69
January - April 2007

SPAIN GOURMETOUR

Food, Wine & Travel Magazine

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Quite by chance, at a time when many parts of the world, including our own, seem to be concerned with confronting the past—acts of remembrance, rediscovering history—this end-of-year issue also seems to lean in that direction... albeit with sights set on the future.

Highlighting such an ancient foodstuff as pulses—lentils, chickpeas, etc.—in the 21st century is, I suppose, quite a bold thing to do, as is reminding ourselves that hunting and shooting were originally food-providing activities, and still can be today.

For the first article in our new series devoted to wineries that have invested outside Spain without relinquishing their roots, we focus on Torres, a name whose association with the wine trade dates back to 1800.

And as we delve back into history, we invite you to join us on an itinerary around Spain's Paradors, the first of which was established as early as 1928. Among their attractions is traditional cuisine adapted to modern times.

Many Spanish wines are charged with history, and none more so than Sherry. From Strabo to Shakespeare to Orson Welles, there have been countless tributes to its qualities through the centuries. Nowadays, people are drinking Sherry at the table as an accompaniment to Japanese, French and even Brazilian dishes. And why not try it with your Christmas dinner?

Staying with the historical theme, we also visit some of Spain's museums, but not major galleries like the Prado. We take a look at more modest collections designed to inform visitors about products that have always been part of Spanish culture: olive oil (already a rich resource for Roman Hispania, and appreciated by the Italians as much then as it is today) oranges, turrón, and even cured ham.

A Happy New Year to all our readers.

Cathy Boirac
Editor-in-Chief

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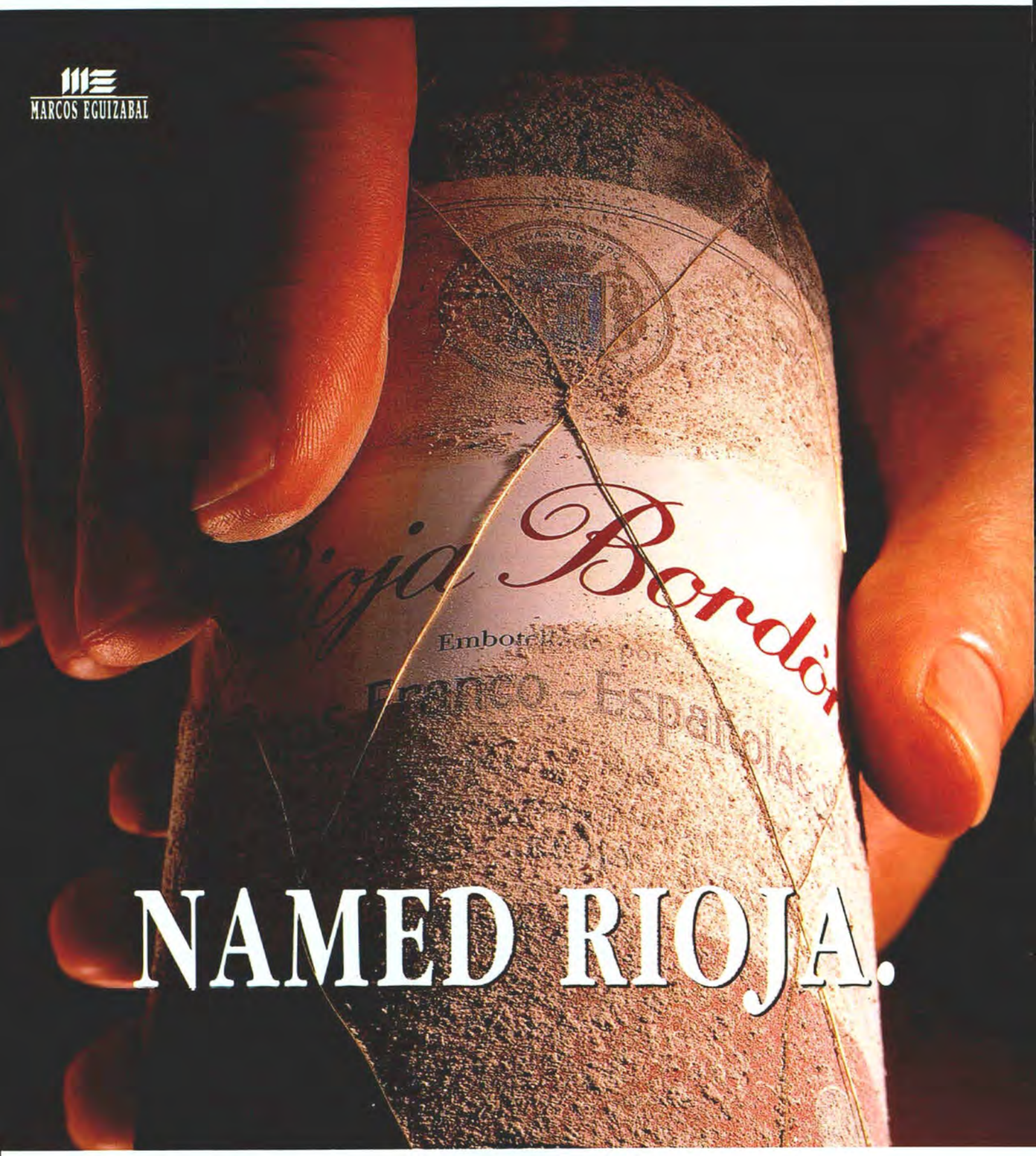

