Spain. It was Priorato's emblem for the two years before L'Ermita appeared—a unique, exclusive wine in which Garnacha predominates to 80% and of which only six thousand bottles were made. An elegant, silky wine, full of fruit and mineral, L'Ermita is now ranked among the finest in the world.

And you forgot your Riojan origins...

Not at all. Palacios Remondo is currently engaged in fine projects such as a rigorous reworking of Tempranillo aimed at maximizing its potential, while the pursuit of excellence continues in Priorato and we consolidate the Bierzo project...

Bierzo is Álvaro Palacios' new sphere of operation and, as we speak, everything around us attests to the ongoing nature of your vocation as a force for renewal in unlikely places.

My 28-year-old nephew, Ricardo, discovered how extraordinary the valleys of this area are when he came here on a chance visit. His vinicultural sensibilities are very close to the surface: he knows all about plants and light, makes his own fertilizers by fermenting selected cereals and grasses, and has an intuitive awareness of biodynamic agriculture and its ancient rituals; he

trained in Bordeaux and worked at Château Margaux. He said: "Uncle, you just have to come to León".

And what did you find when you came here?

I found another source of hidden potential similar to Priorato's. A region of calcareous and slaty soils with hillsides suitable for carrying out top-quality viticulture. A grape variety—Mencía—with a long local tradition, whose value had been debased by uncontrolled production and whose reputation had been tarnished by its relative lack of color and supposedly poor ageing qualities, yet endowed with depth and aroma, a unique mineral quality and hitherto unsuspected elegance. Like Priorato, Bierzo was once the site of important religious settlements: the last two major stopping places on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela were established here. There were seven monasteries here and this short-growing-cycle grape variety, probably of French origin given its similarity to Pinot Noir and Cabernet Franc, was planted in their precincts in the 13th and 14th centuries. As a matter of fact, we've found out that in the 18th century, Mencía wine was sold under the name of *vino bordelés*—Bordeaux wine.

How did you approach this unusual historical restoration project?

The Corullón project has been particularly heavy-going. Although in autumn and spring the landscape is suggestive of northern Europe, in summer it becomes brilliantly Mediterranean. Wines express their landscapes and the mood of their climate. The area around Villafranca del Bierzo has both gently undulating terrain and dizzyingly steep slopes, with a diversity of soils rich in iron and mineral substances solidified into Paleozoic slate. Each needs to be cultivated in its own specific way. We till the soil with mules pulling a Roman plow, use our own fertilizers and carry out short pruning, which gives us three or four tiny bunches per vine, amounting to some 1,500 kg (1.476 US tons) of grapes per hectare—a very small, exclusive yield. The 16 hectares (40 acres) under vine are made up of 80 plots. La Faraona, an exceptional plot situated on a hillside at an altitude of 850 m (2,788 ft) covers an area of only 0.3 hectares (0.74 acres) and produces two or three Burgundy *barriques*, the equivalent of about 200 bottles.

And what are its wines like?

In describing the degree of excellence achieved with Bierzo's Mencía, the comparison that comes to mind is a cross between the wines of Côte-Rotie and Burgundy. Wines derived from a single plot vineyard did not exist in Spain until L'Ermita came on the scene. It was proof that soils can endow as much individuality here as in France or Italy. Corullón's initial blend has been superseded by four genuine Bierzo *grands crus:* San Martín, Las Lamas, Moncerval and La Faraona. Their elegance, mineral properties, length and harmony make them supremely expressive of their specific provenance, a fact attributable to optimal output from vines that are 60 to 100 years old.

You are optimistic by temperament and your conversation is very upbeat. Does anything worry you?

Wind-power schemes worry me. A European structural fund initiative is threatening to spoil our landscape and put agricultural working capacity at risk by installing wind farms on hilltops and underground cables in the subsoil. All this is supposed to be environmentally beneficial, though many disagree with that claim.

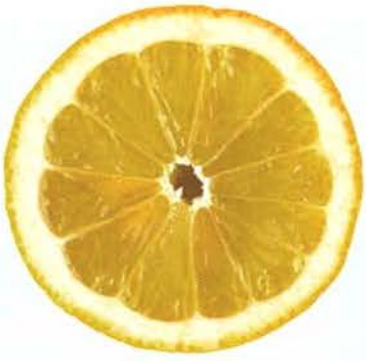
Luis Cepeda *is a journalist and writer. A specialist in gastronomy, his published titles include* Los cien platos universales de la cocina vasca, Gusto de Reyes, Lhardy, La cocina de paradores *and* Maridaje de vinos y platos. *He is the current restaurant and wine critic for the* Guía del Ocio, *Madrid's listings weekly.*

Exporters page 122

Staying Sharp: The Spanish Levante and its LEMONS

The fragility of the lemon tree, extraordinarily sensitive to the cold and temperature changes as it is, makes the sight of a lemon grove surprisingly rare. Surprisingly rare, that is, except for a handful of regions littered around the world that have the climate necessary for this species to thrive. One such region is the southeastern part of the Spanish Mediterranean coast, an area where tradition and innovation have joined hands to bear a fruit, the lemon, for the whole world to enjoy. *Spain Gourmetour* visits the Levante, the small giant of global lemon production.

MARÍA ALCOBRE



TEXT
SAÚL APARICIO HILL

Best-selling author of *Under the Tuscan Sun* Frances Mayes once wrote that, "anytime the perfume of lemon groves wafts in the window; the human body has to feel suffused with a languorous well-being". While it is true that the zesty, refreshing air that one breathes in a lemon grove feels as clean and invigorating as the greenest of mountain valleys, one need not be in a grove to reap the benefits of a fruit that has been considered a source of health through so many ages that even the legends of Ancient Greece talk of it. Lemons are one of the ingredients that feature most prominently in traditional remedies, and for good reason. Plentiful source of essential minerals, vitamins and antioxidants as they are, the regular intake of lemons can be an invaluable health tool. The poet Virgil, in fact, succinctly summed up this point: "This Citron fruit doth chase Blacke venome from the body in every place."

Fruit of a thousand uses, from salad condiment to preserve emulsifier, lemons are an often underused resource in our kitchen. In the cuisine of the region of Murcia, a region at the heart of the main lemon-producing area in Spain and one of the world's prime exporters, lemons are used in countless creative manners: pickled; on meat and fish; with *paella;* preserved in olive oil to infuse it with a delicate tang... even the leaves of the lemon tree are used to make a traditional dessert, *paparajotes*, lightly battered fried lemon leaves. The empty shells are often used to serve ice-cream, and a fine essential oil used by the perfume industry and aromatherapists alike can be cold pressed out of the peel. As Murcia's popular culture would have it (and is often heard from the mouths of local farmers): "The only bad thing about lemons are the thorns on the branches".

Murcia, a 11,313 square kilometer (4,370 square mile) region squeezed in between Andalusia, Valencia and the Mediterranean, is a land of contrasts and a melting pot of cultures. It was one of the first Spanish homes to the trading Phoenicians in the 8th century BC. It was then successively populated by Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans and Goths. Few of these peoples, however, left as enduring a legacy as the Islamic dwellers that followed them in 713 AD. By 1243, when the Islamic kingdom of Mursiyah had fallen into Christian hands, not only had the region been definitively named, but its signature crop, the lemon tree, had been introduced with great success. So much so, in fact, that lemon trees partly spread into the neighboring provinces of Alicante and Almería. From then on, that area of the Spanish Levante would supply lemons to the whole of Spain, with enough to spare for neighboring countries and passing ships.

A question of pride

"We haven't chosen lemons, lemons have chosen us. They have chosen our land." The words of Antonio García, a 70-year-old lemon farmer who was, in the regional banter,

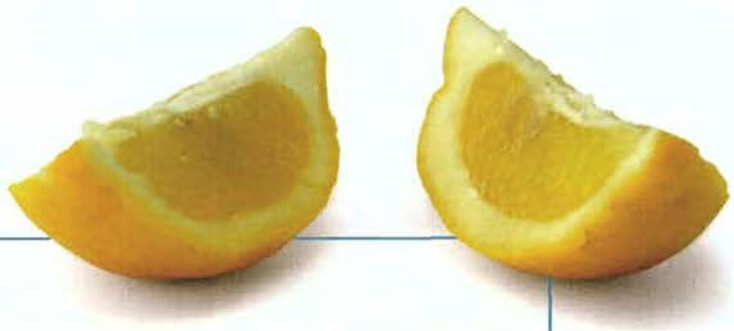
"born under a lemon tree", bear a peculiar and little-known truth. The lemon tree, despite its resilience to water scarcity and other meteorological phenomena, is very sensitive to drops in temperature. Lemon production worldwide is limited to a handful of regions in a handful of countries, normally coinciding with the 38th parallel. In Spain, for instance, lemon production is practically limited to the Southern Levante: Murcia and parts of two of its neighboring provinces, Almería and Alicante. The people of Murcia take pride in this select status, to the point that, as Marcos Marín—another septuagenarian who has spent a life under the shade of a lemon tree—says, "round here, any person that comes by some money buys a lemon grove and builds a house in it. One could say it is almost a status symbol".

Another point of pride with these people has been their export tradition and their enterprising spirit, especially when it has come to lemons. Many lemon-exporting companies date back to the beginning of the 20th century, but Levante lemons were already an important export when they were founded. Marcos Marín, for instance, remembers how his grandfather told tales of the men of old, who drove mule-drawn carts full of lemons and saffron to France. The origins, however, date from even earlier. Many were the ships that, in the late 18th century, stopped over in the port of Cartagena (Murcia) to buy lemons in order to treat and prevent scurvy (a disease caused by vitamin C deficiency) in the crew.

The people of Murcia have traveled the world with their lemons, comfortable in the knowledge that they could offer what few else could. As José Antonio García of AILIMPO (The National Lemon and Grapefruit Interprofessional Association) put it: "No-one round here has ever been scared of picking up a suitcase and leaving for any country in the world—the USA, Canada, Poland, Islamic countries...—and selling lemons over there, even when they didn't speak a word of English or French... or much Spanish for that matter," he adds in a sly aside. People talk of how, back in the days, these traveling Murcians knew what a Canadian dollar, a Swiss franc or a German mark were worth in pesetas by heart, whilst most people in Spain did not even know that Canada's coin was the dollar, Switzerland's the franc or Germany's the mark. They tell of how people from the region, back in the 1960s and 70s, took their lemons to the USSR and bartered them for vodka, wood and paper, since they could not take roubles in payment. They tell the tale, in short, of how simple men from this region traveled the globe making the Levante and Spain feature among the prime lemon producers and exporters in the world.

'A wax lemon'

What is so peculiar about the area around Murcia that makes this small region such a heavyweight in global lemon production? There are three



HEALTH

Despite the late introduction of the lemon tree to Europe, the fruit was a known, if rare and luxurious item, to the Greeks of old. Greeks and Romans alike sought the fruit for its medicinal properties, which were deemed great to the point of bordering on the miraculous. The scholar Athenaeus (ca. 200 BC) told, in his *magna opus* the Deipnosophistae (or Banquet of the Learned) the story of Chlearchus, Tyrant of Heraclea. Chlearchus, who executed his opponents by having them bitten by a snake, was amazed to see how one of his victims had survived by drinking the juice of a lemon that a benevolent stranger had given him on the way to his torment. It was in Islamic culture, however, where the properties of lemons started to be properly investigated. The *Treatise of the Lemon,* written in the 12th century and translated to Latin in 1583, for instance, was written by Ibn Jamiya, a physician so eminent at the time that he became personal doctor to none other than Saladin (1138-1193), Sultan of Egypt and Syria. Another fine example was Ibn-al-Awan's *Dictionary of Simple Remedies,* in which treatments such as a mixture of lemon juice with olive or almond oil were recommended against eczema, lemon juice was suggested as a good liquid with which to clean wounds and cuts and it was claimed that the application of lemon juice allayed the pain and burn produced by insect stings. Perhaps the most creative treatment using lemons was administered, however, by the European herbalists of old, who prescribed a pearl dissolved in lemon juice against epilepsy.

Nowadays, our knowledge of the reasons why lemons can be a useful heath tool are clearer. Lemon is not only the most potent and concentrated natural source of vitamin C, but also contains vitamins B and E, as well as magnesium, potassium, calcium, phosphorus, copper, iron, folic acid and bioflavonoids. It contains powerful antioxidants, which temper the ageing process. Lemon protects the mucus membrane of the stomach, stimulates the action of both liver and pancreas and reduces blood cholesterol levels. Physicians nowadays recommend lemon for ailments as wide-ranging as bladder infections, kidney stones, bronchitis, catarrh, constipation, heartburn or pyorrhea.

main reasons. The first is the above-mentioned exporting tradition and restless, enterprising spirit of its people. The second reason is the varietal blends of lemons grown in the area. The two most abundant lemon varieties in Spanish lemon groves are Fino (also known as Primofiori) and Verna. The former blooms from September to March, and the latter from March to September.

Murcia and its neighbors are therefore capable of producing lemons all year round, a privileged situation amongst lemon-exporting countries, which tend to have lemons during only one season. Years of careful selection and research have culminated in the development of early blooming and late blooming sub-varieties of the

Verna and Fino lemons, guaranteeing that the lemons that come out of the Levante are always recently picked off the tree and at their freshest.
The third and most crucial reason is the commercialization philosophy behind lemon production in the region. The lemon industry in the Levante is geared towards direct consumption, that is, lemons that go directly to the consumer without further elaboration. Fresh lemons: nothing more, nothing less. Only a small fraction of the lemon crop is sold for processing. José García explained how this situation contrasted with other lemon exporters. "Here, 80% of production is directed to the consumer. In Argentina the situation is exactly the opposite: 80% of production is destined to the processing industry. Their system does not pursue the highest quality of the fruit, a fruit with a perfect external appearance, with a rigorous pesticide control..."
The farmer's intention, from the very moment that the lemon tree is planted, is to produce what Murcians call 'a wax lemon', that is, a lemon so perfect in appearance that it seems as if it were made of wax. A lemon with no spots, no bruises, perfectly symmetrical and well rounded, a lemon with a firm and juicy pulp; the type of lemon, in sum, that the most demanding consumer in Europe, America, Asia or any part of the world, for that matter, would be completely satisfied with.
But the intended consumer is not the only secret behind the quality of

WEB SITES

www.lopilopi.com
Apart from contact details, the web site for the flagship brand of Mapil, S.A. includes sections on the company, its products, news, quality policy and its production system. (English)

www.ailimpo.com
The AILIMPO web site includes information on lemons and grapefruit (history, properties and production), on AILIMPO itself (history, functions, organization and other such items), news, a series of downloads (from technical information to pictures), recipes and contact details. (English, Spanish)

AILIMPO

Interprofessional associations started to appear in the European Union as a reaction to the increasing demand for a rationalization of production and, in the specific case of the food industry, a need for transparency and coordination of the production process. These organizations gathered the main actors in a given sector and created a forum where they could discuss the crucial question that any enterprise must ask itself: Where to? Lemons and grapefruits were at one time represented by INTERCITRUS, an interprofessional association based in Valencia that brought together those dedicated to all Spanish citrus fruits in general. This was the case despite the fact that, as José Antonio García, a director at AILIMPO, puts it: "The production, commercial, industrial and consumption dynamics [of different citrus fruits] are far from being the same". A small group of people in the lemon and grapefruit industry realized that these differences called for a more specific and specialized strategy, which ultimately led to the foundation of AILIMPO, the Interprofessional Association for Lemon and Grapefruit, in 1998. Since then, AILIMPO has managed to become one of the main actors in the Spanish lemon industry. The association currently represents, in the words of Mr. García, "A full 95% of the sector: 90% of the commercial operators, and all of the industries, producers and farmers are part of the interprofessional association". AILIMPO has therefore spearheaded most of the sector's initiatives to guarantee the minimal impact and the greatest respect for the environment by the industry, to improve the transparency and balance of the market, to inform the consumer and to promote the virtues of lemons and grapefruits, both in Spain and abroad.

Levante lemons. The region has a strategic advantage over other lemon-producing regions in the world, and that is, quite simply, infrastructure and location. The ease with which lemons from the region reach the main global transport arteries mean that the time lapsed between the lemon being cut and reaching the consumer is extremely short. By sea or by land, those lemons can reach any world destination in record time. According to Dr. Angel García Lidón, a renowned lemon expert, scientist and current Director General for Investigation and Technological Transfer for the regional government, it takes 10 to 15 days on average (a mere three days in the case of Europe) for a Spanish lemon to make it from the tree to the consumer's table. Lemons from Spain's main competitors, Turkey and Argentina, take an average 20 to 25 days and 50 days, respectively.

"Spanish lemons are therefore fresher, retaining more of their bioactive elements such as vitamins and flavonoids," he concludes.

Natural zest

The freshness of Spanish lemons is not their only competitive advantage. In a world increasingly concerned with food security, the Levante can boast of being the region in the world where this concern can be put to rest with the greatest ease. The tremendous extent of exports of most of the lemon-producing companies in the area mean that they must satisfy the safety regulations of many different countries at the same time. Mapil, S.A, for instance, exports lemons to the EU, Canada, the USA, Japan and a handful of other countries in Far-East Asia. "We export the same product to all countries, a prime-quality lemon that is accepted anywhere in the world," Isaac Murcia, an employee at Mapil, clarifies. "This means that we have to use treatments that adjust to *all* the destinations our lemons reach. For each individual chemical, we always have to be under the threshold permitted by the strictest country." The above-mentioned quality of the transport infrastructures in Murcia, Alicante and Almería also have much to do with the low amount of treatments required by the product. Lemons from this region rarely need more than one form of transport to reach their destination, unlike other regions, such as Turkey and Argentina, where lemons are loaded and unloaded several times before reaching the shop shelf. Spanish lemons are therefore refrigerated almost continuously from the moment they are picked off the tree. This continued refrigeration and shorter transport period allows for a very scarce use of post-harvest chemical treatment.

Another peculiarity of the region allows for a greater control of chemical use in the lemon-growing areas of Spain. The high salinity and calcareous nature of the soil, together with near-endemic water scarcity, have been the scourge of the regions where lemons are grown in Spain. Lemon growers have therefore been forced to learn how to maximize the resources available and achieve development that is environmentally sustainable. Patricia García, another Mapil employee, explained how, for instance, discarded lemons and pruning remains are chopped up and spread on the field, therefore achieving an all-natural (and nearly cost-free) initial fertilization of the field. The single most interesting development, however, has been the application of 'drip by drip' watering systems to lemon production. Instead of flood watering every month, as was customary, most lemon producers

have installed complex watering systems that slowly but regularly release droplets of water at the very base of the tree. This, she explained, not only means that no drop goes to waste, but also that any chemical treatment the tree may require, since it is administered in the same way, can be adjusted with computer-like precision.

Moving ahead of the times

Raul Moscardó, one of the old dogs at AILIMPO, comments that "lemon collection hasn't advanced much... 40 years ago we collected by snipping the fruit off the tree with a pair of pliers, just like they do now. Why? Two reasons, really: If you harvest by hand you can make an initial selection of the better lemons, and if you use machines you end up damaging the trees." It is therefore somewhat striking to see how, in a region where harvesting and pruning is still done manually, research and development features so prominently. Not only have some of the globe's most cutting-edge watering systems been developed and implemented, but technological advancement is the order of the day. As Paco Seva of ASAJA (Agricultural Association of Young Farmers) points out: "There is a lot of very hard and productive work being done in the field of integrated production. Consumers, with all the food crises we have seen, are starting to demand a product that has very little artificial residue, and that is a fact that has been completely assimilated by the sector." The secretary general of ASAJA, Alfonso Galvez, not only agrees with that statement, but also believes that: "Given the fact that, through integrated production, we are producing cheaper lemons with even smaller use of chemical substances, I am confident that this system of production will become the mainstream in just a few years." Traceability systems have also become standard in the region, meaning that any consumer in the world can pick up a lemon from the Levante and plot the life, travels, treatments used, time spent refrigerated and any information that he may feel inclined to check up on. "No other lemon in the world can guarantee you total traceability," claims Andrés López, a Technical Director at FECOAM (Federation of Agricultural Co-operatives of Murcia).

These are the reasons why lemons and lemon growers alike stay sharp in the Levante. In a region that has always been a melting pot of cultures, the cultures of tradition, advancement and development have gone hand-in-hand to take its lemons to even the remotest corners of the world. A region that, in the words of Manuel Hernández Pagán (Director General for Agriculture of the Goverment of Murcia) "has decidedly bet on food security, respect for the environment and top quality". A region, in sum, that offers the customer what the customer wants: half a dozen 'wax lemons' in every bag.

Saúl Aparicio Hill *is a Madrid-born journalist and translator. He has contributed articles on tourism and culture to publications in Spain, the UK and the Netherlands.*

Recipes page 88, Exporters page 122 and Photocredits page 140

LEMON TECH

It is somewhat rare to find farmers specialized in traditional crops who take easily to technological advancement. The lemon growers in the Spanish Levante are a case in point. This region has not only developed some of the most advanced 'drip by drip' irrigation systems in the world today, but it has also seen them successfully implanted in the vast majority of the region. It boasts one of Europe's most modern refrigeration truck fleets. It is a pioneer in implementing computerized traceability systems. But, far from standing back and admiring its achievements, the region continues to work in order to remain at the cutting edge.

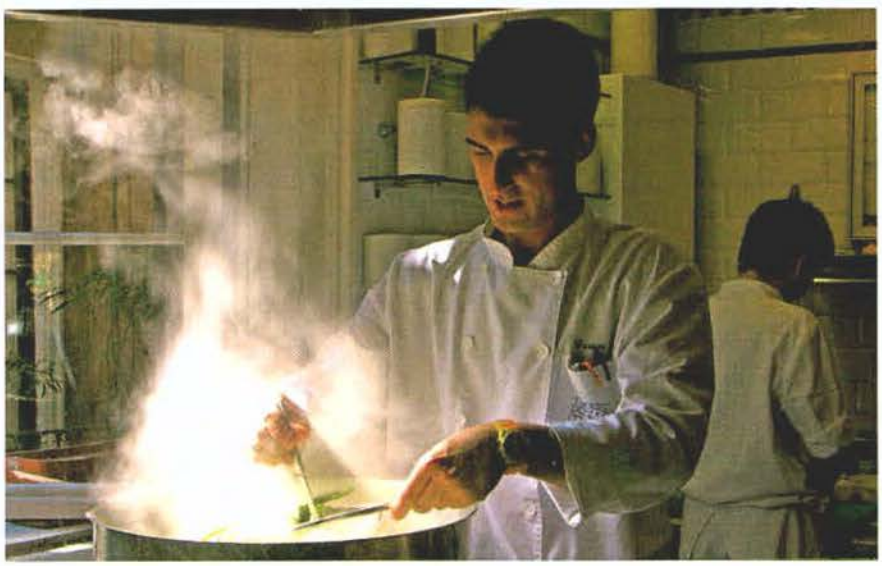
Murcian company TANA S.A., for instance, traditionally dealt in the export of fresh lemons, grapefruits and oranges. The company has now moved on, however, and has proceeded to commercialize, in addition to their usual product, ready-sliced lemons and lemon zest in vacuum packs. This format is aimed at the catering business, where the need for large amounts of sliced lemon and lemon peel could make packed lemon slices and zest an interesting and time-saving option.