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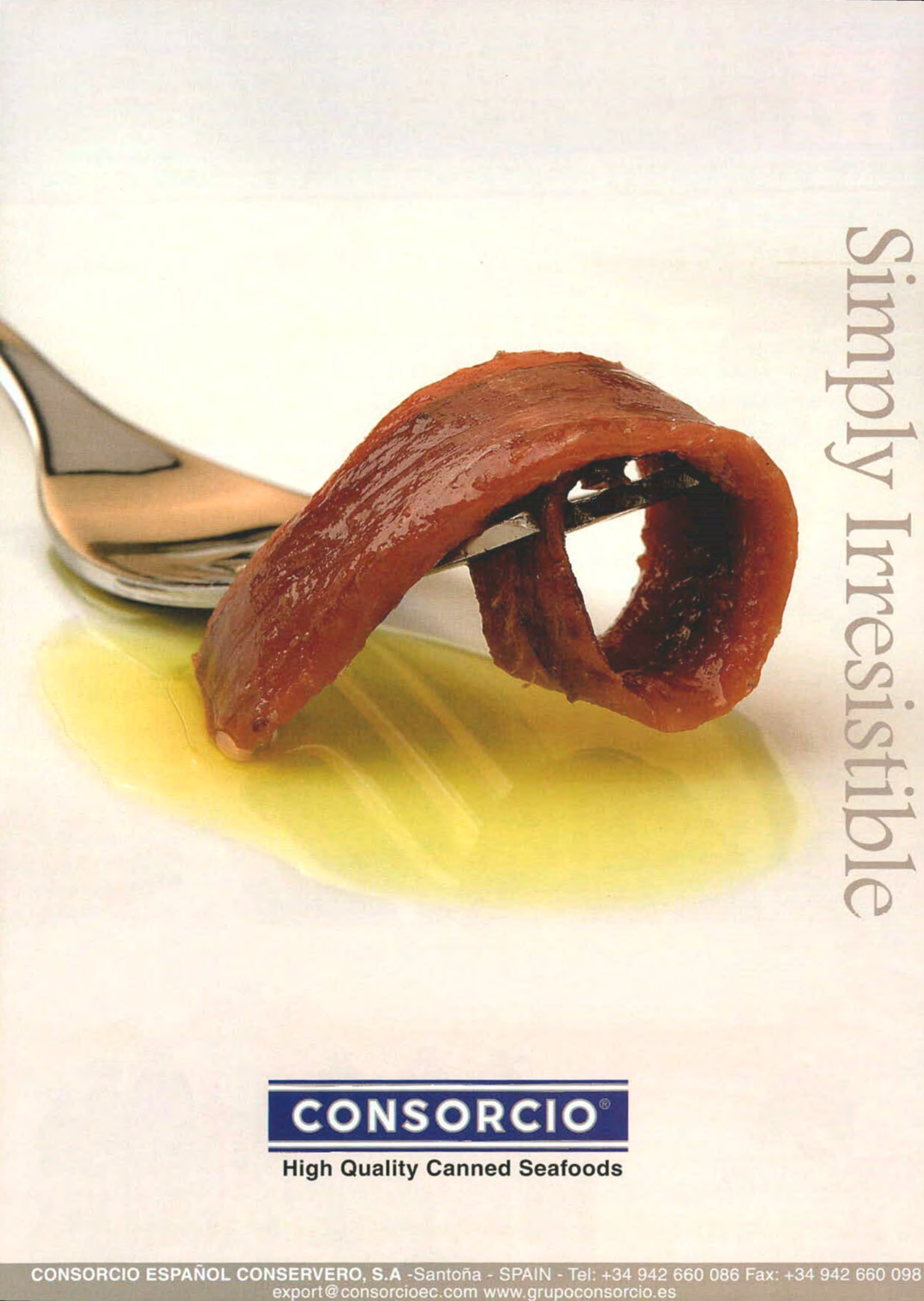