The prime example, however, comes in the form of a clear, watery liquid that I was shown at the AILIMPO headquarters. The sector, as José Antonio García of AILIMPO told me, has come up with a new and revolutionary idea. "We realized that artificial citric acid, or E330, was being used in many products as an acidulating and preserving agent. We have therefore developed a natural lemon juice that is colorless, odorless and completely clear. In effect, a natural alternative to many artificial additives in fruit juices, preserves and other mainstream products, without the disadvantages—such as precipitation or aroma changes—that the use of other natural options, such as unprocessed lemon juice, could entail." The use of this natural, processed lemon juice, he explained, is starting to take off in Spain, where important juice manufacturers have come to realize that the marginal increase in cost derived from using the lemon juice instead of the artificial version is compensated by the possibility of offering the consumer a 'more natural product'.

You can call it hype, but there is no way of denying that gastronomically Spain is at "the tip of everybody's tongue". Long-standing tradition, exotic influences, a genuine cornucopia of products, skill—and yes, in some cases sheer genius—warrant its position at the forefront of the world's culinary scene. Exciting things are happening and both within Spain and far beyond, aspiring cooks want to get the gist of it all. Culinary schools are thriving and waiting lists for interns to access the *sanctum sanctorum* of Spain's famous chefs and *pâtissiers* are running into double and even triple digits.

Getting the Spanish "TOQUE" of Class

Text
Anke van Wijck

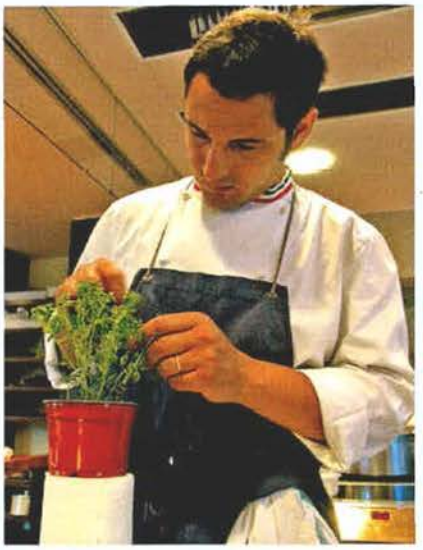


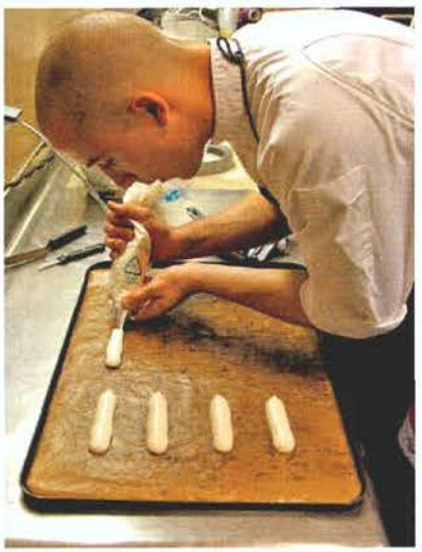
Spain is a country where the ritual of food is as intrinsically a part of culture as art or literature, as present in everyday life as work or leisure, and as high on the agenda as soccer or politics. And with the roads paved by a first generation of culinary visionaries primarily from the Basque Country, the stage was set for a new group of highly motivated and media-savvy virtuosi to enter the scene and for the world to notice. Reports on their groundbreaking innovations and dazzling creativity are circling the globe and Spain has become an absolute must for gourmets all over the world. Now the challenge is on to live up to its fame and to consolidate its position. Therefore solid professional training is key and leading chefs are putting a great deal of effort into recruiting their collaborators even at entry level and initiating them in what they insist is their 'philosophy'. Two terms are key: aptitude and attitude. Or translated into educational terms: skill and motivation. And Spanish cooking schools put equal emphasis on both. Last March, Alimentaria, the world's second-ranking food-fair that is held every two years in Barcelona, featured the First National Contest of Hotel and Restaurant Schools. With such accomplished chefs as Martín Berasategui and Joan Roca commenting at the sidelines and a jury of reputable experts in the field, it was a clear sign of the firm intent to recognize and effectively support the role that these centers for job training and higher education are playing not only in the rise but more importantly in the consolidation of Spain as a foremost gastronomic bastion in the world. Indeed, the recent media exposure—as well as the global aura the profession has gained—has been a boon to culinary schools all over Spain. Demographically, the age group of adolescents between sixteen and twenty is dwindling and, additionally, to many of today's youngsters the prospect of long hours of concentrated work and conflicting schedules seems rather unattractive. This, even despite a virtual 100% rate of labor insertion. But now applications are on the rise and so is the choice of courses offered, especially since non-professionals both in Spain and abroad are also increasingly showing an interest in gastronomy that reaches well beyond the pleasure of fine dining. Possibilities range from simple job training to master's degrees, from hands-on courses and courses for kids to continuing education and monographic seminars, masterclasses, extra-curricular activities, market visits, tours, wine courses, *practica*, internships, demos, and conferences. Be it the rookie, the foodie, the insider or the celebrity, there is a place for everyone to share in Spain's culinary and gastronomic fancy.

The forest through the trees

To be sure, the educational selection is wide and varied, and no one school is equal to another. So to keep seeing the forest through the trees and to satisfy all who are interested in the Spanish culinary scene, a division into broad categories is in order, always keeping in mind that while representative, this is only a sample of all that is available.

In the first place there are those schools that in one-, two- or three-year programs prepare students to become professional kitchen or front-room staff. It was not so very long ago that many in the restaurant and catering branch started off wholly untrained. Even successful chefs—well, yes, Ferran Adrià!—are self-taught or, like Juan Mari Arzak, received their training at the family restaurant. But with Spain as one of Europe's prime holiday choices and ranking second in the world as a congress and conference destination, there is a clear awareness that creating client loyalty excellence is key. Traditionally a destination for sun seekers, Spain now also draws a considerable flow of tourists toward its inland, which not only offers gorgeous landscapes and a wealth of historic monuments and museums, but is also a wide-open invitation to sample Spain's hugely varied regional cuisine. The number of routes that combine gastronomy and culture is growing at a surprisingly fast pace. Plus, Spain features no less than four three-Michelin-star restaurants, nine two-star, and eighty-nine one-star restaurants spread all over the country. "I have noticed a considerable change," says Jose Carlos García, a graduate from *La Consula* (see below) and chef-owner of Café de Paris in Málaga *(Spain Gourmetour* N° 54, English-language version), half of whose clients now come from abroad. He attributes it to the Michelin star his restaurant was granted and explains that since then he has seen a true avalanche of foreigners who are "well documented, well traveled and make up their own gastronomic routes." And last but not least, in the hotel sector, the food & beverage turnover is rapidly gaining weight in relation to room fares. It therefore goes without saying that what is needed is a force of well-trained youngsters at all levels. "Quality is not a prerogative of three-star restaurants or five-star hotels," says Juan Carlos Somoza, general manager of the



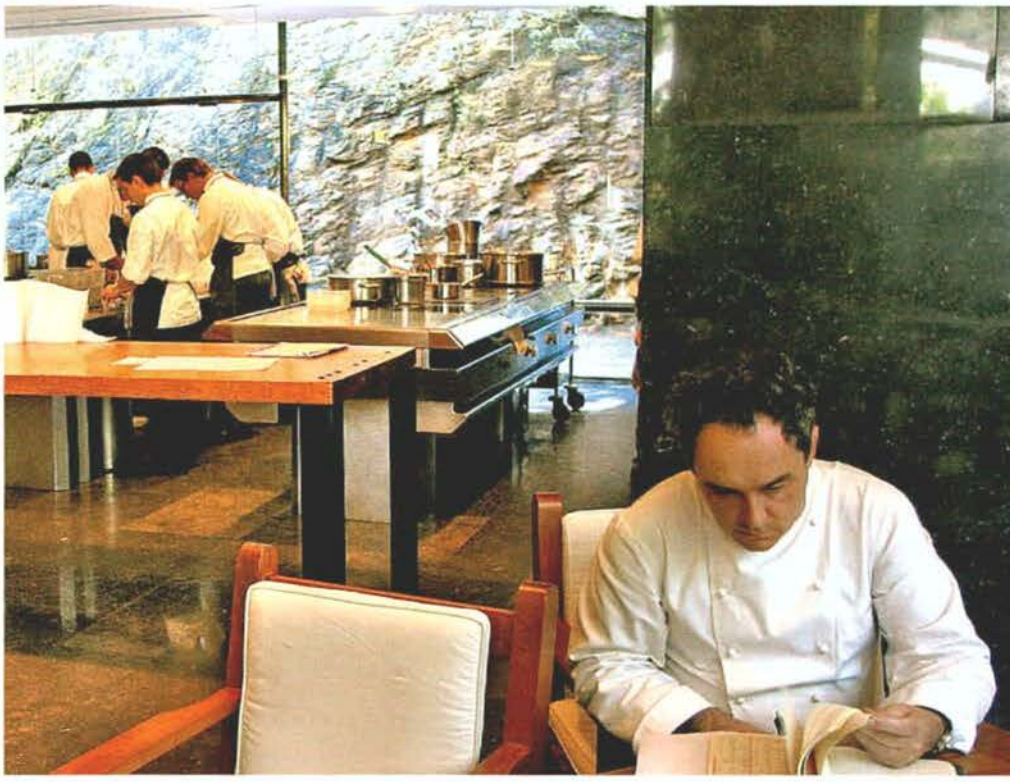


posh Centro Superior de Hosteleria de Galicia (CSHG) in the famous Santiago de Compostela, "whatever the business profile, quality should and can be top-level".
What all these schools have in common is the simultaneous apprenticeship of culinary, waiting, sommelier and bar skills combined with a basic to more in-depth knowledge of administration and management techniques according to the length of their program. Of course, attention is also given to language and computer skills. In-house restaurants that are open to the public grant a welcome opportunity to practice in all these fields under the guidance of qualified teaching staff. The idea is that entering the program often as young as sixteen, the typical adolescent has not yet made up their mind, nor is their personality shaped. The accent needs to be on character building and discipline, but also on smooth cooperation. "Even for people who want to become cooks, frontroom work is particularly suitable for developing both people-skills and team-spirit. Performance in front of a client doesn't come easily to everybody," says Vinyet Capdet, director of restaurant and catering studies at CETT in Barcelona. "Besides," she continues, "what it promotes is the much-needed and not always practiced tight liaison between kitchen and frontroom". At CSHG they clearly share this philosophy. "What is achieved is a permeability between different skills," says marketing manager Andrés Nieto. Many of these schools, after a two-year certificate program, offer an additional year to round-off training. Again Nieto: "Even though a chef spends 90% of his time in the kitchen, he needs to be a good administrator, he needs to be able to look beyond a well-prepared dish and to defend a budget. His knowledge, more than in-depth, should be targeted." Some schools, especially those in a university setting, also offer master, graduate, or five-year hotel and restaurant management studies. But even the students enrolled in these programs, who will probably never don a toque, still go through the preliminary years of occupational training, always in the understanding that a good manager needs to have a grip on every aspect of his or her business.

With the focus on cooking

Besides the forementioned institutions that are integrated in Spain's official educational system and spread throughout its seventeen

communities, there is also a series of schools that offer a more specific curriculum with a high concentration in the culinary arts. Not surprisingly, at least for the time being, these schools are mainly located in the two gastronomic regions *par excellence,* namely the Basque Country and Catalonia. "Everybody who has anything to do with food in San Sebastián knows Luis," wrote Anthony Bourdain in his second best-selling book *A Cook's Tour.* Bourdain did his homework all right. Who better than Luis Irízar to escort him through this delightful gastronomic labyrinth? Although allegedly retired, Irízar, the revered and beloved patriarch of Basque cuisine, remains "in the thick" of whatever is "cooking" in his city. The *Escuela de Cocina Luis Irízar,* now run by his three daughters, is the depository of a long and accomplished career with top-level restaurants in Madrid and San Sebastián. "Here we start from scratch and first teach classic cuisine, then traditional and eventually creative cuisine. You don't start building a house at the roof," says Virginia Irízar matter-of-factly and adds, voicing the opinion of many schools, "nobody walks out of here a chef. If they make good use of their time, they will be well prepared by the time they graduate." Akiro Yoshida, a Japanese art history



WONDERLAND REVISITED

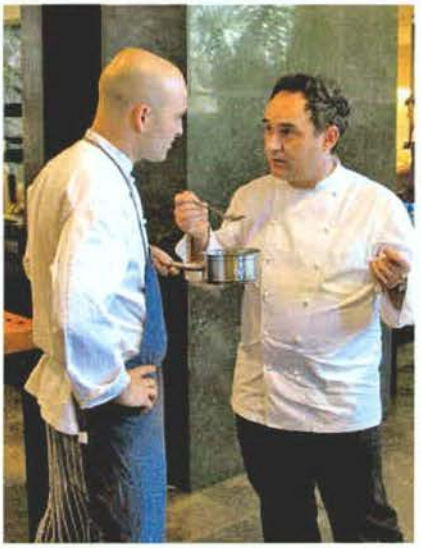
No need to fall through a rabbit-hole to venture into this new Wonderland. Just a little bit of patience. As of next year, Ferran Adrià and his team will guide us through the past and present of gastronomic happyland and will doubtlessly let us have a peek at what the future may hold. At his initiative and under the auspices of the Catalan Government and the savings-bank Caixa Manresa, an agreement was signed last fall to create the International Center for Food Culture and Gastronomic Research of Sant Benet de Bages (at a half-hour distance from Barcelona), also called Project ALICIA (Spanish for Alice), which stands for *Alimentación, Investigación, Ciencia y Arte.* Not surprisingly its logo is a little girl called Alicia. "Wherever nourishment is concerned, we want to work to make her have a better future," proclaimed Adrià in a recent interview with leading Catalan newspaper *La Vanguardia.* It reflects both his concern for younger generations and his urge to remove the aura of exclusivity that surrounds gastronomy. His new concept of *Fast-Good* best embodies the idea that food should and can be healthy, tasty and inexpensive all at once. "The center is going to be a social service institution that puts culinary know-how in the broadest sense at everybody's reach," says Toni Massanés, a fellow instigator and director of the project. ALICIA's web site will, for example, feature a simple course with some fifty basic recipes for young people who start living independently. Simultaneously, in the understanding that traditional cuisine is both the backbone and the inspiration for new culinary expressions, it is one of the project's goals to recover and document gastronomic history, especially that of Catalonia. On the other hand, ALICIA aims at being at the forefront of food research and applied sciences and to be a reference for students and food experts from all over the world. With Adrià's magic touch and a wide response from the food-world, Alicia's future can only look bright!

graduate in her second year at Irízar, explains it her way: "A dish should not only be visually appealing. What is more important is its exquisite taste. For both to coincide you need the foundations and that's what we learn here."
In El Born, one of the older and now greatly gentrified sections of Barcelona, lies the Escuela de Cocina Hofmann where the dynamic Mey Hofmann wields the baton. Partly German-educated and with a degree in economics, her passion for food and a sudden change in life brought her to pioneer this cooking school in 1982. Although in principle no previous experience is needed, Jonatan Díaz, a second-year student, best epitomizes the school's culture. His family owns the Hotel Ceferino in Villanova y la Geltrú (Tarragona) and Díaz enrolled in the Hofmann school after graduating from the Escuela Tecnica Superior de Restauración del Maresme. "It was important for me to graduate from that kind of school because I'm the future owner of my family's hotel, but I wanted to hone my culinary skills, so here I am and I don't regret it," he says, adding: "Cooking is synonymous with passion, but you need a solid basis from which to develop your own ideas." On weekends he takes over the reins at Ceferino's restaurant.

Sweet dreams

And for those who harbor sweet dreams or chocolate fantasies, there are plenty of opportunities to make them come true. Most probably due to an important Arab influence, sweets, desserts, and pastry rank high on the gastronomic priority list in Spain. The predilection for chocolate dates back from the era of discovery when the first beans were brought into the country and the

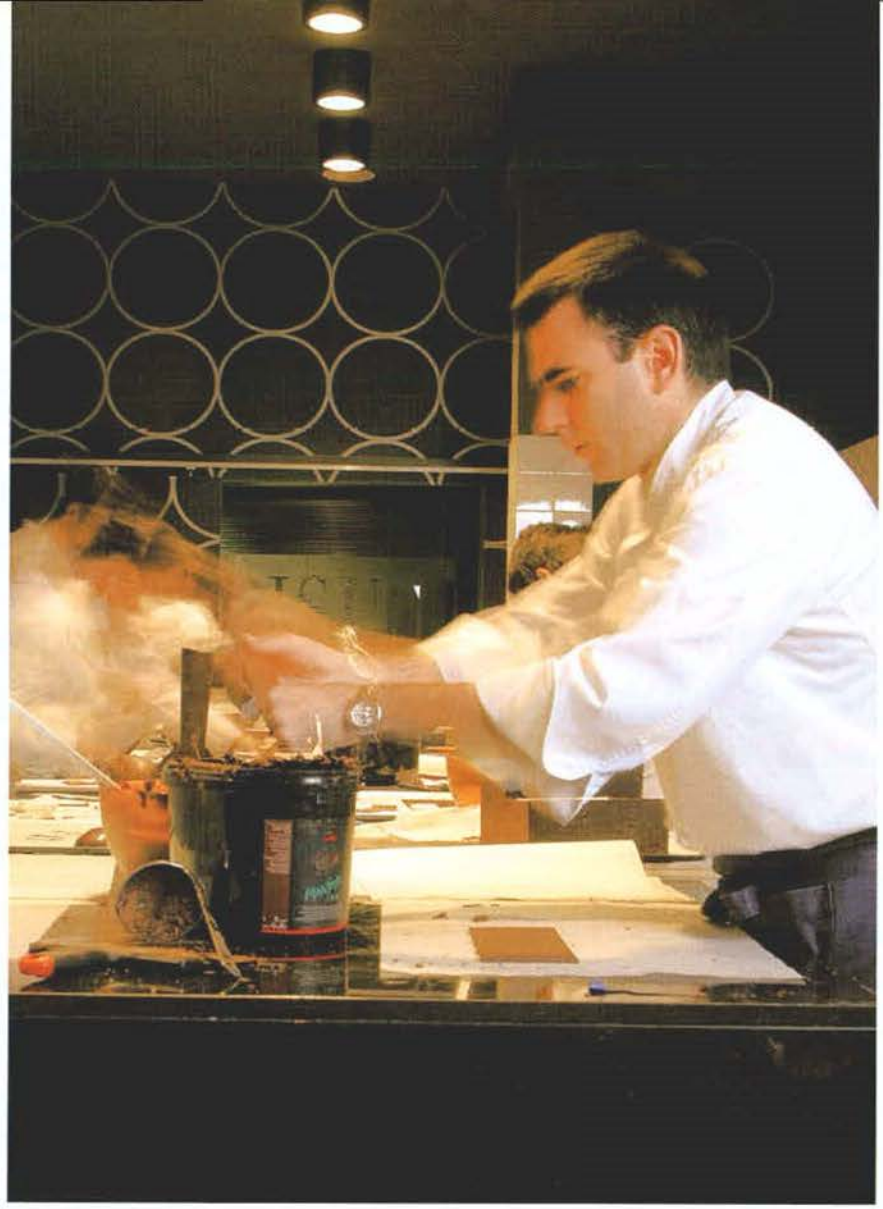
habit of drinking and eating chocolate took a firm hold (see related article in this issue). Lost in the countryside, near the historic town of Vic (also known for its excellent sausage) lies Chocovic, a prestigious chocolate import and distribution firm. Since 1995 the premises house Aula Chocovic, an educational center that started off with courses in chocolate-making for clients. Since then it has outgrown itself. With the firm support of Ferran Adrià and especially of his brother, pastry-wizard Albert Adrià, and with the regular collaboration of other culinary celebrities like the brothers Roca or Toni Botella, Aula Chocovic now imparts courses on many different subjects, primarily aimed at professionals. Besides such traditional seminars as chocolate-making and basic notions of chocolate, they now impart hands-on and theoretical courses not only on *tapas* and cocktail bites, individual pastries or bread for restaurants, but also on food technology, culinary chemistry, or vacuum cooking. Not to mention Ferran Adrià's yearly masterclass! "It is our purpose to continue adding courses that explain the bases of the culinary process," says Ramon Morato, Aula Chocovic's director. "This is the place to come to learn about new methods," commented Ignacio Parellada, the owner of a catering company in Gerona who had just attended the course on vacuum cooking. But how would you like to get the inside on their new line of pre-desserts? What about layers of *foie gras* and ganache, both of similar texture, with crunchy cocoa and apricot toffee?
Oriol Balaguer is a true master in artful chocolate-making. This gifted



thirty-two year-old rules over a small but highly efficient workshop, the Estudio de Chocolate y Pastelería, in the very center of Barcelona. Besides his famous cocoa beans and a variety of chocolates, sorbets, pastries and desserts, he makes products to order for all kinds of celebrations from birthdays to corporate ceremonies. Balaguer sits down with a client and captures the idiosyncrasy of the person or the event to be commemorated, which he then represents in a chocolate work of art. "We use fresh products," explains Balaguer, "so often we finish off the order in front of the client". His way of sharing his expertise and artistry is by regularly having five interns for a minimum of six months in an atmosphere that Balaguer describes as "young and cosmopolitan". "We do things together and share interests," he affirms. As might be expected, the waiting list is long. "This is the best place to learn all about chocolate," says Erina Yamanaka, a Japanese dietician who graduated from Irízar and did a three-month internship at the famous Celler de Can Roca (Gerona) before she started working alongside Balaguer. "Chocolate is complex and intriguing," she says. "And then I saw his book, so I had to come." *La cocina de los postres* (Montagud Editores) was awarded the 2000 Best Culinary Book of the World (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 58).
In the old part of Barcelona not far from the Escuela de Cocina Hofmann, we find EspaiSucre, "the sugar space." Its logo is an ant. "It best characterizes us," smiles its jovial founder Jordi Butrón, graduate of the Escola de Restauracio i Hostalage de Barcelona. "Ants are universally associated with sugar but also with hard work, consistency, discipline and day-by-day effort and that's what the learning process is all about." What, according to Butrón, differentiates EspaiSucre, and what perhaps is the secret behind its meteoric success, is that they teach a very precise and unique course, namely, 'plated desserts'. Some time is also dedicated to small non-sweet dishes. "Part of the recent success in Spanish gastronomy is that we share our knowledge and that means progress for everybody," reflects Butrón and, as though having overheard the conversation, Israeli student Janet Stein Piven raves about all the inside information she gets at EspaiSucre.