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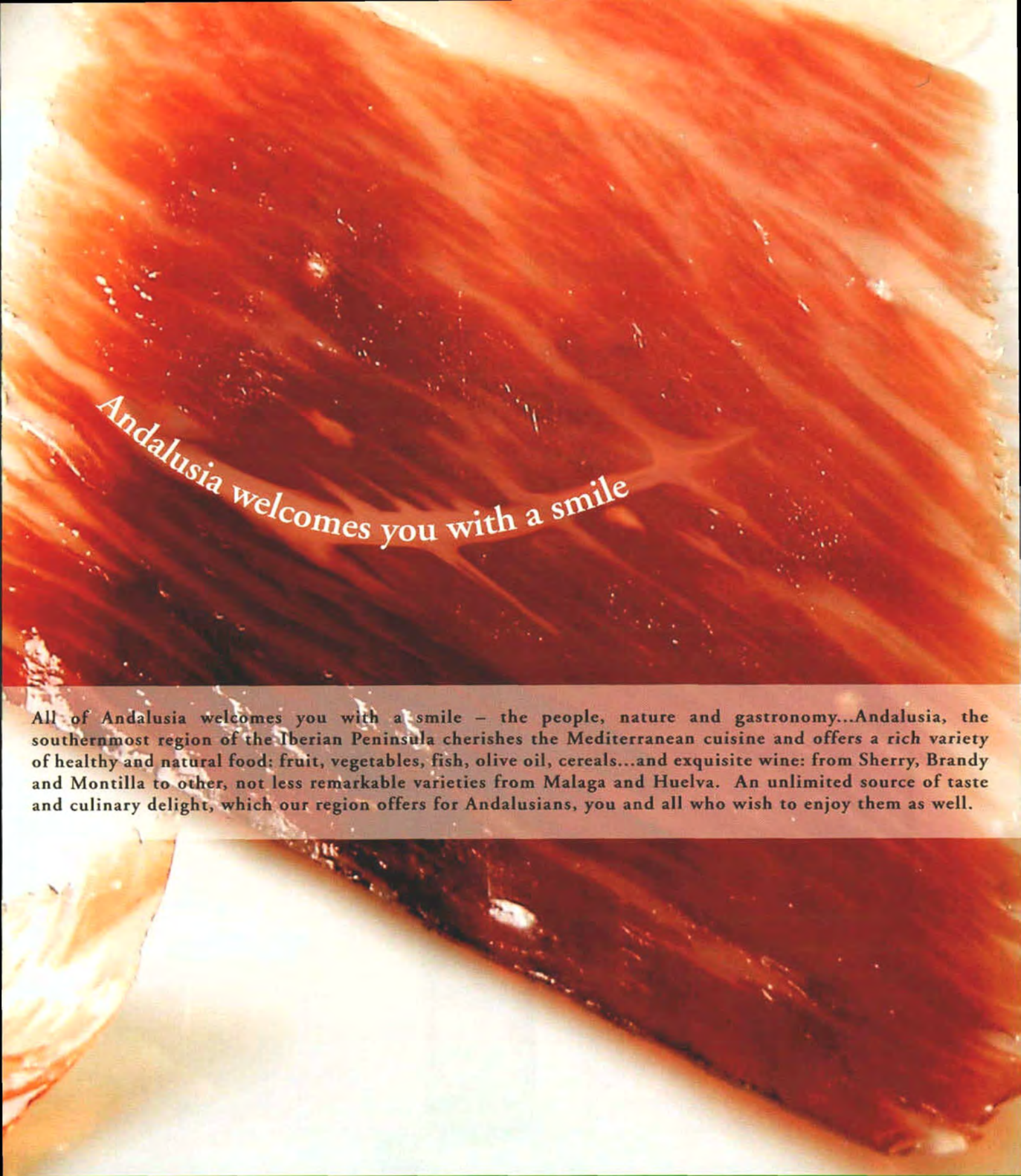

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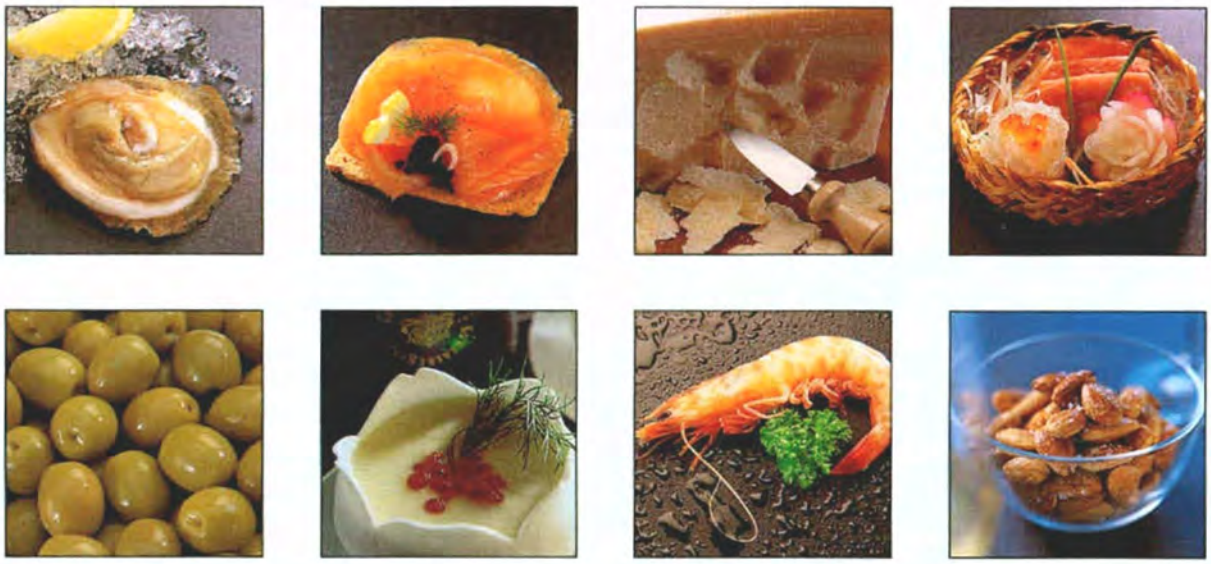