Customized culinary programs

Most schools also offer the possibility of courses on request. CETT, for example, regularly imparts a course in *paella*-making to groups of Japanese women. Or the above-mentioned EspaiSucre has groups that only want to learn how to emulate *crema catalana*, the incomparable Catalan custard cream

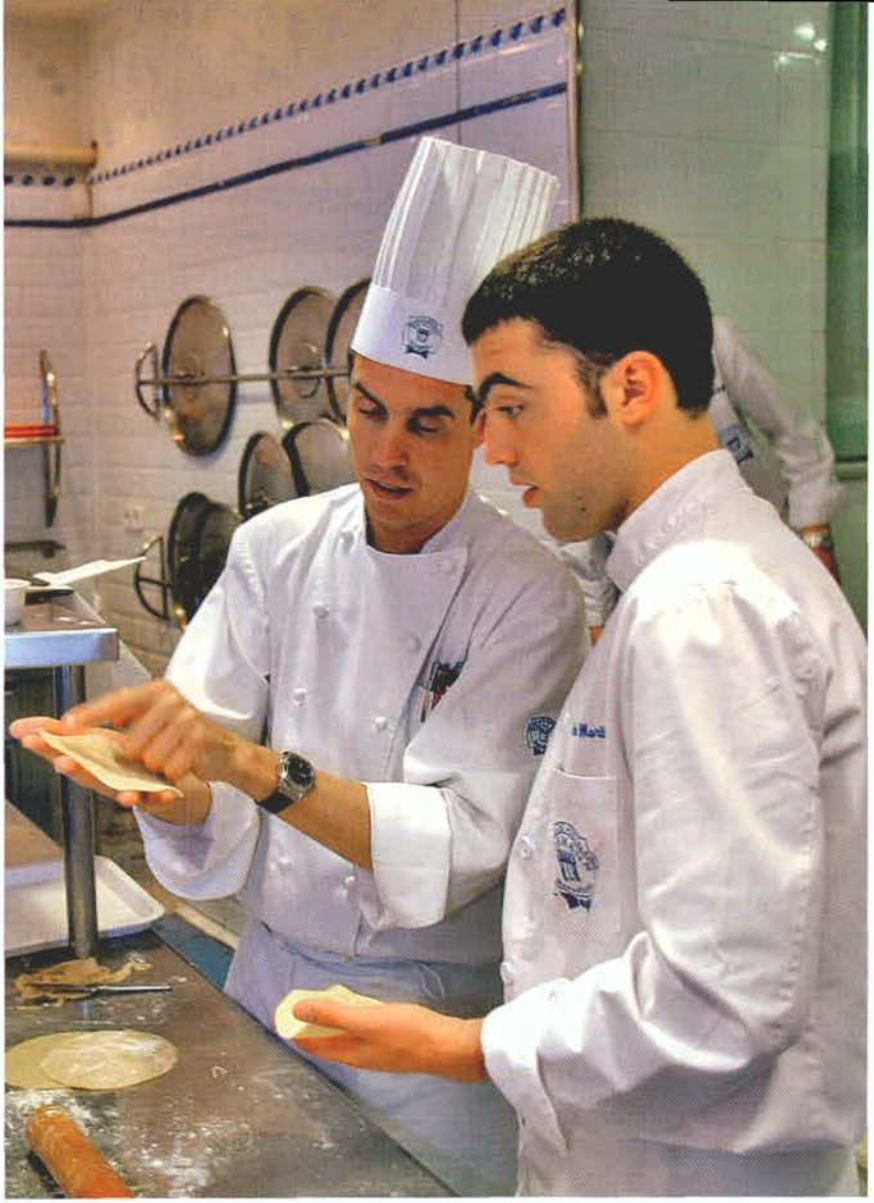


topped with a crunchy layer of burned sugar. But there is also a myriad of smaller schools and private food-enthusiasts that are thrilled to share know-how, table, a good glass of wine, and the fun of it all with fellow food-lovers from around the globe. The most veteran of these schools is Alambique in Madrid. Located near the Royal Palace, its owner, the cosmopolitan yet down-to-earth Clara María Amezúa, made it her goal—long before the present boom—not only to tell the world about the bounty of Spanish products through conferences all over the globe, but also through many different courses for small groups in the welcoming setting of her kitchen-store. A more recent example is the Aula Gastronómica de la Boquería just off *Las Ramblas* in Barcelona. At the initiative of Rafael Clarasó, who worked for nine years at El Bulli, the Aula opened last year. It is situated within La Boquería or Mercado San José, one of the world's most famous farmers' markets, and which displays over twenty thousand different national and international food products (*Spain Gourmetour* N° 38, English-language version). Besides monographic courses for professionals, tastings and even courses for kids, Clarasó organizes guided market tours. He not only advises about how and what to buy at each time of year, but then gives a full-fledged demo or a hands-on class of how to turn whatever has been purchased that day into a succulent meal in the Aula's well-equipped classroom. After that the group is taken to Múrgula, Clarasó's small adjacent restaurant, to sample the same seasonal dishes that they were taught to prepare.

Indeed, what most defines Spanish cuisine is that it is product-based. Each region offers a different basket of products and consequently a different culinary expression. Think of local fish, in-season produce, artisan cheeses, mushrooms, truffles, herby olive-oils, you name it; in every corner of Spain there is something new to learn and to enjoy. After a solid career as an expert in Spanish food-product exports, Marta Angulo understood that there was an important niche to cover. Together with Anne Marie Aznárez, who is in charge of the Barcelona area, she started Culinary Adventures. The company offers a wide range of wine tours, culinary trips and other gastronomic services throughout Spain. Among other events, they organize half-day cooking classes focused on regional recipes and followed by lunch or dinner with a choice of matching Spanish wines. Often visits to local markets are included.

Going global

And although word-of-mouth still works wonders, the Internet has proven to be an invaluable tool for students, professionals and amateurs to both envision what is on the market and be able to compare. No wonder all schools feature comprehensive web sites. "I found CETT through the University of Barcelona web site, because I wanted a school with history, a solid reputation, affiliated with a



university and with a recognized title," says Mung Jung Kim, a second-year student, in excellent Spanish. After studying Japanese and finance in Korea and writing articles on gastronomy as a hobby, she decided to make a move. She likes the recognition that chefs receive in Spain and her final goal is to open a Spanish restaurant in her country. Kim is a case in point of the increasing number of highly motivated international students, interns and professionals that have chosen Spain for that special touch of culinary class. This is why Spain's culinary schools are taking a keen interest in furthering international exchange, not only by receiving students from abroad but also by sending them out. Many have engaged in bi- and multilateral agreements with foreign associations and institutions both to promote mobility among countries and to facilitate validation of certificates. So, for example, the Escuela Superior de Hostelería Artxanda is associated with the Educational Institute of the American Hotel & Lodging Association as well as with the Hotel Institute Montreux.

Or the schools in Benalmádena and Churriana partake in programs like Youthstart, Adap and Leonardo da Vinci. Virginia Irízar makes it a point to have at least 20-25% of students from abroad. It enriches interaction and opens horizons. And the restaurants that take interns recognize these benefits. At El Bulli interns take turns cooking the staff meals and are encouraged to show off their national or regional cuisine. Not only do these meals count for overall evaluation but as Albert Raurich, one of the chefs, says, "we have a lot of fun and learn a great deal". This is clearly a reflection of a new era where teamwork is key to achieving top-quality.

It is all in the team

What perhaps sets Spain apart and what is putting a definite imprint on the master chefs' young acolytes is not only the incessant search for gastronomic excellence and innovation but also the team-spirit, openness and willingness to share. "We make it a point not only to show our interns and trainees the 'how' but more importantly to explain the 'why' of procedures and proportions, the sensations a dish should transmit," continues Raurich. The staff at El Bulli is no exception. "In few places in the United States will a chef stop and show you," comments Boris Portnoy, who has taken some time off from his job at Salt in Philadelphia to do an internship at Mugaritz in the outskirts of San Sebastián. "But here it doesn't matter how long it takes, the end result is important and there is no compromise to that. They show you the exact steps to the best performance," he says in awe. The fact of the matter is that in a professional kitchen even the greatest genius is not self-sufficient. Teamwork is becoming ever more crucial, even though creating a team is far from an easy task in a setting where, characteristically, people tend to move on, especially the most talented. But things are changing. Traditional hierarchy and strict

following of orders are giving way to an atmosphere of working and thinking together. "Practically my whole team consists of former interns, even though it is not easy to hold on to them," explains Raúl Cabrera, executive chef at the Kursaal restaurant in San Sebastián which is run by Martín Berasategui. And he continues, "I certainly don't like the old style of shouting orders and doing things 'just because'. It's counterproductive. Here we have a good atmosphere, people have no qualms about asking questions and helping each other out."

Practice makes progress

Yet it is not only skilled interns that make a good team. All schools have solid connections with local and regional restaurants for mandatory on-the-job training. But not only that, these businesses will eventually employ many of the graduates that used to practice at their place. Carmelo Bosque is a former student of the Escuela de Hostelería y Turismo San Lorenzo in Huesca, near one of Spain's foremost ski resorts. In response to a growing need for well-trained youngsters, in 1995 the school was relocated to a building specifically designed to

offer the best possible training facilities. Bosque, who now successfully runs the one-Michelin-star restaurant Lillas Pastia in Huesca's center, draws 75% of his staff of forty from the school and regularly takes four trainees for their summer practicum. Similarly, Esther Huete, director of beginning studies at Cebanc-Cdea in San Sebastián, explains that the school is in a privileged position. "We're in San Sebastián, in the Basque Country, and what more do students want," she says. Indeed, the area offers a myriad of possibilities for trainees. And here as elsewhere restaurateurs of all levels are increasingly committed to taking them in and complying with the corresponding rotation and evaluation demands, especially when there is an emotional link. Like Bosque, Andoni Aduriz, the highly talented but unassuming chef-owner of the forementioned Mugaritz that has two Michelin stars, was, as Huete proudly remembers, an exceptional student and is now more than willing to offer an opportunity to newcomers (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 53). But he stresses that school is just a first step and that in gastronomy there are many more avenues than creative cuisine. "Depending on your personality, you go in one direction or another," he

points out. As young as he may be, he is fully aware of the toll it takes to remain at the top. As is the case with many of his successful colleagues in the high-end sector—and this came clearly to the fore at the panel discussions during Alimentaria 2004—Aduriz overtly expresses his fear as to the fact that students may get the wrong message and are too starry-eyed with recent success stories. Reportedly quite a considerable number of people 'drop out' because of unfulfilled expectations after three or four years in the profession. This is why rigorous on-the-job training as an intrinsic part of all study programs is crucial. For additional motivation, schools organize all kinds of extra-curricular activities, encourage their students to attend conferences and to partake either collectively or individually in the many national and international contests that are available and regularly cater at promotions both in Spain and abroad.

Where students earn the stars

Yet besides the firm commitment of the hotel and restaurant sector to facilitate on-the-job training to the maximum degree, as mentioned earlier, practically all schools feature in-house restaurants that are open to the public and provide an excellent opportunity to put theory into practice in a 'real-life' situation, albeit in a 'controlled' environment. Reality will set in soon enough! It is a clear opportunity for the students to show themselves at their best without the weight of direct responsibility. After the first four months of preparatory theory and practice, Hofmann's students are set to perform. The school is literally intertwined with the elegant but cozy restaurant that has achieved worldwide reputation. "I get calls from New York to make reservations for people who don't even know that this is a school," says Hofmann with undisguised satisfaction, as she sits next to a wall packed with photos of her pictured with celebrities like Kevin Costner, Michael Douglas or Charlize Theron. Elegance and privileged locations are certainly not a rarity for Spanish culinary schools. The Escuela de Hosteleria de Benalmádena (Málaga) occupies the old hotel La Fonda, built by the late architect César Manrique. It is located in the historic center of the old village and offers splendid views over the Mediterranean. This school, as well as its sister-institution La Cónsula in Churriana (Málaga), features a high-quality restaurant that is open to the public and is fully serviced by the students under the

watchful eye of accomplished chefs, *mâitres d'hôtel,* and sommeliers. "We like the style and the welcoming attitude here" said Nelson Pothier from Quebec on his second visit to the restaurant in Benalmádena while vacationing on the Costa del Sol. "You see how well trained they are and how spiffy they look!" he emphasizes while being served cocktails by two smiling and impeccably uniformed students. No wonder the place is always fully booked. The driving force behind both schools is Rafael de la Fuente, who after a long career of managing such leading hotels as Los Monteros in Marbella or the Villamagna in Madrid, wanted to give back. Before politely excusing himself to welcome the Princess Cristine de Bernardotte (widow of the late Prince Charles of Sweden), a much-cherished regular customer, he intimated that revenues from the restaurant pay about 30% of total expenses. *La Consula* doesn't go for less. It is housed in a 19th-century estate surrounded by a most singular botanical garden. But who could better describe the place than Ernest Hemingway himself, a regular guest of Bill and Annie Davis, its second owners. "I would wake in the morning ... and look out over the pines in the garden to the mountains and the sea ... and I knew I had never been in a finer place," he wrote in *A Dangerous Summer.*

Tangible results

Past efforts to give a decisive impetus to culinary schools are clearly reaping fruits. "Our alumni are our best endorsement," says Francesc Orbitg, director of the Escola de Restauracio y Hostalage de Barcelona, speaking for all. They are an impressive group indeed. To name just a few, there is Sergi Arola, chef-owner of La Broche in Madrid (two Michelin stars) who is opening a new restaurant in the fashionable Hotel Arts in Barcelona; José Ramón Andrés, according to Bill Clinton one of the best chefs in the US (amply corroborated by the concession of the 2003 James Beard Foundation Award as best chef of the East Coast) and co-owner of four restaurants in the Washington area (Jaleo, among them); or Agustí Comabella who before settling down at his restaurant L'Arrel del Born in Barcelona, circled the world twice and cooked for celebrities like Madonna, Sylvester Stallone, and Cameron Diaz. *"El artista nace no se hace"* (artistic talent is innate—you can't produce it), concludes Orbitg, "what we do is give them a solid education, but genius comes from within." This article bears witness to quite a few success stories but of course there

are many more. They are an unequivocal sign of a new approach to teaching as well as changed work ethics. Echoing Orbitg's maxim, there is little doubt that Spain will continue to turn out culinary superstars, but it is also true that the bases are clearly laid for a skillful and motivated workforce to keep Spain right where it is: At the very top!

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.*

Photo Credits page 140

WEB SITES

OFFICIAL SCHOOLS

Escuela de Hostelería de Benalmádena
Benalmádena (Málaga)
www.ehbenalmadena.com

Escuela de Hostelería de Málaga "La Cónsula"
Churriana (Málaga)
www.laconsula.com

Centro Superior de Hostelería de Galicia
Santiago de Compostela (La Coruña)
www.cshg.xunta.es

Escuela Superior de Hostelería
Artxanda
Bilbao
www.escuelahosteleria.com

CEBANC-Cdea
San Sebastián
www.cebanc.com

Escola de Restauracio i Hostalage de Barcelona
Barcelona
www.ferhb.com

CETT - Escola d'Hoteleria i Turisme
Barcelona
www.cett.es

Escuela de Hosteleria y Turismo San Lorenzo
Huesca
www.escuelahosteleria.org

SPECIALIZED SCHOOLS

Escuela de Cocina Luis Irízar
San Sebastián
www.escuelairizar.com

Escuela de Cocina Hofmann
Barcelona
www.hofmann-bcn.com

Aula Gastronómica de la Boquería
Barcelona
www.aulaboqueria.com

Oriol Balaguer
Barcelona
www.oriolbalaguer.com

EspaiSucre
Barcelona
www.EspaiSucre.com

Aula Chocovic
Vic (Barcelona)
www.chocovic.es

Alambique
Madrid
www.alambique.com

RESTAURANTS

Café de París
Málaga
www.rcafedeparis.com

Mugaritz
Rentería (San Sebastián)
www.mugaritz.com

Restaurante Kursaal
San Sebastián
www.sansebastianturismo.com/kursaal

el Bulli
Rosas (Gerona)
www.elbulli.com

OTHERS

Culinary Adventures
www.atasteofspain.com

Restaurante Sant Pau

A true-born Catalan of universal spirit, Carme Ruscalleda focused her artistic talents on the world of food and 15 years ago opened her Sant Pau restaurant in a small seaside town about 50 km (30 miles) from Barcelona. There, the best Spanish female chef ever—and the most unassuming—can give full rein to her creativity, based on traditional Catalonian cuisine or on her own dreams. With her love of the natural cycles of foods and a reluctance to combine ingredients without a reason for doing so, Carme always reveals a human touch in her creations in spite of the perfection of her technique and performance. From now on she will have to divide her time between San Pol de Mar and Tokyo where a new Sant Pau opened just a few months ago. The wine recommendations are given by sommelier Alex Gallardo.

Nou, 10. San Pol de Mar (Barcelona). Tel: (+34) 937 600 662. santpau@ruscalleda.com www.relaischateaux.com/satpau

Carme Ruscalleda

10 RECIPES

Recipes Carme Ruscalleda **Translation** Jenny McDonald **Photos** Toya Legido and Tomás Zarza/ICEX

Textures of chocolate, corn and lemon

(Texturas de chocolate, maíz y limón)

Corn sorbet
Mix the ingredients and let stand for 4 to 8 hours. Blend the ingredients finely to break up the corn grains. Strain through a fine strainer and transfer to the ice-cream maker.

Smooth chocolate sorbet
Heat all the ingredients together, except for the cocoa, chocolate and stabilizer, to 40°C / 105°F. Add the stabilizer and raise the temperature to 85°C / 185°F. Remove from the heat and add the cocoa powder and chocolate. Mix very well. Let stand for 4 to 8 hours. Blend in the Thermomix, strain and freeze.

Cocoa sorbet
Heat all the ingredients together, except for the cocoa and stabilizer, to 40°C / 105°F. Add the stabilizer and raise the temperature to 85°C / 185°F. Remove from the heat, add the cocoa powder and mix very well. Let stand for 4 to 8 hours. Blend in the Thermomix, strain and freeze.

Chocolate cream
Make the custard, pour over the chocolate and stir to mix.

Light sablé
Rub the butter into the sifted flour, sugar and almonds until crumb-like. Add the egg yolks and press in. Wrap the dough in kitchen film and leave to stand for at least one hour. Push through the rolling machine at setting no. 2 and cut into rectangles measuring 3 x 8 cm / 1 1/4" x 3 1/4". Bake at 190°C / 375°F for approximately four minutes until lightly browned. Store in an airtight tin with silica gel.

Lemon cookie spiral
Mix the marmalade with the flour and spread over a silpat. Bake at 150°C / 300°F for 7 minutes. While still hot, form into a cylinder shape. Store in an airtight tin with silica gel.

Cocoa candy
Mix the fondant and glucose and heat to 160°C / 320°F. Remove from the heat and add the cocoa paste. Spread onto a silpat while still hot. Place another silpat on top and roll over with a rolling-pin. Cut the paste into squares.
To make the flakes, take one of the squares and place it between two silpats. Heat in the oven for about 5 minutes. Meanwhile, heat another tray. Roll out the paste very finely with a rolling pin then remove the top silpat. Cool the paste on a marble surface. Lift off and place on the warm tray and gradually pull off in flakes.

Lemon marmalade
Blanch the lemons in boiling water for 2 minutes. Squeeze out the juice. Set aside the juice and peel. Wrap the seeds in a small bundle. Remove any pith from the peel.
Place the bundle with the seeds in a pressure cooker with the cleaned peel and half the water. Cover and heat. When the valve begins to spin, cook slowly for 10 minutes. Take half the lemon peel and push through a fine strainer. Cut the other half into thin julienne strips.
Place the strained juice from the pressure cooker (together with any juice squeezed out from the bundle of seeds) in a pan with the remaining water and the sugar. Bring to the boil and add the puréed and sliced peel. Simmer over a medium flame for 20 minutes, removing any foam with a slotted spoon. Finally, check the density on a cold plate. Set aside.

To serve
Place a thin strip of cocoa powder to one side of the plate and a strip of lemon marmalade to the other. At the center, place a blob of chocolate cream as if it were glue and stick the sablé to it. Decorate to one side with six blobs of chocolate cream close to each other. Top with the lemon cookie and finally a quenelle of cocoa sorbet, one of chocolate sorbet and one of corn sorbet.

Preparation time: 60 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes + 30 minutes for the lemon marmalade

Recommended wine
Mataró Violeta from Alta Alella 2000, DO Alella. A red wine made from grapes left longer than usual on the vine, it makes a good, sweet but not too sweet, partner for the chocolate while also marrying well with the corn sorbet and the lemon marmalade.

SERVES 18: **Corn sorbet:** 220 g / 1 cup / 8 oz sugar, 350 g / 12 oz drained canned corn (from a good brand), 50 g / 4 tbsp / 2 oz atomized glucose, 100 g / 3 1/2 oz table cream, 390 g / 13 fl oz water, 5 g / 1/6 oz / 1 teaspoon stabilizer. **Smooth chocolate sorbet:** 400 g / 1 3/4 cups / 14 oz melting chocolate, 200 g / 3/4 cup / 7 oz sugar, 5 g / 1/6 oz / 1 teaspoon stabilizer, 400 g / 1 3/4 cups / 14 oz evaporated milk, 20 g / 1 1/2 tbsp / 1 oz cocoa powder, 40 g / 3 tbsp / 1 1/2 oz atomized glucose, 10 g / 2 tsp / 1/3 oz inverted sugar, 150 ml / 5 fl oz / 1/4 pint water. **Cocoa sorbet:** 300 g / 1 1/4 cups / 10 1/2 oz cocoa powder, 100 g / 3 1/2 oz atomized glucose, 400 g / 1 3/4 cups / 14 oz sugar, 20 g / 1 1/2 tbsp / 1 oz inverted sugar, 10 g / 1/3 oz stabilizer, 1.1 l / 4 3/4 cups mineral water, 300 g / 1 1/4 cups / 10 1/2 oz evaporated milk. **Chocolate cream:** Custard: 250 ml milk / 1 1/8 cups / 8 fl oz + 250 ml / 1 1/8 cups / 8 fl oz cream + 50 g / 4 tbsp / 2 oz sugar + 100 g / 3 1/2 oz egg yolks. Cream: 250 g / 9 oz chocolate, the above custard. **Light sablé:** 250 g / 9 oz butter, 350 g / 1 1/2 cups / 12 oz light flour, 25 g / 2 tbsp / 1 oz icing sugar, 25 g / 2 tbsp / 1 oz ground almonds, 3 egg yolks. **Lemon cookie spiral:** 100 g / 3 1/2 oz lemon marmalade puréed, 30 g / 2 1/2 tbsp / 1 oz rice flour. **Cocoa candy:** 190 g / 7 oz fondant, 100 g / 3 1/2 oz glucose, 100 g / 1/2 cup / 3 1/2 oz cocoa paste. **Lemon marmalade:** 2.5 kg / 5 1/2 lb lemons, 1.2 liters / 2 pt. mineral water, 1.8 kg / 4 lb sugar. Cocoa powder

Cuttlefish, almonds, young green beans and cocoa sauce

(Sepia, almendra, judías tiernas y salsa de cacao)

SERVES 4: 1 cuttlefish (preferably female) weighing 1 kg / 2 1/4 lb, 400 g / 14 oz fresh almonds, 400 g / 14 oz very thin green beans, 100 ml / 1/2 cup / 4 fl oz almond milk, 20 g / 1 heaping tablespoon ground rice, 50 g / 2 oz melting chocolate, 20 g / 1 oz roughly chopped cocoa beans, 20 ml / 1 1/2 tbsp / 1.5 fl oz *verjus* (tart grape juice), 1 small shallot, mineral water, salt, pepper, olive oil. ***Picada*** (a traditional Catalonian minced sauce used to bring out flavors during cooking, and sometimes including nuts): 2 ripe tomatoes, 6 cloves garlic, 12 parsley leaves, 50 ml / 4 tbsp / 2 fl oz sweet sherry.

Cuttlefish

Remove the two membranes from the body, the thick one and the thin one. Trim the body and cut into perfect rectangles. Keep the trimmings, legs, ink, liver and skins for the following preparations.

Cocoa sauce

Fry 100 g / 3 1/2 oz of the cuttlefish trimmings and skins, with 40 g / 1 1/2 oz of the liver, until well browned. Season with salt and pepper. Add the rice, grated chocolate, 400 ml / 13 fl oz boiling water and cook for 15 minutes. Strain, check for salt and set aside.

Almond sauce

Blend 50 g / 2 oz almonds with the almond milk, salt and pepper in the Thermomix, and set aside.

Broth

Cut 300 g / 10 1/2 oz cuttlefish legs into pieces and brown with 30 g / 1 oz of the liver in a little olive oil in a large pan. Season with salt and pepper. Add the blended picada, cook for 2 minutes then add 1 l / 1 3/4 pt boiling water. Cook for 20 minutes, blend, check for salt, strain and set aside.

Ink

Gently fry 1 finely chopped shallot in a little oil, then add 50 ml / 4 tbsp / 2 fl oz water, 30 g / 2 1/2 tbsp / 1 oz ink and 100 ml / 1/2 cup / 4 fl oz oil. Bring to the boil, season with salt and pepper, add the verjus, strain and set aside.

Green beans

Blanch for 2 minutes and set aside.

Almonds

Peel and soak in milk.

To serve

Start by making a few stripes of cocoa sauce, add a few touches of almond sauce and sprinkle with chopped cocoa beans.

Add the green beans and almonds, after first sautéing in a little oil with salt and pepper.

Heat the cuttlefish pieces for just a few seconds on a chrome griddle and add. Dress the dish with a little oil lightly mixed with the ink sauce. If available, decorate with a piece of zucchini flower, baked for just 2 minutes.

Serve the broth separately.

Preparation time: 45 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes for the sauce + 20 minutes for the broth

Recommended wine: Rocallis 2002 from the Can Ràfols del Caus winery, DO Penedés. Very complex aromas and a strong palate, a good partner for the texture of the cuttlefish. The subtle toast flavors blend well with the cocoa sauce.

Rare squab

(Pichón de sangre)

SERVES 6: 6 squabs, red wine, port, 18 tiny onions, 12 lychees, 50 g / 2 oz melting chocolate, rocket, cardamom, olive oil, salt and pepper. **For the stock:** 1 onion, 1 leek, 1 carrot, 1 small stem celery, 2 shallots. **Cake:** 125 g / 1/2 cup / 4 oz butter, 20 g / 1 1/2 tbsp / 1 oz sugar, 20 g / 1 1/2 tbsp / 1 oz salt, 3 eggs, 180 g / 3/4 cup / 6 oz flour, 5 g / 1/6 oz / 1 teaspoon baking powder, 200 g / 7 oz chopped walnuts

Squab

Bone the birds (except for last leg bone) and set aside the breasts and thighs. Remove any meat from the carcasses and roast with a little oil at 190°C / 375°F for about 20 minutes. Fry the vegetables for the stock until soft, then add to the browned carcasses. Leave for about 5 minutes. Moisten with red wine and reduce. Place in a large pan and cover with mineral water. Reduce very slowly to about 1/4. Strain through a fine strainer. To make the sauce, sauté the shallots until browned then add a glass of port. Reduce and add to the carcass broth. Strain and set aside.

Dress the squab with cardamom, salt, pepper and oil. Flash fry the thighs, then cook in the oven with water for 15-20 minutes. Before serving, cut into three pieces (retaining the last bone). Flash fry the breasts and heat under a grill, skin side up so that the skin helps cook them, for about 8 minutes. Retain the rare juices released after cooking.

Cake

Soften the butter and work with the sugar and salt until mixed. Add the eggs, at room temperature, one by one. Add the flour and baking powder sifted together. Gradually add the walnuts by hand. Pour the mixture into a greased and floured loaf tin. Bake at 160°C / 320°F for 35 minutes, covered to protect from excessive browning. Then uncover and bake for a further 25 minutes.

When cold, cut into thin slices measuring 15 cm / 6" long and 2 cm / 3/4" high. Place these strips inside a ring. Bake until crisp at 100°C / 215° F.

Little onions

Place the onions in the steam oven for 10 minutes. Remove and peel. Place in a pan with hot oil, season with salt and pepper and a little sugar. Fry gently until lightly browned. Set aside.

Lychees

Just before serving, sauté the freshly-peeled lychees with the onions and add the pieces of squab thigh. Check for salt and pepper. Add a spoonful of squab sauce to glaze.

To serve

Melt the chocolate with 300 ml / 1 1/4 cup / 10 1/2 fl oz squab stock. Form a tear-shaped pool of chocolate sauce on the plate, and top with the breasts, one on top of the other. Place the cake ring to one side and fill with the sautéed lychees, onions and squab. Stick in the pieces of thigh with the bone standing up vertically. Dress with chocolate sauce. Garnish with a few rocket leaves and drops of the rare squab juices.

Preparation time: 45 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes + 4 hours for the stock + 1 hour for the cake

Recommended wine: Clos Mogador by René Barbier 2001 from the DOCa Priorato and made from Garnacha, Cabernet, Cariñena, Merlot, Syrah and Pinot Noir grapes. The Priorato character offers finesse, power and exactly the right degree of maturity and expression, with a texture that will bring out the flavors of the lightly cooked squab. The aromas blend well with the garnishes.

Hot ganache with pink pepper ice cream

(Ganache caliente con helado de pimienta rosa)

The technique for making a tasty ganache with a very fine, melting texture is simple but it is important to add the ingredients in the correct order.

Heat the ingredients in the microwave. While hot, carefully mix the chocolate then add the hot cream, the eggs—attention!!!—at room temperature and finally the soft butter. Mix well.

Pour into molds measuring 4 cm / 1 1/2" in diameter by 1.5 cm / 3/4" high and chill.

Bake at 190°C / 375°F for approximately 3 minutes and 45 seconds.

In the Thermomix, at a slow speed and using the Varoma for steaming, cook the sugar, glucose, two types of milk, and cream. When the temperature reaches 40°C / 105°F, add the stabilizer. At 60°C / 140°F, add the butter in pieces. Continue to raise the temperature, at medium speed, to 85°C /185°F. Add the pink pepper and blend. Let stand for 4 to 8 hours. Blend again and transfer to the ice-cream maker.

To serve

Turn out the ganache at the center of the plate while very hot. At the table, top with a quenelle of pink pepper ice cream.

Preparation time: 30 minutes + 4 hours for the ice cream.

Cooking time: 15 minutes

Recommended wine: Dolç de l'Obac by Close de l'Obac, 1995. A strong, fresh wine with aromas of cake, pepper and cinnamon. It will blend perfectly with the contrasting temperatures and perfumes of the ganache and the ice cream. Made within the DOCa Priorato from Garnacha and Cariñena grapes.

SERVES 15: **Ganache:** 275 g / 10 oz melting chocolate, 110 g / 3 1/2 oz cream, 3 fresh eggs, 40 g / 1 1/2 oz butter. **Pink pepper ice cream:** 270 g / 1 1/6 cups / 10 oz sugar, 110 g / 4 oz atomized glucose, 50 g / 2 oz butter, 80 g / 1/3 cup / 3 oz powdered skimmed milk, 400 g / 14 fl oz cream (35% fat content), 1.14 liters / 2 pt full cream milk, 10 g / 2 tsp / 1/3 oz stabilizer, 30 g / 2 1/2 tbsp / 1 oz pink pepper

Black and white chocolate bonbons

(Bombón de chocolate negro y blanco)

FOR 50 BONBONS: 500 g / 1 lb 2 oz plain chocolate, 250 g / 9 oz cream, 250 g / 9 oz butter, 50 g / 2 oz white chocolate, 2 sheets gelatine, 100 ml / 1/2 cup / 3 fl oz Calisay liqueur (or other herbal liqueur)

Outer casing

Heat the plain chocolate in the microwave to 56°C / 133°F. Then bring the temperature down to 27-28°C / 81°F by adding a little chocolate that has been previously set aside, finely chopped, and then by placing the chocolate in its container in a bowl of iced water. (Note: the water must never touch the chocolate). Then raise the temperature again to 31°C / 88°F and coat appropriate molds. Leave to set for 24 to 48 hours in a dry, dark, cool place (preferably at 18°C / 64°F).

Cream of Calisay

Boil the cream and add the butter and white chocolate. Soften the gelatine and add. Pour in the Calisay and beat in the electric beater. Leave to set for one day.
Remove the casings from their molds. Beat the cream of Calisay well, transfer to a piping bag with a 6 mm / 1/4" star-shaped nozzle and fill the casings. Top with a rosemary flower and leaf.

Preparation and cooking time

30 minutes + 1 day for the casings and cream to stand.

Recommended wine

Cava Mestres Clos Nostre Senyor 1996 Brut Nature, DO Cava. A dry, creamy *cava* that reveals its long ageing in the wood. With a touch of acidity and a pleasant, slightly bitter finish, it is just the right match for the two chocolates. Made from Macabeo and Xarello grapes.

Norway lobster, citric coral jelly, soupy rice

(Cigalas, gelatina cítrica de sus corales, arroz caldoso)

SERVES 4: 24 large Norway lobster (peel and chill the tails), 300 g / 10 1/2 oz rice (preferably Vialone nano), 1 clove garlic, parsley, 1 ripe tomato, salt, pepper, olive oil. **Soupy rice:** 12 crayfish heads, 1 onion, 1 carrot, 1 leek, 1 bouquet garni, 3 liters / 5 pt 5 fl oz mineral water, 70 g / 3 oz rice. **First *picada:*** 3 ripe tomatoes, parsley, 6 cloves garlic, 80 ml / 1/3 cup / 3 fl oz dry sherry. **Citric jelly:** 12 crayfish heads, 800 ml / 3 1/3 cups / 1 1/2 pt mineral water, 20 g / 1 1/2 tbsp / 1 oz tapioca, 0.5 g / 1/8 teaspoon agar-agar, 2 sheets gelatine, rind and juice of 1 lemon. **Second picada:** 4 ripe tomatoes, parsley, 6 cloves garlic, 80 ml / 1/3 cup / 3 fl oz sweet sherry. **Sautéed vegetables:** 8 dwarf carrots, 100 g / 3 1/2 oz mange-tout, 500 g / 1 lb 2 oz very young peas, 500 g / 1 lb 2 oz very young broad beans, 6 very young heads garlic, parsley

Soupy rice

In a large pan, gently fry the chopped Norway lobsters heads, add salt and pepper, and the remaining ingredients, very finely chopped. Brown lightly and add the ingredients of the first picada. Cook for two minutes then add the boiling water and the rice. Boil for 30 minutes. Strain and set aside.

Jelly

Gently fry the remaining heads, season and add the finely chopped ingredients of the second picada. Cook for 2 minutes then add the mineral water and tapioca. Cook for 20 minutes. Measure out 250 ml of the resulting stock and add the agar-agar and the lemon rind and juice. Bring to the boil then add the softened gelatine sheets. Season with salt and pepper, strain and pour into a mold. Leave to set then cut into perfect dice.

Vegetables

Blanch each type of vegetable separately. Refresh and set aside.

To serve

Gently fry the garlic, finely chopped parsley and diced tomato in a little oil. Add 1.5 l / 6 1/2 cups / 2 1/2 pt boiling stock, then the rice. Boil for five minutes then simmer for a further six minutes. Add salt and stock if necessary and leave the rice to stand in the pan for 1 minute before serving. Arrange the vegetables on the plates, with the lightly griddled tails and the jelly cubes. At the table, pour some of the soupy rice over the vegetables, crayfish and jelly.

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 45 minutes

Recommended wine: Milmanda de Torres 2002 from the DO Conca de Barberá. A creamy, complex Chardonnay with a touch of citric tartness, a good match for the rice.

Lemon-flavored potato chips

(Patatas chips al limón)

SERVES SEVERAL APERITIFS: 2 kg / 4 1/2 lb lemons, *fleur de sel*, 2 kg / 4 1/2 lb potatoes preferably Kennebec, olive oil

Lemon salt

Peel the lemons, removing just the yellow part without the pith. Blanch the peel in lightly salted, boiling water. Refresh, then dehydrate at 40°C / 105°F for about 48 hours. Crush the dried peel to a fine powder, sift and mix with the fleur de sel in a proportion of 3 g / 1/2 teaspoon lemon powder to 30 g / 2 1/2 tbsp / 1 oz salt. Keep in a dry place. This lemon salt is ideal for condimenting foods that need a salty, citrus touch.

Potato chips

Slice the potatoes 1 mm / 0.03" thick. Place in water and change the water three or four times to remove any starch. Dry well with a cloth. Heat oil in a deep frying-pan and fry the chips, a few at a time, keeping them separate. When fried, remove and place on absorbent kitchen paper. Sprinkle with lemon salt. Leave to dry at 90°C / 195°F for 3 hours.

To serve

These chips make a magnificent, easy-to-serve appetizer. When dry and crisp and perfumed with lemon, they are irresistible.

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes + 48 hours for dehydration + 3 hours for drying

Recommended wine: Fino Tío Pepe by González Byass, DO Jerez-Sherry-Xérès-Manzanilla de Sanlúcar. Dry and delicate with all the character of the Palomino Fino grape and just the right touch of oak. The ideal apéritif!

Warm salad of scallops, coral foam and lemon ketchup

(Ensalada tibia de vieiras, espuma de sus corales y ketchup de limón)

Scallops
Open, wash and keep the nuggets. Separate the corals for the foam.

Coral and herb foam
Gently fry the coral in a little oil with salt and pepper. Add 400 ml / 1 3/4 cups / 13 fl oz boiling mineral water. Skim, leave to cook for just two minutes, then strain and set aside. In 250 ml / 1 1/8 cups / 8 fl oz lightly-salted mineral water, blanch 15 g / 1/2 oz fresh mixed herbs. Blend and strain. Mix the coral broth with the herb broth and add the dissolved gelatine. Chill until lightly set. Using an electric whisk, beat for 10 to 12 minutes until three times the original volume. Transfer to a wide, flat mold from which individual servings can be cut easily.

Salad
Wash the salads well and cut into thin, regular strips.

Citric sea jelly
Bring 100 ml / 1/2 cup / 3 fl oz seawater to the boil, add a little blanched lemon rind and a little ground white pepper. Strain then add the gelatine. Leave to set in a large mold from which perfect, small dice can be cut.

Lemon ketchup
Blanch, peel and cut up the ripe tomatoes. Place very flat pieces of tomato on a baking sheet without overlapping. Drizzle with a little oil, and sprinkle with salt, sugar and lemon rind. Bake at 100°C / 215°F for two hours. Crush very finely with the rest of the ketchup ingredients and set aside.

Brioche sticks
Cut the brioche into long, thin sticks. Dry out in the oven at 80°C / 175°F for 20 minutes. Keep in an airtight tin.

To serve
Sauté the salad vegetables, season with salt and pepper and arrange in a mound along the center of the plate. Top with the lightly griddled scallops, dressed with oil and fleur de sel. At the side, place some coral foam, the citric seawater jelly and a few strips of lemon ketchup. Add a few brioche sticks, some chives and chervil.

Preparation time: 20 minutes

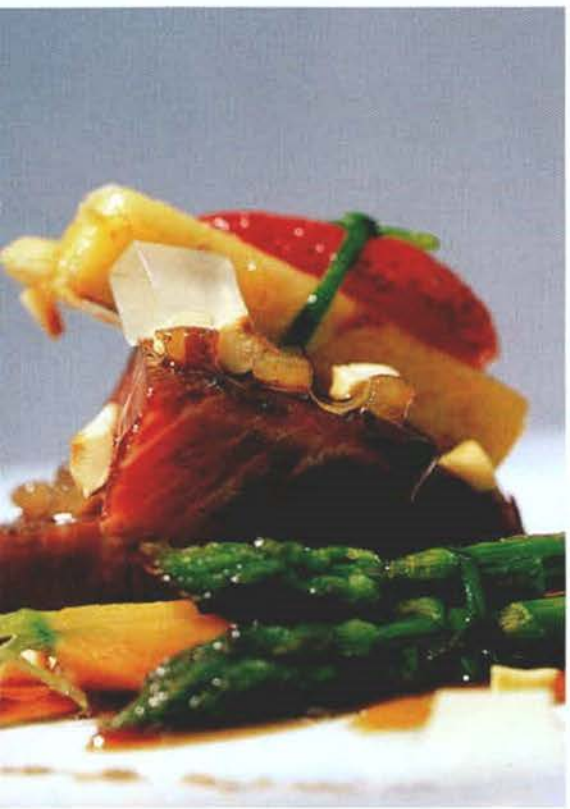
Cooking time: 20 minutes + 2 hours for the ketchup tomatoes

Recommended wine: Guitián sobre lías by Bodegas La Tapada 2001, DO Valdeorras. A Galician white with a German air, intense floral and fruity aromas and a sea tang, just right for this dish. Made from Godelló grapes.

SERVES 4: 12 scallops, olive oil, Majorcan fleur de sel, white pepper. **Coral foam:** sage, chives, chervil, parsley, basil, 3 sheets gelatine, mineral water. **Salad:** endive, lettuce, oak leaf, rocket, seaweed (50 g sea green beans). **Citric sea jelly:** 100 ml / 1/2 cup / 3 fl oz seawater, lemon rind, 1 sheet gelatine. **Lemon ketchup:** 1 kg / 2 1/4 lb ripe tomatoes, rind of 1 lemon, 30 g / 2 1/2 tbsp / 1 fl oz extra-virgin olive oil, juice of half a lemon, 30 g / 2 1/2 tbsp muscovado sugar, 20 ml / 1 1/2 tbsp / 1 fl oz Modena vinegar, salt and pepper. **Crisp sticks:** 1 brioche

Blade of Ibérico pork with lemon sauce and caramelized tail

(Presa de paleta de cerdo ibérica, salsa de limón y rabo caramelizado)



SERVES 6: 2 shoulder blades of Ibérico pork, 2 Ibérico pork tails, 100 ml / 1/2 cup / 3 fl oz beef stock, bouquet of vegetables, cardamom, powdered hot ginger, Jamaica pepper, quartered roasted hazelnuts, olive oil, salt, pepper. **Jelly:** 4 lemons, 20 g / 1 1/2 tbsp / 1 oz sugar, 0.5 g / 1/8 teaspoon agar-agar, 2 sheets gelatine, 100 ml / 1/2 cup / 3 fl oz mineral water. **Garnish:** fruit (bananas, strawberries), vegetables (carrots, asparagus), chives

Blade of pork

Hang the pork for three days in the cold room. Trim and cut into slices 1 cm / 1/2" thick (take care to slice in the correct direction). Dress with a little oil and chill.

Tail of pork

Remove any bristles and fat. Place in a large pan and cover with mineral water. Bring to the boil, skim and add a bouquet of vegetables (leek, carrot, celery, bay leaf, parsley, thyme) and a small bundle of pepper grains. Boil for two hours, bone and lay out flat on paper. Cool and cut into very small dice. Set aside.

Lemon jelly

Mix the lemon juice with 100 ml / 1/2 cup / 3 fl oz mineral water, the sugar and the agar-agar. Bring to the boil and add the gelatine. Strain and leave to set.

Garnish

Cut the banana into rectangles, dress with oil, salt and Jamaica pepper. Cut the strawberries into quarters (depending on size) and dress with oil, salt, cardamom and pepper. Blanch the chives and use to make bundles of banana with strawberry. Peel and shape the carrot. Blanch in boiling, salted water for two minutes. Cool and sauté with oil, salt and pepper. Remove from the heat and sprinkle with ginger. Gently fry the asparagus in the deep-fryer. Drain on absorbent paper and season with salt. Make bundles of carrot with asparagus using blanched chives.

Powdered spices

Mix a little Jamaica pepper and cardamom and crush to a powder. Add powdered ginger.

To serve

Season the slices of blade of pork with salt and pepper and flash fry on both sides. Roast in the oven at 190°C / 375°F for just 1 minute then place in the grill for a few seconds. Heat the garnish bundles in the oven at 190°C / 375°F for three minutes. Sauté the tiny dice of tail in a non-stick frying-pan without oil until caramelized. Season with salt and pepper and add to the beef stock. Serve the slices of pork alternating with bundles of fruit and vegetables. Add the sauce with the caramelized pieces of tail. Sprinkle with roasted hazelnut quarters and the tiny dice of lemon jelly. Add a stripe of powdered spices.