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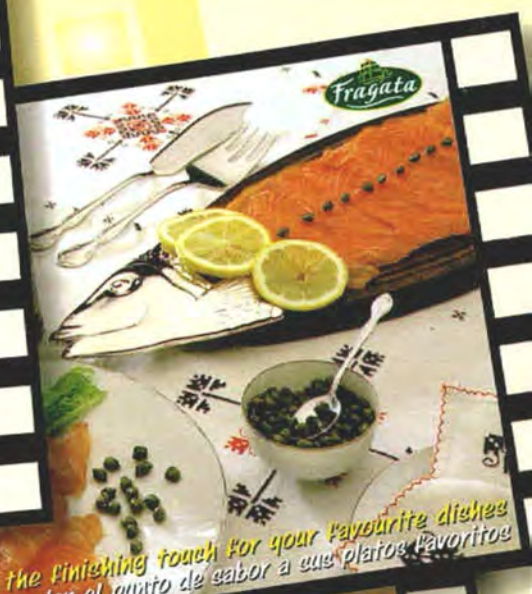

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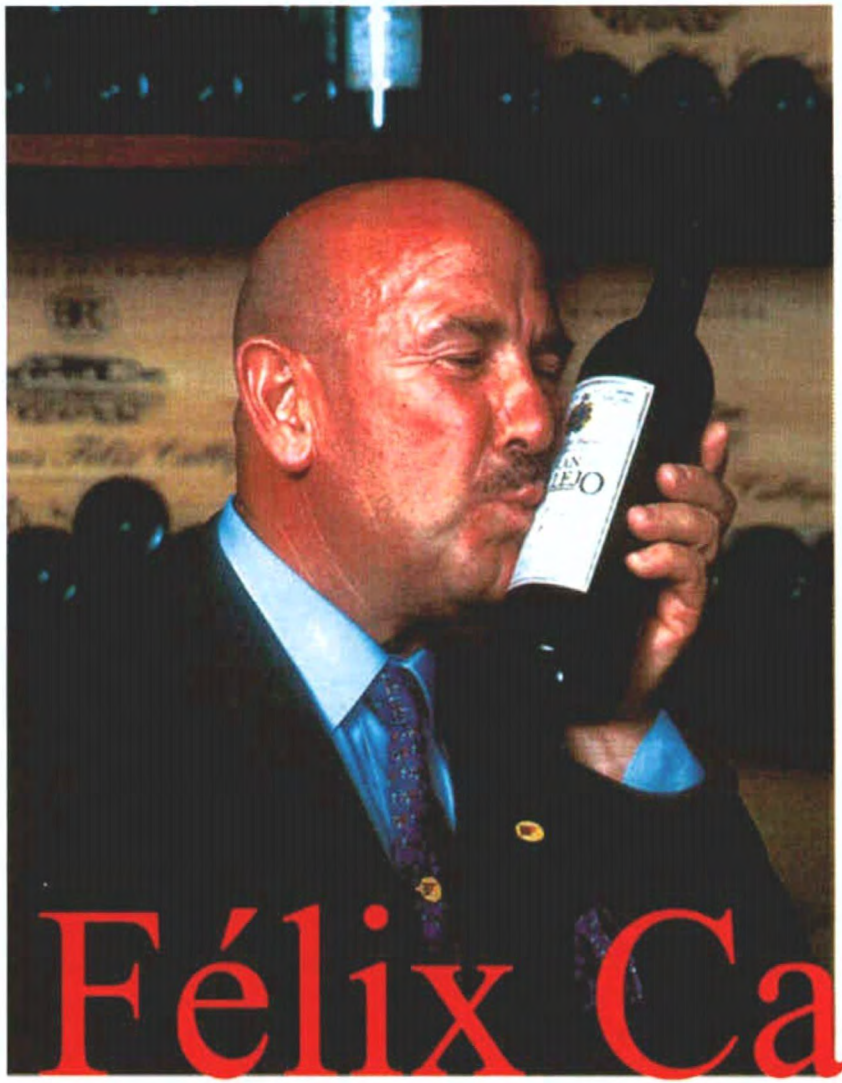

When the sun goes down, the workers of the winery tide up their tools and collect their personal belongings to go back home. A man remains without noticing the passing of time, and he asks "What time is it?"; without caring that little by little everyone is going away, he prefers to remain all by himself in that place. Well, not totally alone: he is accompanied by his wine.