Preparation time

30 minutes + 3 days for hanging the meat

Cooking time

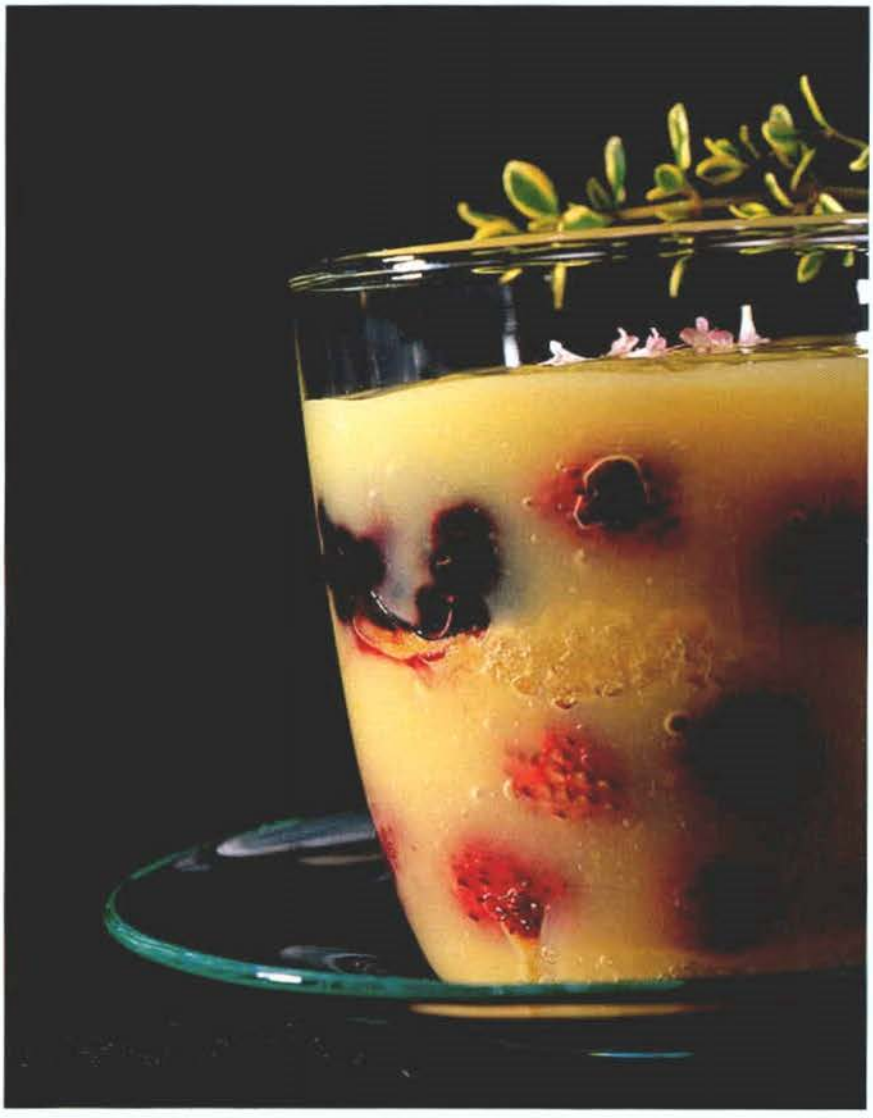
10 minutes + 2 hours for cooking the tails

Recommended wine

El Calvario by Finca Allende 2000, from the DOCa Rioja. An explosion of aromas, fruit and spice. Elegant in the mouth with a long, pleasing finish. The mature, polished tannins make this an ideal wine to accompany the Ibérico pork, and the aromas blend wonderfully with the sauce and the garnish. Made from Tempranillo and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Dessert cup: lemon and berries

(Postre a la taza: limón y frutos rojos)



SERVES 8: **Cream:** 4 lemons, 4 eggs, 250 g / 1 1/8 cups / 9 oz sugar, 50 g / 4 tbsp / 2 oz cornstarch, 1 liter / 4 1/2 cups / 1 3/4 pt water. **Sponge cake:** 8 eggs, 200 g / 3/4 cup / 7 oz flour, 200 g / 3/4 cup / 7 oz sugar, zest of 1 lemon. **Dip:** 200 ml / 3/4 cup / 7 fl oz kirsch, 200 ml / 3/4 cup / 7 fl oz syrup, 100 g / 1/2 cup / 3 1/2 oz lemon juice. **Berries:** raspberries, wild strawberries, blackberries, gooseberries

Sponge cake

Beat the eggs with the sugar and lemon zest. Fold in the flour then spread over a baking sheet. Bake at 190°C / 375°F for about 22 minutes. Cool and cut into cubes measuring 3 x 3 cm / 1 1/4 x 1 1/4".

Dip

Prepare the syrup by boiling 100 g / 1/2 cup / 3 1/2 oz sugar with 100 ml / 1/2 cup / 3 fl oz water. Stir in the lemon juice and kirsch and soak the cake in the mixture.

Cream

Grate the lemon rinds. Squeeze the juice from one lemon. Bring the water to the boil. Mix the eggs with the sugar and the cornstarch. Add the lemon rinds, lemon juice and hot water and bring slowly to the boil, stirring all the time. Strain.

To serve

Place layers of soaked cake, berries and lemon cream in transparent serving bowls.

Preparation time

20 minutes

Cooking time

30 minutes

Recommended wine

Molino Real, Mountain Wine 2001, from the Telmo Rodríguez bodega, DO Málaga. A subtle muscatel wine with complex varietal aromas and a full palate. Its slight sharpness blends well with the different flavors of the dessert.

On the move

TEXT
SAÚL APARICIO HILL

ILLUSTRATION
PERICO PASTOR

Wineries Unite to Export

Nine artisanal, low-production wine cellars in the Priorato Qualified Designation of Origin (DOCa) have recently formed an export consortium. The group, which will operate under the name of Petits Cellers del Priorat, is composed of three microcellars from the town of Porrera (Joan Simó, L'Encastell and Ardèvol Associats), two from Gratallops (Ripoll Sans and Masdeu i Campos), one from El Molar (Mas Garrian), one from Bellmunt del Priorat (Primitiu de Bellmunt), one from Poboleda (Mas de les Pereres) and one from La Vilella Alta (La Cartoixa de Montsalvat). Despite their union, the newly founded association has every intention of maintaining the personality and characteristics of each wine, cooperating in trade fair visits, commercialization and exports of their wines. The nine wineries had an approximate production of 90,000 bottles in 2003, 50% of which came from aged vines (60 to 80 years old), which fetched approximately one million euros. Only 20% of their production stayed in Spain: 40% was exported to the EU and another 40% went to the United States.

The Alegría export consortium is a similar venture. In this case, it is eleven wineries from different DOs that have gathered together in order to cooperate in the US market under the full name of Alegria-The New Spanish Wine Group. The consortium has a potential export capacity of 500,000 wine cases, is already present in ten of the states in the Union and will focus distribution on delicatessen shops and the horeca channel. Some of the bigger names integrated into this venture are Casa de la Ermita (Jumilla DO), Viña Bajoz (Toro DO) and organic winery Albet i Noya (Penedés DO).

Petits Cellers del Priorat
Date of foundation: 2004
Activity: Elaboration and export of wine
Joint turnover in 2003: Approx. 1 million euros
Export quota: 80%

Alegría
Date of foundation: 2004
Activity: Elaboration and export of wine
Joint turnover in 2003: Unavailable
Export quota: Approx. 50%
www.alegriawines.com

Grupo SOS: A Rising Force in the US Olive Market

Grupo SOS, one of the giants of the Spanish food industry, has undertaken an ambitious plan to become a force to be reckoned with on the US market. Said plan began in December 2003, when the group performed a 35 million euro buyout of US company American Rice Inc. According to Grupo SOS, the Houston-based company American Rice is one of the largest rice conglomerates in North America, and owns many leading brands both in the USA (Comet, Blue Ribbon, AA and Adolphus) and abroad (Cinta Azul in Puerto Rico and Abu Bint in Saudi Arabia).

This move not only allows Grupo SOS to position itself in the North American rice market, but also provides the company with a quality distribution network for the rest of its products. The more than 5,000 outlets of its American affiliate will allow the Spanish group to become a big player in the distribution of olive oil. The objective of the group, as chairman Jesús Salazar revealed in a recent press conference, is to reach a market quota in the USA of 9% by 2008. Grupo SOS owns two of Spain's most traditional and important olive oil brands, Carbonell and Koipe, in addition to producing a wide range of 'no-name' brands.

Date of foundation: 2002
Activity: Food production and distribution
Workforce: 2,360
Turnover in 2003: 782.2 million euros
Export quota: 20.44 %
www.soscuetara.com

Viscofan Investing to Stay on Top

The world-leading company in production and distribution of artificial tripe for the meat industry, Viscofan, invested heavily in the reconditioning of existing plants and the building of new ones in 2003. It will be reaping the benefits of this investment throughout 2004, as the company's plants in Germany, Spain, the United States, Czech Republic and Brazil are adapted to the latest technologies. The improvement of current infrastructures means that, by the end of 2004, a reduction in costs and, in some cases, additional production capacity will be visible. As far as new factories are concerned, estimates are that the company's new manufacturing plant in San Miguel de Potosí (Mexico) will be in full operating order towards mid-summer this year. Viscofan invested 30 million euros in the refurbishment of old plants and an additional six million in building the Mexican plant.

Date of foundation: 1975
Activity: Production of artificial tripe and plastic casings for the meat industry
Workforce: 3,027
Turnover in 2003: 371.31 million euros
Export quota: EU (incl. Spain): 47.18%; Rest: 52.81%
www.viscofan.com

Marqués de Riscal Combines Art with Commercial Strategy

The design and construction at Bodegas Marqués de Riscal of a new headquarters and luxury hotel by world-famous architect Frank O. Gehry has marked the first step of an ambitious international commercial strategy by the Rioja winery. Marqués de Riscal has come to an agreement with global hotel chain Starwood to manage Gehry's new masterpiece, which will begin welcoming guests to the town of Elciego (Álava) in 2005. As part of the agreement, Starwood will now offer Marqués de Riscal wines in its more than 800 hotels distributed worldwide, providing a privileged launch pad for the winery to raise its profile in the international wine market.

"We consider that Starwood, via its prestigious Luxury Collection, is the perfect complement to this project and to our own wine business, an association of brands which complements the needs of our most demanding customers and strengthens the commitment of Marqués de Riscal to quality and innovation," noted Alejandro Aznar, president of Vinos de los Herederos del Marqués de Riscal. The brand awareness of the Rioja winery that will result from this worldwide distribution is, in Mr. Aznar's words, "crucial" to the international strategy of the winery, which plans to export 80% of production by the end of 2010.

Date of foundation: 1860
Activity: Elaboration of wine
Workforce: 140
Turnover in 2003: 40 million euros
Export quota: 60%
www.marquesderiscal.com

Food Consortiums Go Abroad

Cheese and Ibérico pork product distributor Consorcio Exportador Ibérico, S.A. (CEISA), from Bilbao in the Basque Country, has formed European Gourmet Brazil Importação-Exportação, a Brazilian subsidiary. The new company will soon begin to commercialize the products of its Spanish counterpart through an office opened during April 2004 in the city of São Paulo. This office contributes to the growing distribution network of the export consortium, which already enjoys permanent representation in Argentina and Venezuela. The Basque company had sales of 3.55 million euros last year, 3.45 million of which were garnered from sales overseas. Last March, three Andalusian companies also joined efforts to export their products together. Andalusian Food Exporters, S.L. (AFEX) is the joint commercial venture of four companies producing olives and oil. COREYSA from Osuna (Seville), Muñoz Vera e Hijos, S.A. from Cabra (Córdoba), Coop. El Trujal de Mágina from Mancha Real (Jaén) and Envasadora del Aljarafe from Pilas (Seville) have taken a 25% piece each in this venture, which has been sponsored by the Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade. The consortium plans to initiate operations in Eastern Europe and the Islamic world, but does not rule out expansion into other regions. COREYSA will supply sunflower and olive oil, Muñoz Vera e Hijos extra-virgin olive oil, Coop. El Trujal organic olive oils and Envasadora el Aljarafe will provide a wide range of table olives.

CEISA
Date of foundation: 1988
Activity: Distribution of cheese and Ibérico pork products
Turnover in 2003: 3.55 million euros
Export quota: 97%
www.ce-iberico.com

AFEX - Andalusian Food Exporters
Date of foundation: 2004
Activity: Manufacturing and export of olives and oil
Joint turnover in 2003: Approx. 37 million euros

More news
www.spaingourmetour.com

Text
Angeles Cosano

Translation
Hawys Pritchard

Photos
Lizarran

Lizarran

Tapas Go International

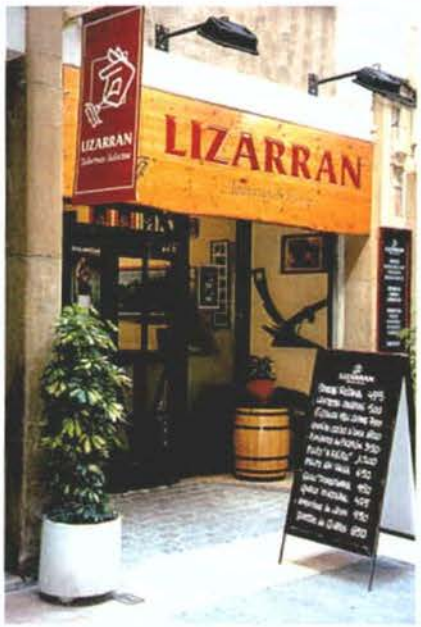
Lizarran—a name that has become synonymous with Spanish *tapas*—now leads its sector, with sales worth 67.5 million euros expected for this year. A clever formula that combines the best features of fast food with top-quality, classically Spanish products has succeeded in exporting 'tapas culture' to Portugal, Germany, Italy, Andorra, Mexico and the United States.

Tapas belong in a category of their own (*Spain Gourmetour* Nos. 58, 59, 60), and could be seen as one of the last redoubts of gastronomic resistance to the way in which tastes worldwide are becoming increasingly bland and standardized. No-one can really explain the origins of tapas, though the usual story attributes them to northern Spain in times of King Alfonso X, the Wise (1221-1284). Nowadays they are spread throughout the Iberian Peninsula. There is no question about the etymology of the term, though: the word tapa means 'lid' or 'cover', and in this context refers to the age-old practice of topping a glass of wine with a slice of ham, cheese or sausage to prepare palate and digestion for more substantial food to come. A tapa was, in effect, a *tentempié*, another beautifully expressive term (the equivalent of 'pick-me-up') for a snack that tides you over. This sort of food would have been provided in the countless wayside inns, taverns, cheap restaurants and lodging-houses dotted all over the Peninsula, as well as the eating and drinking places that abounded in every town and city. The term is still very much in use, though appetizer would be the more usual term today, and an enormous range of choice and raw materials of marvelous quality continue to be characteristics of this style of eating, which has now acquired added value contributed by an extraordinary degree of culinary creativity. The ancestral tapa has well and truly taken off: a combination of imaginative approach, excellent technique and keen aesthetic sense have elevated it to the realm of delicatessen, even nudged it towards *haute cuisine*, so that today it offers a viable, and delicious, occasional alternative to traditional sit-down knife-and-fork eating.

The Lizarran Food Franchising Group has now made this option accessible beyond Spain. Its strategy has been consistent from the start: to combine the best features of fast food with classically Spanish quality products. *Chistorra* (a type of red sausage) with quail's egg; carpaccio of *cecina* (beef cured by salting, smoking and air-drying) with Idiazábal cheese; salt-cod au gratin with *all i oli* (garlic mayonnaise) and creamed spinach; salad of soused chicken... these are just a few examples of the company's presentation menu created by the late Mateo Ferrero. This León-born entrepreneur, an expert in tourist-sector companies, settled in the Catalan seaside town of Sitges having spotted commercial potential there. In 1988, he opened Eguzki, a bar/restaurant modeled on the lines of a traditional Basque *taberna*, which rapidly took on the status of local tapas mecca. He had no idea then that his intuitively unconventional approach to the catering business would eventually lead to an enterprise on such a large scale.

Pincho culture

In 1996, Mateo Ferrero and business partner Germán Funes set up the Lizarran Tabernas Selectas franchise company, the firm's main brand and embryo of the group created in 2001. Today, this restaurant group (51% of which is owned by Luxembourg's Pan European Food Fund and the rest by its founding partners) has 145 franchises in Spain, Andorra, Portugal, Germany and Italy, with another 46 expected to open this year, 13 of them abroad. Even markets that one might not initially expect to share Spanish tastes, such as China, Russia and some Arab countries (Morocco, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates), have shown considerable interest in the Lizarran package. "We are a Spanish tapas taberna, and that whole concept is what we want to export," declares Delfí Torns, the group's international and marketing director. "The way the eating experience is structured is one of our special characteristics: customers just help themselves to tapas displayed on the bar without having to ask for them. This means that the 'philosophy' behind the whole business of tapas-style eating, and the customer's honesty intrinsic to it, has to be inculcated via the waiters." Only genuine Spanish products are served in Lizarran establishments, and they come in the form of *pinchos* (tapas skewered on a stick, which the customer then places in a little dish and presents for the bill to be calculated) and *raciones* (larger portions, served on a plate), whose range includes such traditional dishes as oxtail stewed in red wine, salt-cod *al pil-pil* (emulsion of olive oil and the gelatin and juices from the fish), *koskera* (hake with mussels, asparagus and hard-boiled egg), and *fabada asturiana* (Asturian white bean stew incorporating sausages, bacon and pork), all prepared in the central kitchen in Valencia. To go with these is a range of wines from Rioja, Ribera del Duero, Navarra, Ribeiro, Rías Baixas and Penedés, *sangría* having recently been added in response to specific demand from German and Italian customers. These same two markets are also responsible for the fact that *paella* now features on the menu. Recognizing the appeal of products covered by a Designation of Origin, the company bosses last year created Lizarran Origen Tradición, a concept with built-in guarantees of product quality and authenticity and of good practice in food health and safety. "In this same area, we also offer our franchisees a training and quality control scheme for handling foodstuffs, maintaining the cold chain, shelf-life, and complete recipes for every product that comes out of our central kitchen."



Going international

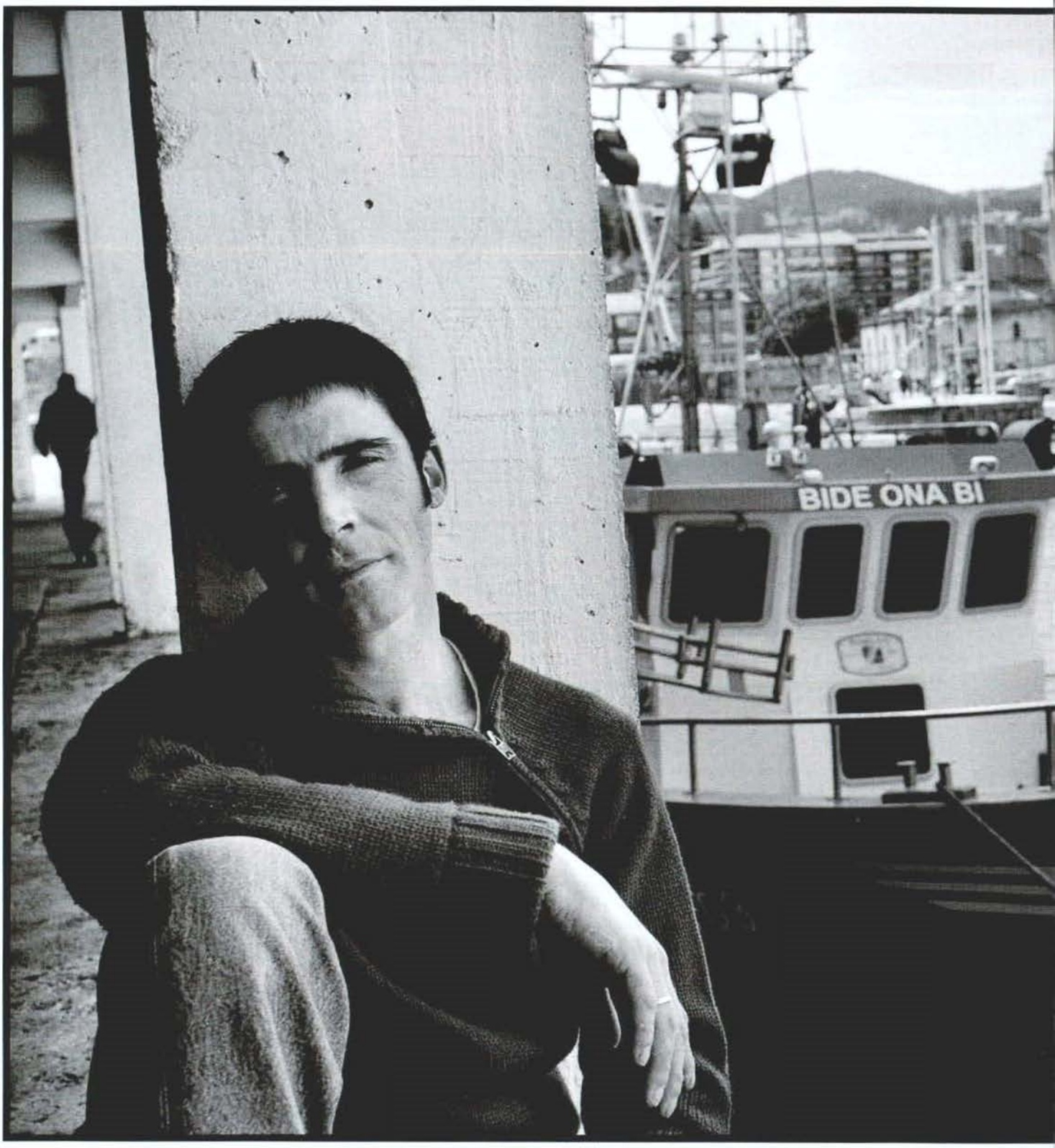
A Lizarran taberna opened in Andorra in 1999 and another in Portugal (Lisbon) the following year: these were to serve as a highly effective crucible for testing the formula for success already in operation on Spanish home ground. But the acid test came in 2002, when the company launched an ambitious scheme to go international with the concession of master franchises in Germany (Karlsruhe) and Italy (Vicenza)—"both markets with enormous potential given how well our gastronomic culture is received there"—and preparatory ground-work for going into Mexico (Mexico DF) and the United States (California). Lizarran's working strategy has consistently been to keep rigorous control over the project, "...even above and beyond what is specified in the contract. This means putting in a lot of effort and providing plenty of support in the area of training and business management. We have an in-house advisor in this field, a specialist in various aspects of the restaurant business, not just in personnel and product management but also in designing menus, setting prices and assessing the competition. We also have a 'mystery customer' system in place—someone who visits each establishment once a month, incognito, to assess key elements such as the attitude of the waiting staff, the image of the premises, customer relations, and so on." As regards prospects for this year, in Delfí Torns' view the vital thing is to consolidate the company's objectives. To this end, four new franchise tabernas are planned to open in Portugal by the end of this financial year, bringing the total there up to 15; four more are to open in Germany (making six in all); two in Italy (making five in all). Meanwhile, in the Mexican capital, building work is already underway on a pilot Lizarran taberna to test that market.

In the short term, their sights are set mainly within the EU, with two essential fronts, France and the UK, yet to conquer. Initial contacts have been made in both countries, though Torns is cautious in his assessment of their potential: "A market such as France, which ought in principle to be very receptive to a product like ours, obviously presents various hurdles: it is a very mature market, with an ample gastronomic supply of its own and with big restaurant groups already well-established there. The British market, meanwhile, already has a solid base of franchise restaurants and is traditionally open to a wide range of different ethnic cuisines, with a high degree of acceptance." Nevertheless, all the pointers seem to indicate that negotiations are going well. "No doubt about it—there's room for our scheme. The important thing is to find the right partner, and that's what we're engaged in right now."

Journalist ***Angeles Cosano*** *is a regular contributor to business and lifestyle publications.*

WEB SITE

www.lizarran.com
Very complete web site with information for clients, franchised establishments and customers alike. It is divided into seven sections: company (corporate philosophy, news and introduction to the concept), image (photographs), franchise (information on the franchise system employed), users (reserved entry for associates), products, *rincón de Lizarrán* (introducing the second type of franchise Lizarran offers) and Lizarran solidarity (information on how it contributes to NGO activities). (Catalan, English, Spanish)



José Julián Goiogana

José Julián Goiogana has lived from the sea—indeed, much of the time on the sea—since the age of sixteen. Son and grandson of fishermen, he loves his boat, loves his work, but is none too optimistic about the future: "I don't think this job will take me up to retirement". It's a tough, dangerous job and one that is becoming less and less profitable.

The Young Man and THE SEA

Unsung Heroes

TEXT
CARLOS TEJERO

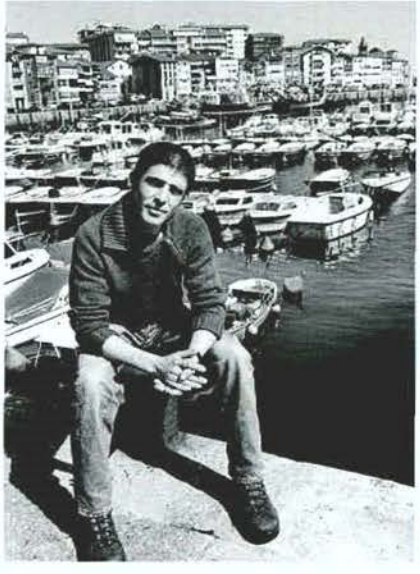
TRANSLATION
HAWYS PRITCHARD

PHOTOS
MATÍAS COSTA/ICEX

Lequeitio (Vizcaya) is a fishing town sandwiched between the mountains and the sea. In its neat harbor, houses cluster together above the quay where fishing vessels bob. These boats have an erect prow, undulating sides and their hulls are painted blue, red and green. Seagulls tear through the dusk, flying over the fishing boats that glide about the bay, while boys play football on Isuntza beach. In the background, the municipal band can be heard practicing in the sailing school's upstairs room. It would be hard to find anywhere more picturesque, with so many of the Basque Country's classic attributes: marvelous landscape, welcoming people, fine old buildings and seductive gastronomy: in this little town of 7,000 inhabitants, there are no fewer than 24 of the gastronomic societies (cooking and eating clubs, generally a masculine preserve) for which this part of Spain is famous (*Spain Gourmetour* N° 42).
This ancient township, founded in 1325, and whose coat of arms incorporates a whale motif, is where José Julián Goiogana was born 33 years ago. Curiously for this almost entirely Basque-speaking area, no-one calls him Joseba, which would be the local equivalent of his name. He is generally known as Jose, though many also call him 'Berdeles'. *Berdel* is the Basque word for mackerel, which happens to be the most abundant species around this time of year (March/April), and for which José and his crew of three spend their days fishing from his little 11-meter (36-foot) boat. Later, in May, comes the season for monkfish (goosefish), sole and scad (horse mackerel), which are net-caught. June sees the start of the season for albacore tuna, which is fished by the *curricán* (surface trolling) method. At that time of year the spells spent at sea are much longer: ten, twelve days, two weeks... sometimes even longer if they have to tie up in some distant port to wait for bad weather to settle. José's hands bear the marks of hard work. They are enormous hands, calloused, chapped by cold salt water, and scarred by the tools of his trade. Fishing is in his blood. His father and grandfather (natives of Elanchove, another lovely village not far from Lequeitio) were fishermen before him. "Now that was tough and dangerous. There's been so much progress since then: radio, GPS (Global Positioning System)...; my grandfather used to sail in boats that didn't even have navigation charts, setting his course by the stars." Like all fishermen, José does not like the term *pescador* to describe his occupation. He prefers to call himself a *marinero*—a seaman. A fisherman is an amateur who does a bit of rod-fishing off the rocks or the jetty; a seaman earns his living with a fishing boat. That's the difference. Though José Goiogana enjoys his work, he is not a seaman by vocation: "I'd have preferred to earn my living some other way, but when I was 16, if you weren't particularly good at school, fishing was the only option". Things are different now: "I don't know where youngsters who don't stay in school get jobs, but it certainly isn't in the fishing industry". It is becoming increasingly difficult for boat owners to find crew: "They have to take on African or Latin-American immigrants". José's boat is atypical "because the whole crew is local and what's more, I've got a 22-year-old marinero, probably the youngest one in Lequeitio". This is exceptional.

Good path

José is boat owner, skipper and marinero all in one. But that hasn't always been the case. At the age of 16, he signed up with a trawler. "It was a living hell: days and days out at sea, endlessly long working days and appalling conditions." After ten years of working for other people, José was helped by his father to buy a little 24-foot boat, the *Bide On*, a



Basque name meaning 'Good Path'. His father worked with him up until his retirement. Then his brother Juan took his place for three years, until he found a job on land. A year-and-a-half ago, taking advantage of subsidies offered by the Basque government, José took a gamble and bought a bigger boat, the *Bide Ona Bi* (Good Path II): "The name brought us luck the first time, so we decided to keep the same one for the second boat". To those of us unfamiliar with the world of fishing, it is barely comprehensible that this vessel, just 11 meters (36 feet) long, should be worth an astonishing 300,000 euros. "You have to bear in mind that boats today must be kitted out with the latest navigation technology, and that doesn't come cheap."

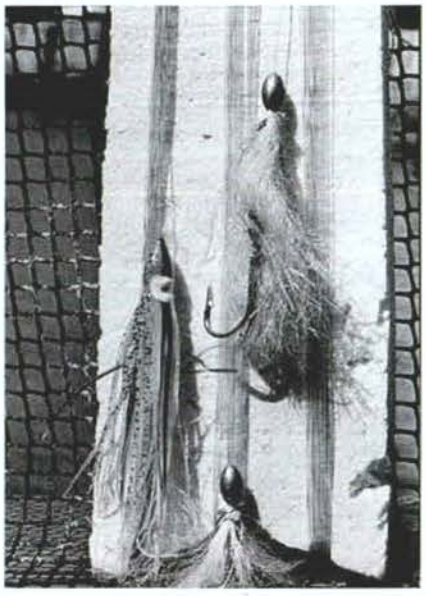
José shows off his boat proudly. It is clean and well looked after. In the front of the boat are four big reels, two on either gunwale, of synthetic fishing line. This type of fishing gear is still known as *'línea de mano'*, for it used to be hauled in by hand; nowadays, a hydraulic system reels it in automatically. Each line is about 10 meters (11 yards) long, and hooks are tied every 30 cm (12 inches) along its length, with a 2 kg (4.5 lb) weight on the end. When the fish have been localized by means of the sonar, the boat positions itself over the shoal and the lines are released. The glinting hooks attract the fish, which swallow them without the need for lure. This is the method used for catching mackerel.

The bridge is well equipped. José demonstrates how the sonar works: it serves not only to locate shoals, but can also tell an experienced skipper what sort of fish they are depending on the kind of patch produced on-screen.

A bench on the bridge, used for sitting, also serves as the skipper's bed. A hatchway under the instrument panel leads down to the sailors' quarters containing four bunks, two on either side. Behind the bridge are a little kitchen and a small lavatory and shower. The remainder of the deck, towards the stern, is covered by a rigid canopy which provides useful protection against hot sun and, in bad weather, wind and rain. Stacked up here are plastic boxes for holding the catch and containers for ice, and beneath is the main hold: "Between this one and the one in the prow, the boat can carry eight or nine tons of fish, properly stowed".

On top of the boat, alongside the radar and various aerials emerging from the bridge, stands a very convincing-looking plastic owl, gazing skywards. Strolling along the quay the previous night, I had actually spotted this feature, not knowing then that this was José's boat. "Know what it's for?" asks his father, José Julián. (I'm on the point of suggesting: "To bring good luck?") "The seagulls hang around the quayside feeding on leftover bits of fish, and they cover the boats with bird-shit and garbage. But they don't come anywhere near this one: they see the owl and are scared off."

This whole family is closely involved in fishing. As we know, José's father is now retired, but his mother, Paulina, a busy, bustling lady, sells the fish not sold at the quayside auction to fishmongers and restaurants: "I go all over the Basque Country in a refrigerated van," she explains cheerily. Marta, José's sister, works at Conservas Ortiz, the biggest fish canning company in the area, which has its headquarters in the nearby town of Ondárroa (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 59). Aintzane, his wife, is also involved in the business: she prepares the tackle.



Fishing for albacore

The albacore (or long-fin) tuna is a migratory fish which travels from the Sargasso Sea to the Bay of Biscay every year in search of food. This type of fish, which Basque fishermen call *egaluze*, is known in Castilian as *bonito del norte*, and is distinguished from its relatives by its long pectoral fins (which accounts for its alternative name in English). This type of tuna is fished off the Cantabrian coast using two different methods: surface trolling and rod fishing. Given that we are so concerned these days, and rightly so, with ecology and sustainable development, it is worth noting here that both these methods are traditional to the fishermen of the Basque Country, Asturias and Galicia.

But the same can not be said of everyone. Other countries use mid-water (pelagic) trawl nets "with trawlers working in pairs, each taking one end of the funnel shaped net, which can be dragged at varying depths". This method at best damages the fish, which are wounded by the mesh, and at worst, if the net is towed at too great a depth, demolishes marine life. Until recently, the dreaded drift nets were also used, but these have now been outlawed by the EU. "The trouble with those methods is that they aren't selective, they catch anything and everything in their path: young and adult specimens... all kinds of species: turtles, dolphins..." Pros: bigger catches and consequently cheaper albacore tuna at the fish dealer's. Cons: "In 15 to 20 years, there'll be no fish left".

The curricán, or surface trolling, method involves two metal outriggers some 12 meters (13 yards) long which are attached, one on either side of the boat, in a V-shape. Along each outrigger are five or six rings, to which lines of variable length are tied. As a lure, a blob of rubber in the shape of a little octopus is tied onto the end of each line: this not only attracts the fish with its color but also conceals a double hook. José shows us a few of these lures, carefully stored in little white polystyrene trays and wrapped up in newspaper. "This one's my favorite," he says, pointing to a fluorescent green miniature octopus: "He hardly ever lets me down".

Once the baited lines have been paid out, the boat drags them across the surface at a speed of 6 knots (about 12 km / 7.5 miles per hour) and, attracted by the lures, the tuna albacore become hooked onto the trolling lines. The catch is stowed away in the hold and packed with ice, "which maintains it at 1°C (34°F) or 2°C (36°F), without actually freezing it". Freezing would spoil the fish. Albacore tuna is fished by day—"they don't bite at night"—when it is fished at all, that is: "We've sometimes had to come back empty-handed after several days' search. Albacore tuna behave unpredictably; they are sometimes very spread out, other times in very close groups; sometimes they're on the surface, other times they swim very deep..."

And if there's no catch, there's no money. "And on top of that, I still have to meet the expenses," explains José. The profits from each trip are divided up into three shares for the boat owner, the skipper (in this case, one and the same person) and the crew. That's the way it has always been done. The crew members have no fixed wages. "Now, because it's so hard to get men, the big boat-owners are starting to offer fixed wages to make sure of their crew."

Live bait

José is also experienced at fishing for albacore tuna with a rod: "You need a bigger boat, with 13 or 14 marineros and enough room to carry live bait," made up of anchovies, sardines, small scad, and the like. In fishing slang, this bait is called *macizo*. "When the skipper gives the

order to spread the macizo, fistfuls of bait are chucked into the water to attract the tuna, which are very greedy fish." Each fisherman is equipped with a rod, and when the fish come to the surface he baits his hook with anchovy, the tuna's preferred snack, and fishing begins. These tuna weigh somewhere between 3 and 15 kg (33 lb), so this sort of fishing is clearly no picnic. "But it's a case where skill triumphs over brute force. Mind you, even a tuna weighing no more than 5 kg (11 lb) can pull a man into the water". José has seen it happen several times; and he's seen men hurt by the boat's side as they struggled with fish, "and tuna making off with the rod, vanishing into the water like a missile". Sometimes, an *egalagur,* or 'rogue' tuna will appear among the rest; these fish can weigh as much as 400 kg (900 lb). "When an egalagur takes the bait, you know you're dealing with a different beast. When that happens, the entire crew has to help bring it in—one man alone just can't handle it."

On a good day, around 300 albacore tuna can be rod-caught, and they come in various categories. There are the *tomateros* (José's father explains that they are so-called because "being small, they haven't got much fat yet and their meat is drier, so they are best cooked with tomatoes"), which weigh in at between 3 and 5 kg (6.5 and 11 lb); the *biribil* (which means 'round ones' in Basque), weighing between 4 and 7 kg (9 and 15.5 lb); and the *morroskos* (this means something like 'big strong boys'), weighing 7 kg (15.5 lb) and upwards.

"But there's no future in fishing," pronounces José. "There's no proportion between what they pay us for the fish and the selling price to the consumer. If mackerel fetches 0.30 euros per kilo (2.2 lb) at the quayside auction, it sells at over 3 euros at the fish store on the corner." In other words, the fish has multiplied ten times in value just by crossing the road. "We are practically being paid the same as 10 or 15 years ago, and yet the cost of materials, fuel and so on has gone up." That's the way it is, and the fleet gets smaller year by year. One sees ever more leisure craft in fishing ports these days. It is hardly surprising, then, that marineros take other jobs when they get the chance, or that young people are disinclined to learn an occupation that is such hard work, offers little financial reward and is, to cap it all, dangerous.

José has looked into the abyss on more than one occasion during his 17 years as a marinero. He has lost a couple of friends to the sea and he himself has had a few narrow escapes: "Twice I've felt my legs turning to jelly with fear—I thought I'd had it. If I have to die, I'd rather do it on dry land. At least my family would have somewhere to go and mourn me," he concludes, glancing at his three-year-old son, Alain. Blond and blue-eyed—"He takes after his mother"—it seems very unlikely that Alain will be a marinero when he grows up.

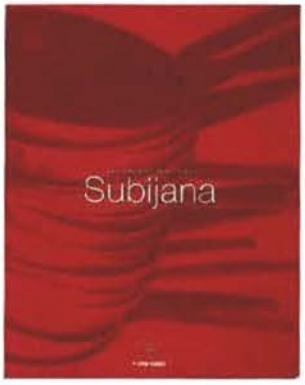
Carlos Tejero *is a journalist and editorial coordinator of* Spain Gourmetour.

Spain Gourmetour gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of Manuel Torres Lozano, National Sales Director of Conservas Ortiz, S.A.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Text
Gabriela Llamas

Translation
Synonyme.net



Head Chefs

Intelligence, creativity and talent multiply according to the extent to which they are shared. Three important books with very different characteristics prove this is so. On the one hand, the home cooking of one of the forerunners of what became known as 'New Basque Cuisine'. On the other, a book focused on the professional world, with a decidedly technical, innovating style, revealing the secrets and discoveries of the use of vacuum cooking. Third, the sensitivity and technique of the best creative cuisine set amongst Catalan traditions.

La cocina doméstica de Pedro Subijana (Pedro Subijana's Home Cooking) provides us with invaluable help on deciding the daily menu. It takes many years of experience, know-how and love of the kitchen to so clearly convey the knowledge acquired throughout an extensive professional career. This is a book for both the amateur and the professional. Pedro Subijana, true to his principles, respects tradition with an innovating spirit. His book represents a collection of more than 800 recipes of traditional cuisine, mainly Basque, without forgetting the strong French influence on *nouvelle cuisine*. It also portrays other regions and countries, and more sophisticated, innovating dishes, all of which are practical and first rate. Subijana, the author of other works such as *La cocina de Akelare, el sueño de Pedro Subijana (The Cuisine of Akelare. Pedro Subijana's Dream*, see *Spain Gourmetour* Nº 55) has imparted his knowledge on television, but felt the need to give shape to this kind of recipe book. The choice of recipes is remarkably interesting and anyone with basic cooking skills can prepare them. The author's desire is "to give shape to a compendium that encompasses everything which might occur to you to cook, without getting into a fluster: simple recipes which anyone can make at home, dotted now and again with some higher-level details, for the more experienced". A case in point is the King prawns wrapped in seaweed with a salted sunflower seed praline; just the ingredients would complicate the lives of many of us.

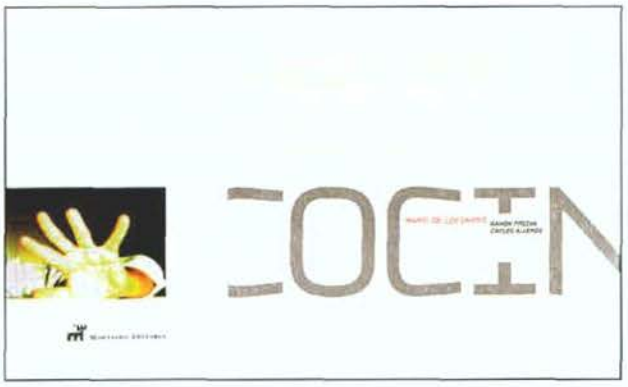
The absence of photos is compensated by a DVD which comes with the book, complete with new current recipes, filmed step by step and including Subijana's explanation of exactly how they are made at his restaurant, Akelare. *(Ediciones Ttarttalo S.L.; ttarttalo@ttarttalo.com)*

La cocina al vacío (Vacuum Cooking), by Joan Roca and Salvador Brugués, is a must for any professional. Its arrival fills a significant gap in the world of culinary techniques, helping to combat the reticence which still exists towards the vacuum technique, associated even today with industrial processes of profitability and production. The authors approach the quest for maximum quality in culinary art using an integral formula that encompasses new technologies. Such a technical, arduous subject is methodically organized with excellent design and presentation, and accompanied by first-rate photos.

A biographical sketch of the authors, Joan Roca and Salvador Brugués, follows the foreword by Hervé This. Both authors belong to families with a long catering tradition, having met at the School of Hotel-Catering and Tourism in Gerona and subsequently followed parallel careers. Professors of the School of San Narcís, in 1998 Salvador left the Restaurant Brugués to devote himself to training and research. Joan Roca is still with El Celler de Can Roca (two stars in the *Michelin Guide*, one of the best on the Peninsula) and has received numerous awards.

The book's general approach is none other than linking three vacuum concepts together—preserving, cooking and kitchen—and embodying them in a new culinary technique with surprising results.

The authors have placed more emphasis on vacuum cooking, which nowadays is the less developed use of this technique. They identify two main types: indirect cooking and immediate cooking, which they explain in full detail, with characteristics, requirements, advantages and suitability for different foods. The famous recipes,



emblematic dishes at El Celler de Can Roca, including Warm cod with spinach, cream of Idiazábal, pine nuts and a Pedro Ximénez reduction *(Bacalao tibio con espinacas, crema de Idiazábal, piñones y reducción de Pedro Ximénez)*, are outstanding. These and other recipes are published with fine illustrations and accompanied by technical explanations and complete temperature charts. The description of the physiochemical alterations caused by this cooking technique is quite educational and very detailed, while fundamental techniques, including value charts and machinery, complete this work. Approximately the last third of the book offers recipes with their recipe cards, organized according to product type.

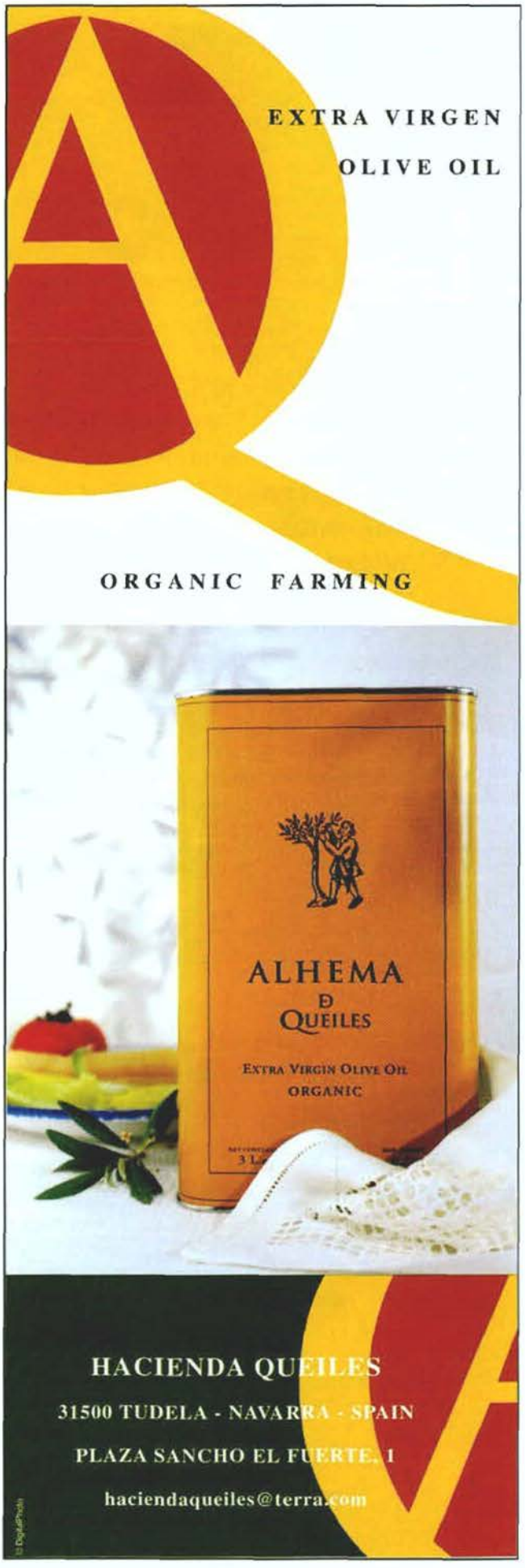
Who said anything about kitchen secrets?