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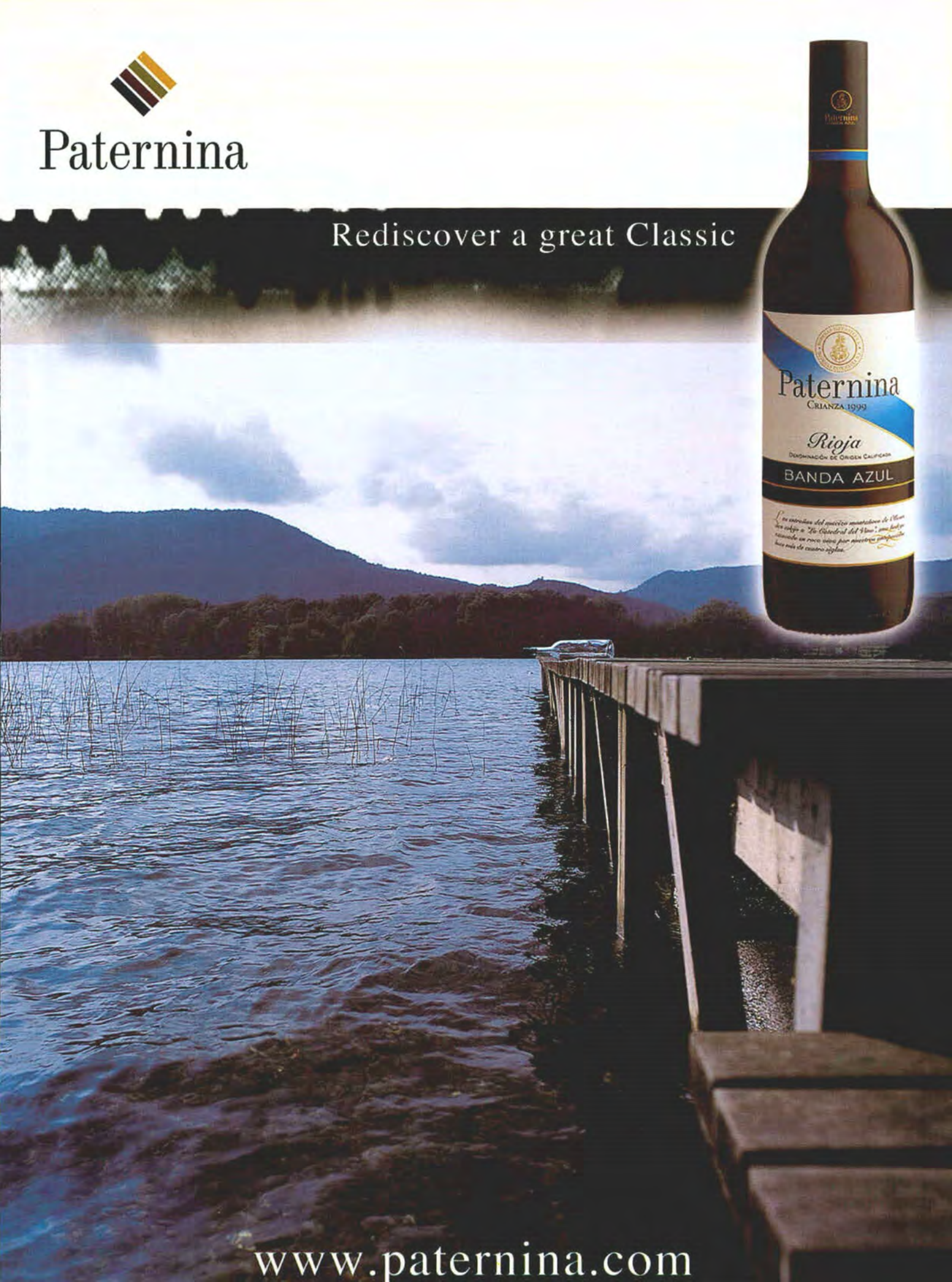
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SHERRY at your table

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The phenomenon of tapas restaurants, which rapidly multiplied outside of Spain in the 1990s, is still booming across Europe and the United States. Through its positive association with traditional Spanish "nibbles", Sherry has become a more highly regarded drink. Its reputation suffered in the 1980s when it was known best as "auntie's secret stash" or the old, dusty bottle dragged out for the winter holidays. Today, people in these dynamic, wine-consuming countries have discovered the joys of Fino/Manzanilla, Amontillado, Palo Cortado, Oloroso, Pedro Ximenez (PX) and Moscatel combined with their indigenous cuisines. Even if the tapas restaurant customer is lured by a bottle of Rueda or Ribera del Duero to accompany the main course, it remains customary to enjoy a chilled glass of Fino with the first bowl of olives and/or finish with a cool or room temperature glass of PX or Moscatel with flan or *helado* (ice cream). Only the foolish would argue against the affinity of Sherry with a majority of Spanish cuisine. But how about Sherry with other foods?

Selling Sherry to accompany Spanish food is an easy task, but unless one lives in Spain it's unlikely one will be eating Spanish food on a regular basis. A concern plaguing buyers and Sherry drinkers today isn't so much as to whether to serve it but rather in what context and with which foods.

To answer concerns about many of the finer points of pairing Sherry with different foods, I spoke to Julian Jeffs, author of the book *Sherry* (Mitchell Beazley 2005) and Sarah Jane Evans, former editor of the BBC's *Good Food Magazine* and most recently appointed Master of Wine (MW). When asked what she thought about the gently oxidized nature of Sherry paired with food, Evans suggested that "frying brings out the caramelized, sweet and burnt notes in your meal, so it needs a wine that stands firm against it—something passive just doesn't work. 'Oxidative' in wine speak is often seen as pejorative; however, the gentle, pre-oxidative nature of lighter Finos or Manzanillas sits beautifully in contrast to the bitterness of lettuce and other greens as well as with the vinegar or lemon juice in a dressing. A fresh and fine Mosel Riesling, for example, as good as it is just wouldn't work."

A factor often forgotten in assessing wines is texture. Texture is something which most Sherries have in abundance. One of the points that may have drawn Evans to write her MW dissertation on Sherry is its range of textures. "It's interesting to see that, compared with other wines, in Sherry, one doesn't consider fruit in its assessment. With Manzanilla there's a fine, rapier-like, lean quality which works like a lemon juice seasoning alongside richer shellfish. The fuller-bodied Finos work more happily with denser, but still watery, foods like an old-fashioned consommé. These styles have a dry finish that sets them apart from most white table wines, which would otherwise have their sweeter elements highlighted when paired with these same foods." The salty qualities often attributed to Manzanillas may also create the impression of savoriness and thereby accentuate the drinker's appetite. According to Jeffs, "It's also important to note that the textural appeal of the powerful Jerez Finos is distinguished from the lighter ones from El Puerto de Santa María, which resemble Manzanilla. Also, a very light Manzanilla Fina compared to the same wine in the older and more viscous Pasada form will have a different texture in one's mouth. Age difference is absolutely striking, however, when one approaches Oloroso. The higher glycerol content in Oloroso makes a difference in its

appearance, with its long legs in one's glass and in one's mouth, which is also fuller. In the case of PX, there will be a dominance of sweetness coupled with a note of bitterness at the end, which is the unmistakable signature of an old Sherry. The treacly character of a PX is delicious poured over ice cream or used to prepare raisins in puddings. It's a fine dessert wine one can drink with chocolate, and not that I know from personal experience, but PX is said to be nourishing to pregnant women," concludes Jeffs.

Sherry in world kitchens

My counterpart in Japan has enjoyed continued success pairing Manzanilla with raw fish dishes, while Fino suits the grilled and fried versions better. Following that lead, I've found, through personal experience, that Fino and fish and chips make a great pair, while Manzanilla consumed with briny, raw oysters are surpassed only by France's Muscadet, a young village Chablis or an austere Blanc de Blancs Champagne. The exotic spice elements in older Amontillados and Palo Cortados combine extremely well with the complex seasoning and cooking preparations of fine Indian cuisine, while the rich, autumnal characteristics of these same wines are glorious with game birds. A Cream or young sweet Oloroso can be a delicious companion to the sweeter barbecue sauces used on meat in the southern part of the US. Dry and pungent Olorosos are great alternatives to hearty reds and are best used with wild mushrooms, dry aged cheeses, lamb, hare and venison. Lamb accented heavily with oregano and garlic, as they do in Greece, or with olives *à la Provençale*, is great with a younger Oloroso or Amontillado, while a Portuguese *frango piri-piri* sings with a younger Amontillado or Palo Cortado. While PX is one of the few wines suitable for chocolate, I find that Moscatel is best left to its own device or, if you must eat it with a dessert, try it with a spiced fruit tart.

What about ingredients such as chilies with Amontillados, Olorosos and Palo Cortados? Don't spicy and hot foods accentuate the presence of alcohol in highly fortified wines, creating an unbalanced sensation in one's mouth? "I find that well-made Sherry's concentration becomes extremely balanced over time. An old Sherry can cope with spicy foods whereas many other wines with a higher alcohol content probably couldn't," commented Evans, to which Jeffs added, "I'd be more worried with Port because the alcohol conspicuously shows

through, whereas in Sherry it doesn't." Continuing his support of Sherry's suitability with food, Jeffs said, "Many cheeses go very well with Sherry, especially those which are particularly difficult to match with a table wine. Stilton goes marvelously with a dessert Oloroso and makes a better combination than the classic Stilton and Port. Spain's traditional goat and sheep's milk cheeses, and even the classic French Roquefort, can pair well with an old and/or sweet Oloroso (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 59)." My personal experiences with PX concur with Jeffs', and I feel that indeed PX is best suited to accompany blue cheeses or a fine cigar at the meal's end rather than with dessert.

The local experience

One of the best ways Jerez has to promote itself, to "transmit the Sherry virus" as it were, is by bringing people to visit the region in order to taste it alongside regional foods. This becomes more relevant as one looks at how the "English-speaking" table may have brought its influence back to Jerez. When in Jerez one should eat as the Jerezanos, not that there's much choice in this town, which is essentially built around wine, bulls and horses. However, if you tire of the typical tapas fare, you can enjoy an "insider's" meal at the venerable La Mesa Redonda, conveniently located steps away from the offices of Sherry's governing Consejo Regulador and its commercial body, Fedejerez. The chef, José Romero-Valdespino López de Carrizosa, took over the family restaurant in 1997 after stints in kitchens in Madrid, the Pyrenees, San Francisco and at the Andalusian landmark El Faro in El Puerto de Santa María. Deeply interested in his region's culinary history, José shared some of his thoughts. "We focus on products from the region, especially Sherry, and try to recreate the cooking from the bodegas' family kitchens. Outside influences grew from French families, such as the Domecq, and the English, from the Gordons, among others." As in Britain, autumn is bird hunting season in Spain and José hunts birds when he has the time. The snipe at La Mesa Redonda comes wrapped in a generous slice of *lardo de jamón ibérico* (ibérico ham fat) and is set atop a bed of minced gizzard from the same bird with a side of sautéed, local, wild mushrooms. Served rare, it makes a succulent pairing with a glass of the former family bodega's Tio Diego Amontillado.

Enjoying fresh game, locally-culled produce and locally produced wine isn't unknown in other regions but it is of keen culinary interest to both Spaniards and the British. The growth of wild foods in Britain is evidenced by the success of books from the chef Fergus Henderson, which in turn are based on the menu at his St. John restaurants in London. New projects such as Truffle UK, a company focused on developing Britain's burgeoning truffle production industry, hint at a "foodie" dynamism not unlike that in the US 15 years ago. Various Sherry styles, as evidenced at La Mesa Redonda, align beautifully with foods sourced as close to nature as possible.

Diversity in the market

Changes in the weather throughout the world are cause for alarm in many regions including Spain. Global warming's challenge for wine growers, the subject of a March 2006 international conference in Barcelona hosted by the Wine Academy of Spain, still hasn't created headaches for growers in the Sherry region. The

vines in the area are well-accustomed to drought conditions, having sent their roots meters deep into the *albariza* soils in search of water below, thereby minimizing hydric stress on the baked vine above. The year 2005 was a relatively short harvest year which offset the windfall harvests of other recent vintages. While this may disappoint the region's numerous independent growers, it does enable the bodegas to stabilize stocks and not risk a crash in Sherry prices, a memory from the past which haunts the area to this day.