(Montagud Editores, S.A.; www.montagud.com / www.libreriagastronomica.com)

Mano de cocinero (A Cook's Touch). Ramón Freixa is the Head Chef of El Racó d'en Freixa (one star in the *Michelin Guide)*, in Barcelona. Founded by José Maria Freixa, Ramón's father, it was a pioneer of quality confectionery and bread-making. His dessert-trolley always caused a stir among his customers. In 1995, Ramón took his revolution both into the kitchen and into his interest in confectionery, culminating in a complete menu of desserts, which, even today, can still be sampled at the customer's request. Ramón has recently opened two restaurants in Madrid and Marbella where he recreates his imaginative cuisine.

Technique, product and feeling are the basis of Ramón Freixa's cuisine, three concepts linked together in a diagram which opens his book. Ramón displays a solid technique which allows him to freely combine flavors and textures from different origins. Restlessness, imagination, evolution and creativity are complemented by his vast knowledge of pastry and cake-making, something which is not always very common in chefs at this level. These characteristics and his passion for chocolate have made him a specialist in sweet cuisine.

The seasonal recipes dance to the rhythm of the seasons showing the importance and primacy that he bestows on the product without forgetting his interest in spices, aromatic herbs, new ingredients, sweet and sour contrasts and surprising combinations of both textures and flavors. Pampering, care and attention in minute detail are given to snacks, *petits fours*, breads and *'tocs'*, dressings which combine several elements, adding a light-hearted touch to the dish. His interest in the product has led him to recuperate some almost-forgotten tubers such as the Chinese artichoke, vegetable oyster, rutabaga, Jerusalem artichoke and sweet potato, which mingle



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Web: www.grupoian.com
E-mail: info@grupoian.com

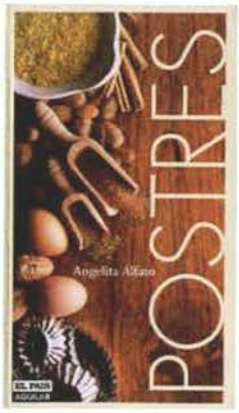
together in a unique dish of winter vegetables with scallops, truffles and crispy beetroot.
Childhood memories and references to culinary traditions can be appreciated in the origins of many of his dishes such as *xatonada* (a cod and escarole salad, anchovies, olives and *xató*, a sauce of *ñora* peppers). We can find *romesco* (a sauce made of a type of pepper, hazelnuts, oil and vinegar) inside a fritter, anchovies in ice cream, escarole dressed with a black olive oil, and cheek of cod with its own consommé. The soup of *calçots* (shallots) with duck confit, where traditional ingredients such as the tender onions from Valls (Tarragona) or calçots (shallots), truffle and duck are combined together in a unique fashion, is also outstanding. Or the false cinnamon made of black olives—just the sight of it evokes childhood desserts with a touch of humor. And an endless list of many more dishes conveyed through clear, detailed recipes.
The photos by Carles Allende reproduce the author's originality and his cuisine, giving the book enormous sensitivity and balance.
(Montagud Editores, S.A.; www.montagud.com / www.libreriagastronomica.com)

History and Culture

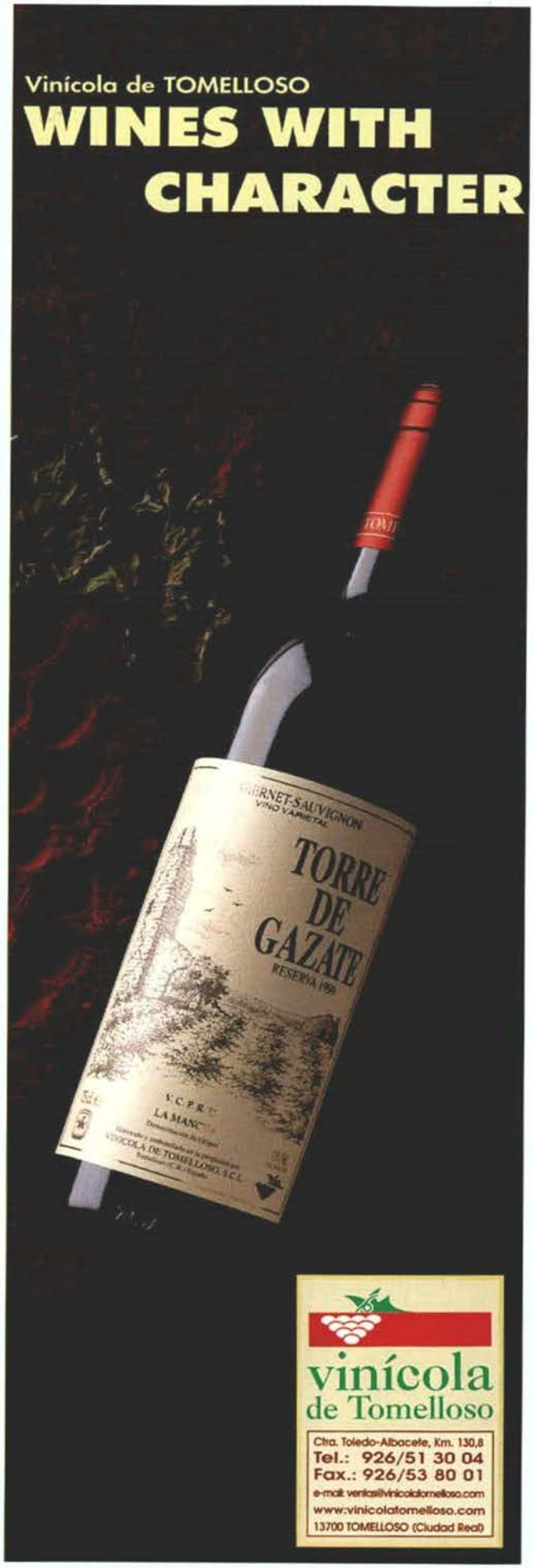
Las voces y refranes del olivo y el aceite (Expressions and Sayings of Olives and Oils), compiled by Augusto Jurado, offer a scholarly, comprehensive book for a pleasant, easy read. Its impressive documentary work as far as the quality, quantity and variety of its illustrations can be finely appreciated. Full of anecdotes and curiosities concerning the world of the olive, its expressions, legends and history, sayings and technical terms, from days gone by until present day, it is truly an entertaining read. Photos, illustrations, engravings and a meticulous, magnificent edition, convert this book into a unique, essential document both for the bibliographer as well as for the professional or amateur of the world of oils.
(C&G Comunicación Gráficas, S.L.; cgedicion@arrakis.es)
Cándido, mesonero de leyenda (Cándido, A Legendary Innkeeper) is not a cookbook, but a biographical sketch of a star of Spanish regional cuisine "who knew how to live up to his times and have a head start on the dizzying evolution which Spanish cuisine would undergo at the end of the 20th century. As we all know, he rescued many Castilian recipes from oblivion to refine them, raise their standards and transform them into a tourist attraction for his Segovian inn." This Segovian restaurant was the meeting place for the most famous national and international personalities of that time: Nobel Prize winners, Hollywood artists, politicians, society and bull-fighting personalities, naming just a few, are reflected on these pages. Several authors participate in this book: Lorenzo Díaz, José Carlos Capel, Rafael Ansón, Tico Medina and more... A pleasant, enjoyable, entertaining book with many photos from the family archives.
(Fundación Cándido; candido@mesondecandido.es; www.mesondecandido.es)

Regional Cuisine

Golmajías. Repostería sencilla (Golmajías, Simple Confectionery) and **Postres** (Desserts), both by Angelita Alfaro. The first, with a prologue by Ferran Adrià, takes its name from the *golmajías* or *golmajerías*, a word originating in La Rioja which refers to all types of traditional sweets and desserts from that region. The author has collected these recipes since childhood, conserving a tradition which would otherwise have been



lost. Angelita published her first book in 1991 and achieved an all-round success due to the simplicity of her recipes. Since then, she has published three other books: *Gran Cocina Navarra* (Great Navarran Cuisine), *Cocina de Navarra* (Navarre Cuisine) and *La dieta de la vida* (The Diet of Life) which in 1999 received the International World Cookbook Award for the Best Book on Health and Cooking. This is her first book on sweets and desserts. We can find very local recipes such as *fardalejos*, small, rectangular-shaped pastries with an almond and egg cream filling, which are the pride of Corella and La Rioja. Or the *Sopa tostada del Niño de Peralta*, a typical Christmas dish in the Ribera in Navarre. The soup is cooked in an earthenware dish, alternating layers of fine slices of bread—all traditional soups are prepared this way—with dried fruits, sugar and cinnamon. It is finished with bread, pine nuts and almond powder and then sprinkled with milk and oil, in which garlic has been previously fried and left to set in the oven at a low temperature. Fried garlic in a dessert is one of the many surprises that traditional sweet-making has in store for us. Gastronomy that will soon be classed as an anthropological document.
(Ediciones Ttarttalo, S.L.; ttarttalo@ttarttalo.com)
The second book completes the first with recipes from Navarre and other more universal examples, such as the Genovese sponge, *brioche*, all kinds of mousse, and a few more modern touches using exotic ingredients such as mango.
(Santillana Ediciones Generales, S.L.; www.elpaisaguilar.es)
Sa cuina, cocina tradicional mallorquina (Sa Cuina, Traditional Cuisine from Majorca) reflects the splendor and sophistication of a unique cuisine due to the wealth of influences it has received and through the characteristic cooking times and methods—slow and gentle—notably lacking in the high temperatures or excessive frying usually found in the south of the Peninsula. Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, and Hebrews have all left their mark on the Balearic Islands (*cocarrois y robiols*—savory and sweet pies), as have the Italians (*cocas*—flat cakes baked and covered with vegetables or sweet ingredients, and pasta), and British, French and American products (peppers, tomatoes...). The author, Toby Molenaar, a Dutch journalist and film director, pulled into port in Majorca in 1961 to visit a friend, and has been researching the island's history and customs up to modern times ever since. She finally settled in Majorca and offers us this document full of proverbs, songs, home remedies, historical notes and delicious recipes which help us appreciate and preserve the gastronomic heritage of our ancestors.
(Zendrera Zariquey; czendrera@writeme.com)



Products

Nuevas Gildas (New Gildas) During the Forties, when the film Gilda caused a great stir, the owner of one of the bars in San Sebastián's old quarter gave this name to a *tapa* he had invented: a Manzanilla olive with an anchovy and a *piparra* (green pepper pickled in brine and vinegar) speared on a cocktail stick. The union of these three products, the suggestive name and the irony of the hot and spicy pepper, unleashed an absolute revolution in the world of bite-sized snacks—tapas, *canapés* and apéritifs—which still exists today. These new gildas are especially devoted to cheeses from the Iberian Peninsula and other products with Designations of Origin or Protected Geographical Indications, all sharing the common denominator of quality which characterizes the prime materials of Spanish gastronomy. Many of them made their debut in the recent food trade fair Alimentaria, in the section "The Spain of 100 Cheeses" ("La España de los 100 quesos").
Its authors are José Carlos Capel, food-gourmet and writer, who has published innumerable articles and books on Spanish history and cooking and is a critic for the newspaper *El País*; Enric Canut, journalist and food-gourmet, possibly the best connoisseur and advocate of cheeses from the Peninsula, author of *La España de los 100 quesos* (The Spain of 100 Cheeses), a very thorough guide on the subject; and the Leonese Head Chef, Carlos Cidón, the creator of a series of recipes with ideas on how to get the best from top-quality products.
(Editorial Everest, S.A.; www.everest.es)
El libro de los bocadillos con pan precocido, (The Book on Sandwiches with Pre-baked Bread). The tradition of the sandwich is deeply rooted in our country. Antonio Velasco Zazo relates in his work *Fondas y mesones* (Restaurants and Inns) that sandwiches were invented in the Mesón de Paredes, one of the most popular inns of Madrid in the 17th century. Ander Calvo, a regular collaborator with the newspaper *El País*, winner of the 1st International Sandwich Championship in 2000, and manager of the Madrid bars La Taberna de los Mundos and Hurly Burly, helps us keep the tradition alive offering us ideas to make creative, attractive sandwiches adapted to different kinds of bread.
(Ed. Berlys Alimentación, S.A.U.; www.berlys.es)

On Spanish Gastronomy

Cesar, Recipes from a Tapas Bar (César, recetas de un bar de tapas) is a tribute to the art of living more than to a way of eating.

-"A topless bar?"
-"No, a tapas bar. It's Spanish."

When three students from the famous Californian restaurant Chez Panisse (Berkley, California) decided to open this tapas bar together, there was an element of confusion. Tapas were then only for initiated gourmets and had not yet caught on with the American general public, as they have today. Voted for five years one of the best restaurants in the Bay Area by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, César combines the Spanish world of tapas with the American art of cocktail-making. The foreword on Sherry, (the tapa companion *par excellence*), is followed by a chapter on cocktails, an explanation on tapas-eating and their staple ingredients, and it comes to a close with the recipes. A very original book which portrays a true blend of concepts and has achieved overwhelming success in California.
(Ten Speed Press, Berkley, CA; www.tenspeed.com)
Rosas Tapas-Vejen til Det Spanske Kokken (Rosa's Tapas: A Journey through Spanish Cooking). Although the book was originally

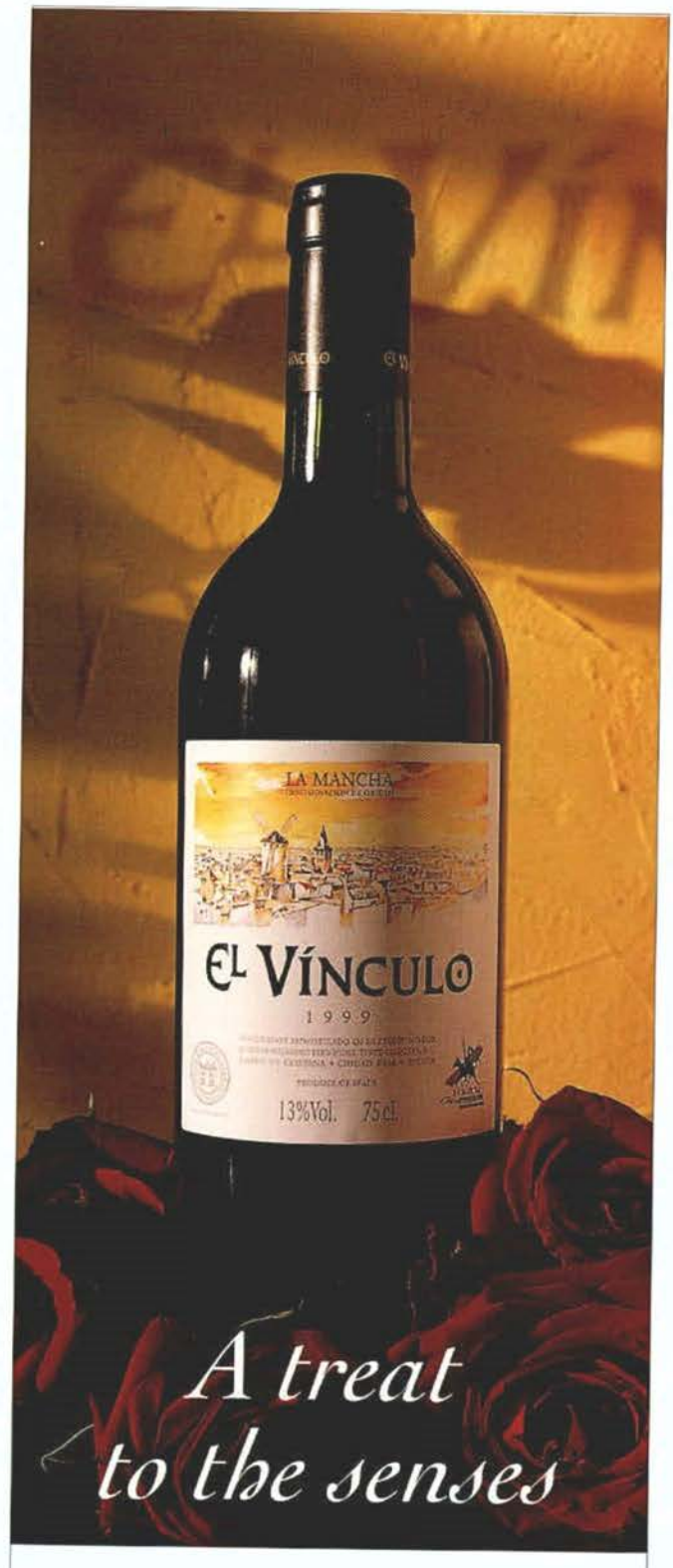
published in Danish, its author, Rosa Salas, married to a Danish importer of Spanish wines and products, is Catalan. Rosa, who runs a catering business in Denmark where she lives, has written a very personal, informative book with a good introduction on traditions, ingredients and basic sauces. The recipes are separated into Breads, Cheeses and Fruits; Fish and Seafood; Vegetables, Meat and Desserts. It offers menus and wine recommendations, and the majority of the recipes are illustrated with photographs. Widely distributed, it was fourth on the Top Ten Most Sold Books in Denmark. *(Aschehoug Dansk Forlag A/S og; www.aschehoug.dk)*

Guides

'The Taste of a Place, Majorca' (El Sabor de un lugar, Mallorca) isn't a recipe book, as its author, Vicky Bennison, only devotes 16 pages to this topic. It is a culinary guide to Majorca, essentially practical in nature, to initiate the traveler in getting to know and understand the history, places and products of a very distinctive cuisine with a wide range of influences. The different chapters range from historical background to restaurants, shops, markets, fairs and festivals; ingredients, where pork and *sobrasada*, a spreadable red sausage typical of Majorca, have their own chapter, given their importance in the island's economy. A map of the island and other interesting information for the traveler is also included in the work.
(Chakula Press Ltd., PO BOX 39705, London W4 4WA)

El Camino de Santiago del Norte (The Northern Road to Santiago). When July 25th falls on a Sunday—as is the case this year—it is a Holy Year, a privilege granted by Pope Alexander III in 1179 through which the Church of Compostela can bestow the Jubilee pardon, that is, a pardon for the sins of all the faithful. New guides mark the most famous European Pilgrimage Route to the tomb of Saint James. The most well-known is the Camino Francés (French Route), but alternative routes, such as the Northern Road or the Coastal Road, which borders the Cantabrian coastline, also exist. This guidebook offers the traveler detailed information to help cover what is also known as the Primitive Route, stretching from Irún to Santiago de Compostela, passing through San Sebastián, Bilbao, Santander, Ribadesella, Oviedo and Lugo. A visual guide filled with photos, maps and useful hints, this is a must for the backpack of any pilgrim wishing to walk the Road. For more information on guides to the Jacobean Route, see *Spain Gourmetour* Nos. 47 and 61. *(Santillana Ediciones Generales, S.L.; www.elpaisaguilar.es)*

La Vía de la Plata (The Silver Route). An essential visual guide to cover a 2,000-year-old route (widely unknown in comparison to the world-famous Jacobean Route) which formed the backbone of Western Iberia: the magnificent Roman road that joins Merida to Astorga. Paco Nadal, author of both these guides, is the first Spanish author to publish a travel guide with *National Geographic*. *(Santillana Ediciones Generales, S.L.; www.elpaisaguilar.es)*



UN VINO DE ALEJANDRO FERNÁNDEZ

El Vínculo. Campo de Criptana, Ciudad Real, España
www.grupopesquera.com

EXPORTERS

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

Food Products

Chocolate

Blanxart
Tel: (+34) 933 733 761
Fax: (+34) 933 731 748
bombonsblanxart@blanxart.com
www.blanxart.com

Bombons Cudié, S.A.
Tel: (+34) 938 900 017
Fax: (+34) 938 903 541
cudie@bombonscudie.com
www.bombonscudie.com

Cadbury Dulciora, S.L.
Tel: (+34) 983 329 100
Fax: (+34) 983 329 160
cadbury.dulciora@csplc.com
www.cadbury.es

Capuchinos Alimentación, S.A.
Tel: (+34) 957 325 191
Fax: (+34) 957 326 346
general@capuchinos.com
www.capuchinos.es

Chocolates Simón Coll, S.A.
Tel: (+34) 938 911 100
Fax: (+34) 938 912 613
chocolates@simoncoll.com
www.simoncoll.com

Chocolates Valor, S.A.
Tel: (+34) 965 890 950
Fax: (+34) 965 894 697
chovalor@valor.es
www.valor.es

Debelis, S.A.
Tel: (+34) 972 164 505
Fax: (+34) 972 164 559
anna.hinojosa@puratos.es

Lacasa, S.A.
Tel: (+34) 976 462 111
Fax: (+34) 976 772 091
lacasa@lacasa.es
www.lacasa.es

La Morella Nuts, S.A.
Tel: (+34) 977 332 797
Fax: (+34) 977 323 520
morella@morellanuts.com
www.morellanuts.com

Las Comas Cemoi, S.A.
Tel: (+34) 972 261 097
Fax: (+34) 972 261 666
gerencia@lascomas.com
www.lascomas.com

Nestlé España, S.A.
Tel: (+34) 934 805 100
Fax: (+34) 934 733 950
www.nestle.es

Nutrexpa
Tel: (+34) 932 900 290
Fax: (+34) 932 900 341
www.nutrexpa.es

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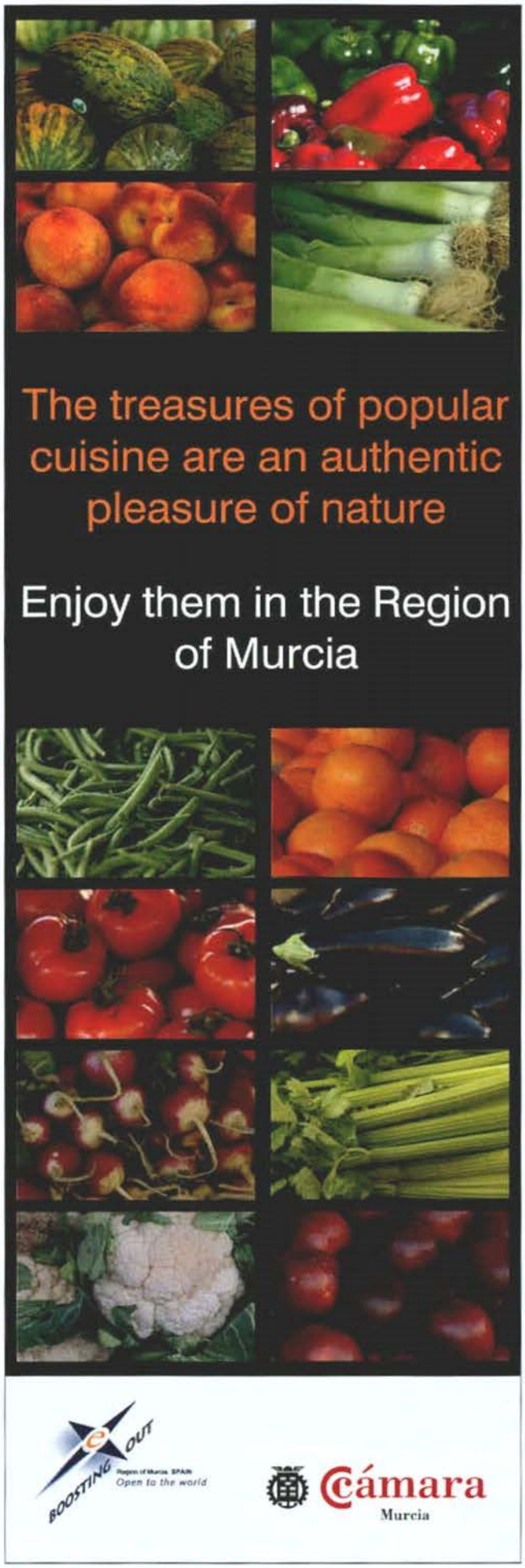