In recent years the sale of common types of Sherry such as Cream, Pale Cream, Amontillado and Fino has slipped. This trend has been most apparent in the younger and simpler Sherry styles, many of which are represented by the supermarket's own labels, a phenomenon in the UK but not in the US. Significant growth has taken place within the sub-category of Age-Dated Sherry (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 54). Created in 2000 by a joint initiative between the Regulatory Council and the bodegas, this new assignation allowed the bodegas to have an authorized and regulated means of effectively marketing and promoting their older, more complex and costly wines. Several were already sold, but

WEBSITES

www.sherry.org

Website for the Regulating Council of Jerez-Xérès-Sherry, Manzanilla de Sanlúcar de Barrameda and Jerez Vinegar DOs. Includes information on vineyards, wines and wineries, as well as advice on their conservation and suggestions for fusing flavors. (English, French, Spanish)

www.enjoysherry.com

Creative and animated website aimed at promoting Sherry wines in the US. Includes information on types of wine, consumption recommendations, cocktail ideas and a calendar of events. (English)

www.turismojerez.com

Website dedicated to the Jerez Plan for Excellence in the Tourist Industry with integral information about the city, its services and a range of leisure activities. Includes a section on Sherry wine. (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish)

were done so in minute quantities and to the few customers "in the know." The VOS (Vinum Optimum Signatum or Very Old Sherry) and VORS (Vinum Optimum Rare Signatum or Very Old Rare Sherry) titles, indicating an average age range of 20+ and 30+ years respectively, were the first out of the gate to be joined three years later by 12- and 15- year old versions, as well as the vintage-indicated *añadas*. These sub-sub-categories are limited to the Amontillado, Oloroso, Palo Cortado and PX styles. The most recent statistics have shown enormous growth of the Age-Dated range overall and of Oloroso and PX styles in all forms.

With the increase in diversity and availability of Sherry styles, the growing interest and education of members of the wine trade and stable prices worldwide, the Sherry enthusiast has yet to experience a better time to enjoy this wine that adheres to tradition while enthusiastically embracing the future.

***David Furer** is a writer and consultant for wines, spirits and food. He wrote* Wine Places *(Mitchell Beazley 2005) and is the contributor for Sherry to* Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine Book *2007 (Mitchell Beazley 2006). He has also worked for Fedejerez (Federación de Bodegas del Marco de Jerez) in promoting their wines generically in England and Scotland, and is a Certified Sherry Educator.*

OPINIONS FROM EXPERTS

To gather opinions from experts in the United Kingdom and the United States two meetings were held. David Furer met with five wine purveyors in London, while Steven Olson, a US Sherry Educator, led a group of American sommeliers and restaurateurs through Jerez and the greater Andalusia area.

The participants in London were Chris Adnitt, proprietor of the restaurant Number 22, Robert Giorgione, head sommelier at the restaurant The Orrery which has one Michelin star, Joe Martin, bar manager at Fino, Becky McKeavitt, sommelier and bar manager at The Salt Yard charcuterie and restaurant, and Ray O'Connor, assistant head sommelier at Maze which also boasts one Michelin star.

From the United States we had Jacques Bezuidenhout, beverage manager at Tres Agaves Mexican restaurant in San Francisco, Virginia Philip MS, Master Sommelier at The Breakers Resort in Palm Beach, Florida, Brian van Flandern, head bartender at Per Se, one of the four restaurants in New York bearing three Michelin stars, Roger Kugler, sommelier and general manager at Suba restaurant and tapas bar, Dewey Dufresne, proprietor of WD-50 with one Michelin star, Andre Compeyre, sommelier at the double-starred restaurant Daniel, and Nancy Selzer, managing partner of Casa Mono tapas bar and restaurant, all of them from New York City.

This is a compilation of their contributions.

How is Sherry incorporated into restaurants' wine programs?

In the United States, Roger Kugler of Suba and La Boqueria lists Sherry by category: bone dry, dry, medium dry, medium, medium sweet and sweet, and they are offered mostly by the glass only. Doing this gives the customer an opportunity to pick a Sherry based on their own taste, knowing what style of wine they like already. Suba currently has a selection of 15 with at least one in each category.

Other restaurants, such as Per Se in New York and Tres Agaves in San Francisco, are creating signature cocktails mixed with different styles of Sherry.

In London, Chris Adnitt, from Number 22, serves all eight Sherries he lists in a standard 175 ml (7 fl oz) wine glass and the PX in a 125 ml (4 fl oz) glass, just because his customers are hard-pressed to finish more than that.

Becky McKeavitt, from The Salt Yard, confesses that it's still quite a struggle to get people to try it for the first time. She pours clients a drop and encourages people to try a Sherry with a particular dish. With ten styles to choose from, she thinks there's a style for everybody, from very dry to very sweet.

Ray O'Connor, from Maze, keeps an open bottle in the restaurant, making it easier for people to put their trust in his hands. If people are having a pre-coursed menu, he believes it offers them the chance to try different kinds of Sherry.

What is the best way to get customers into Sherry?