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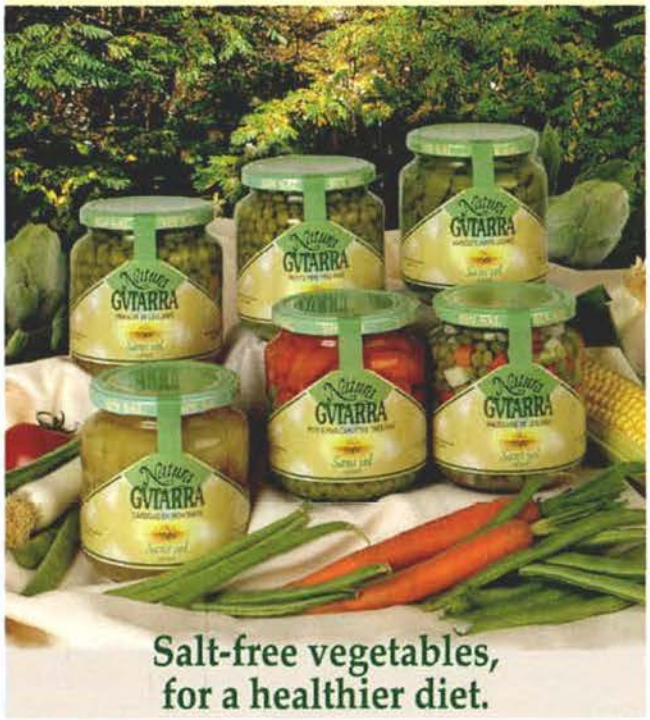

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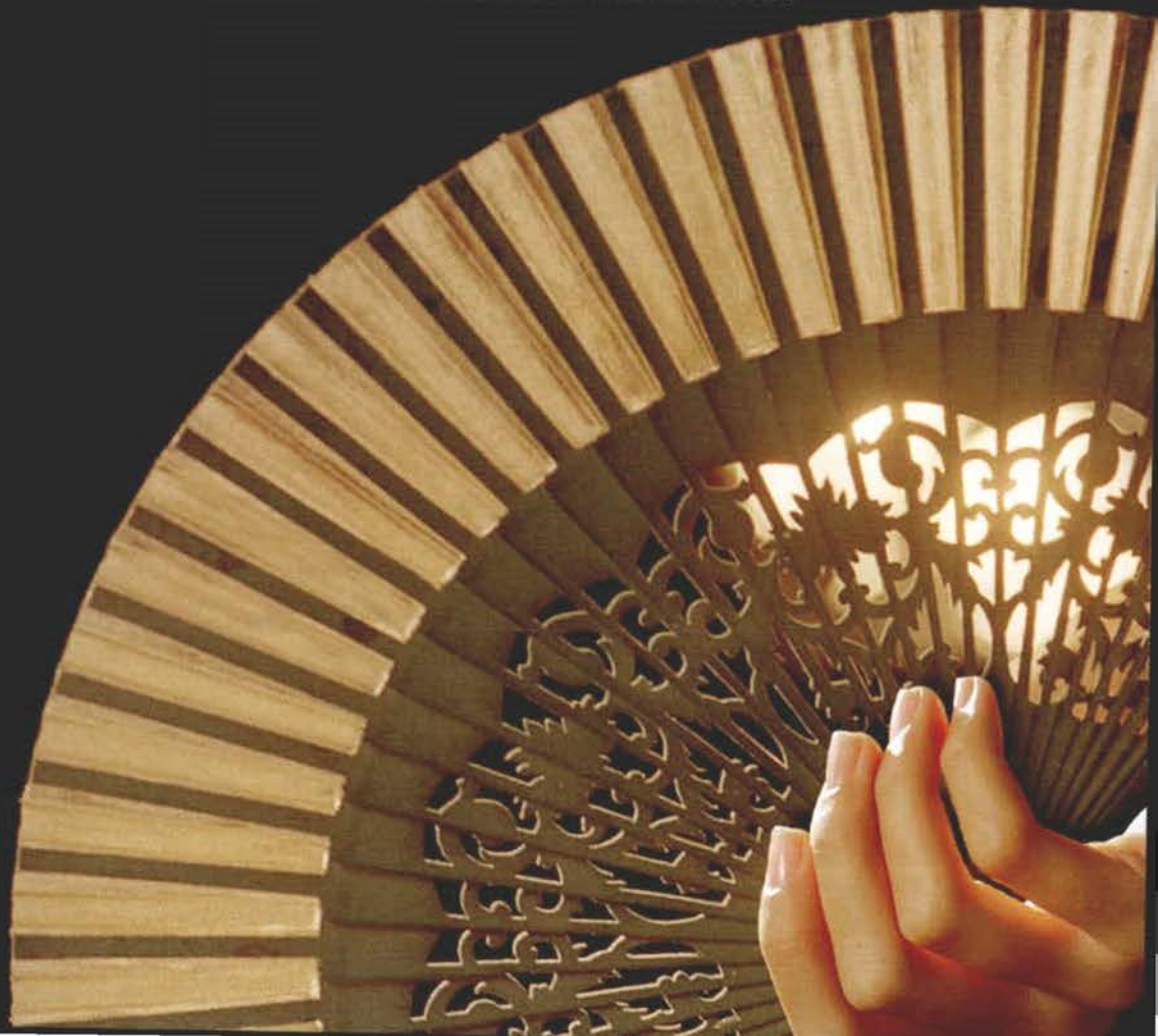

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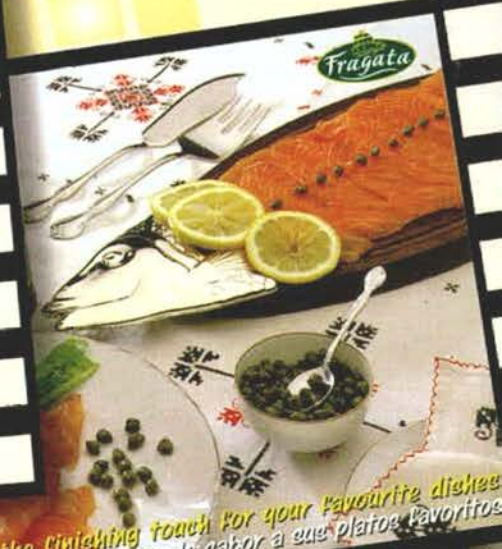

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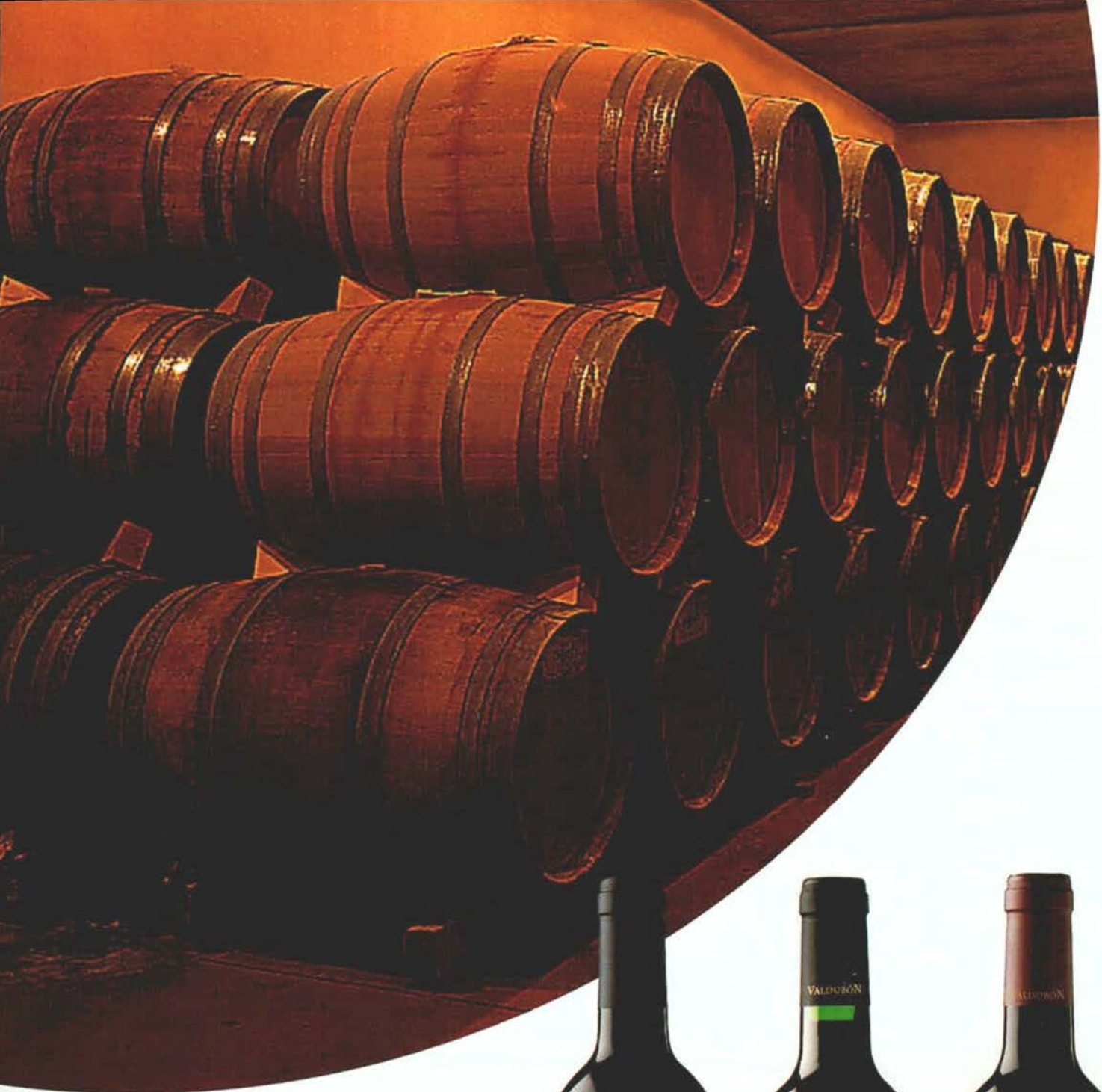

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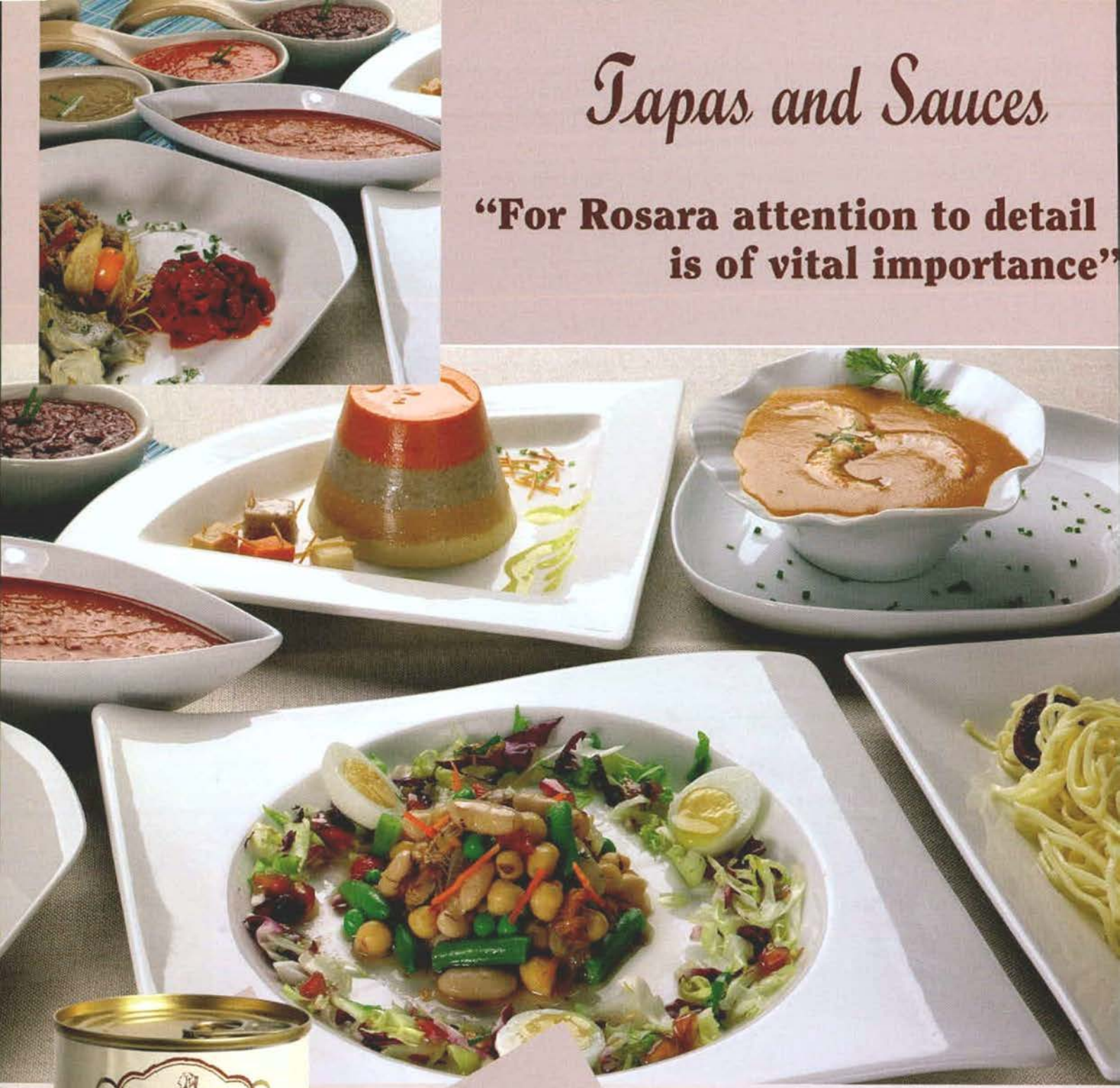

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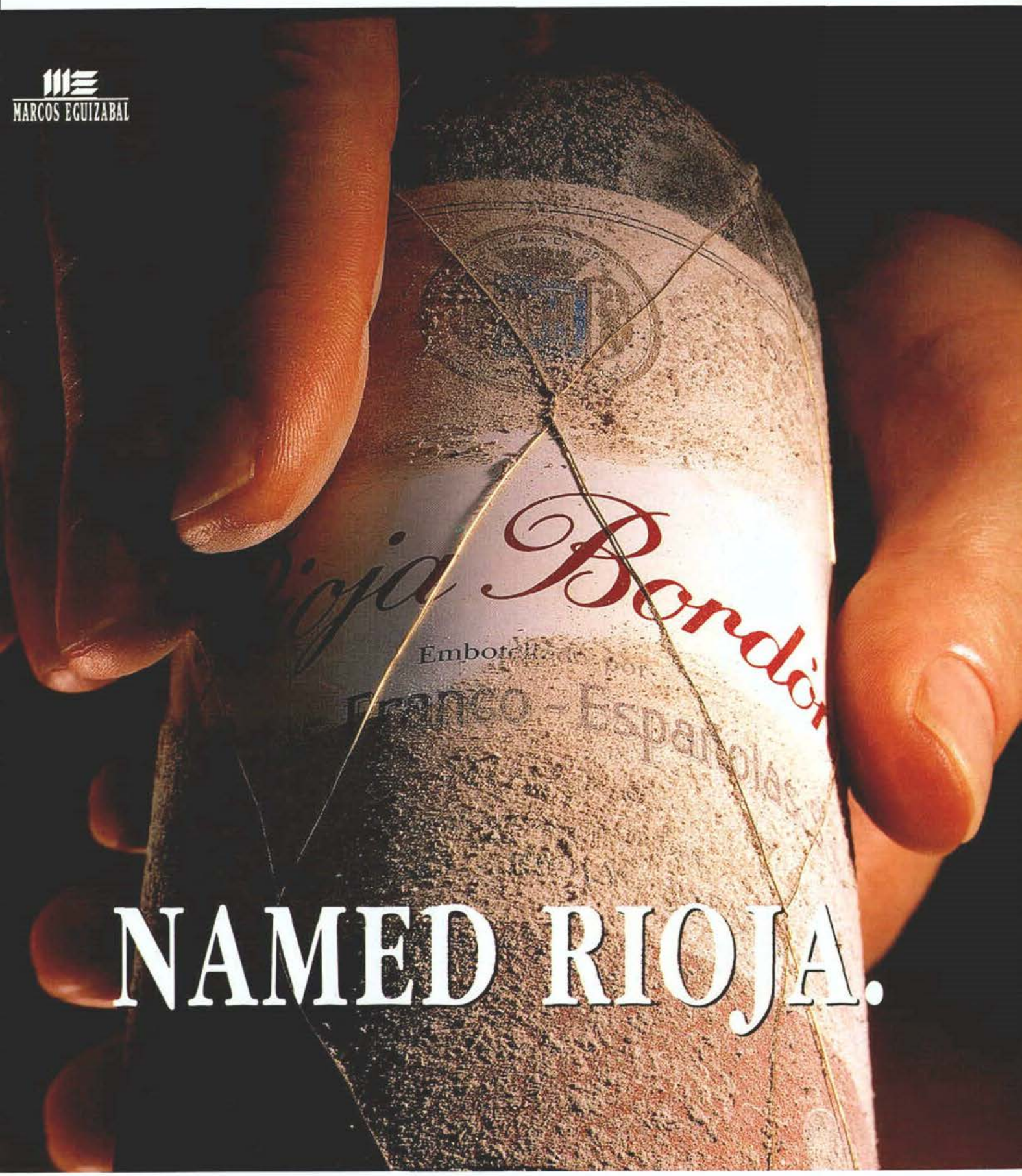

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GLOSSARY

Cava

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.

CREDITS

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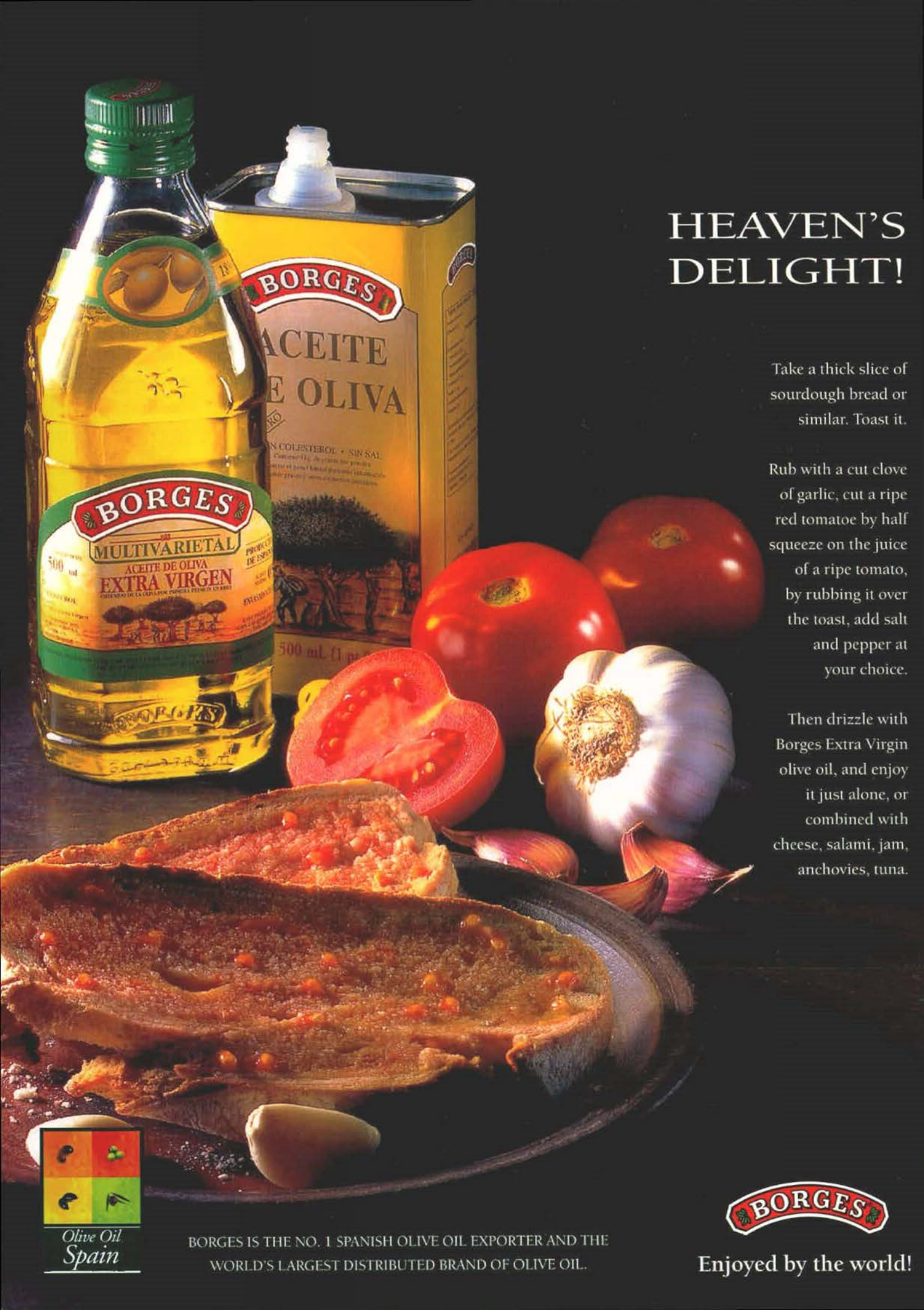

HEAVEN'S DELIGHT!

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.

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