Nancy Selzer, of Casa Mono in New York City, is starting a series of wine tastings offered to the general public as a way of getting people to understand food and wine pairings better. Her first tasting will be Sherry.

In the United States, most of these sommeliers/restaurateurs have a close relationship with their chefs and they work together to create food and wine pairings to feature on the menu or to have the servers suggest to diners. This seems to work exceptionally well in the case of Sherry.

The pairings also seem to work in the United Kingdom. According to Robert Giorgione, from The Orrery, sommeliers have become more understanding of the image that Sherry truly represents as well as its amazing food pairing opportunities. Written menu combinations and tasting flights of Sherry add value to the guest's experience when dining at a top-end restaurant. It's a positive message and sets a good mood.

Becky McKeavitt considers that, for a young consumer, these styles are too dry when drunk alone, making them less appealing as an aperitif; however, when you combine it with the right foods it really comes together.

Ray O'Connor agrees, and says that if you sell Sherry with food it begins to make sense to the customer, its suitability often blowing them away.

At Number 22, they are conscious that they are, above all, a tapas restaurant. Chris Adnitt perceives that people are ultimately looking for a wine to work with a wide range of food and most of those foods are on the table at the same time. Sherry manages to hit more bases than other wines, and serving it by the glass allows people to enjoy a wider palate of wine.

And as an added value, Joe Martin believes that having it with food allows people to come up with another vocabulary. It's a slightly different language than the usual fruit-based wine lingo. Descriptions such as salty or subtle rather than dry or sweet take precedence and perhaps the food helps to clarify the wine's descriptions.

What sort of customers drink Sherry?

In London there is a melting pot of people, which makes it exciting for Sherry and for restaurateurs. What's everyday for some may not be for others, and what's commonplace for a Londoner may not be for someone in Yorkshire or Atlanta. More people are traveling and thus more people are experiencing different cuisines. Sherry can play a part in the growing interest in wine and food, especially with Asian foods, according to Robert Giorgione. As for Chris Adnitt, he says that a 20-something will probably not sit at his bar late at night sipping a Cream Sherry, but they might enjoy it as part of a cocktail. People are more likely to try things that are experimental rather than traditional.

According to Steven Olson, in the United States older customers who recognize certain brands are drinking Sherry. This sometimes

leads them to try other styles too. Younger diners are becoming more curious about it when they see it on the menu and are eager to ask questions and try something new, especially when encouraged by the staff (or the menu) to try it with food.

Most customers who drink Sherry also have a greater appreciation for fresh ingredients, modern cuisine and food trends.

How has the customer's perception of Sherry changed?

In the UK, according to Robert Giorgione, Sherry is seen as underrepresented, as it was known as "your auntie's drink" until quite recently with the integration of Sherry onto more restaurant wine lists. This perception may be because it is considered to be less fashionable than branded Chardonnays. The alcoholic strength of most Finos and Manzanillas today, compared to several years ago, place them on a par with today's stronger New World wines. Its great value for money and its message is gradually becoming more positive, while packaging has become more modern and useful, allowing Sherry to reach a wider audience.

In the US, all things Spanish have become hugely popular in the past few years, especially wine and cuisine. This trend has opened the door to experimentation by chefs in the kitchen and sommeliers with the wine list. Because of this, Sherry has been popping up in more places, making it more widely available. It's not just found in Spanish restaurants anymore.

As Steven Olson remarks, diners are becoming much smarter and demanding diversity and higher quality. They want to be wowed when they go to dinner. More customers are thinking of themselves as "foodies". They read the magazines and travel just for the sake of experiencing a certain cuisine. Because of this, they are more open not only to trying Sherry with dinner but also wanting to learn about its origins and its place in the culinary world. They are certainly impressed when they realize what a unique and fine wine it is and eager to try more.

A list of different pairings chosen by participants:

- Fino and/or Manzanilla
  Risotto
  Sushi and sashimi
  Ham, sausages, charchuterie
  Vegetable pizza

- Amontillado
  British game
  Dim sum
  Vietnamese spring rolls

- Oloroso
  Fried mushrooms
  Foie gras and mushrooms

- Palo Cortado
  Oven-grilled chicken

- Moscatel
  Blue cheese

- Pedro Ximenez
  Chocolate
  Reduced as a sauce for foie gras

The stuff of MEMORIES

The ancient Greek poet Hesiod (8th century BC) provides us, in his narrative *Theogony*, with a story about the gods of antiquity, including the names of the nine classical muses: Calliope, Clio, Erato, Euterpe, Melpomene, Polyhymnia, Thalia, Terpsichore and Urania. In the ensuing centuries, their patronage of the arts and sciences extended to all corners of the globe. Countless *musaea* ("seats of the muses") have been created to preserve the heritage created by generation after generation of mankind on every continent, some of which—the Hermitage, the Louvre, the British Museum and MOMA—serve as cultural landmarks for the world as a whole. *Spain Gourmetour* has visited four parts of Spain and four exceptional museums whose exhibits, far from requiring sophisticated display cases, frames and strong-rooms, feature on the tables of discerning eaters on a daily basis.

TEXT
BINGEN URQUIJO

TRANSLATION
HAWYS PRITCHARD

Let's imagine starting our itinerary on Madrid's Paseo del Prado, site of three of the most important museums in the world. Set among stately old trees, luxurious hotels and 18th century fountains, these three palaces receive thousands of visitors each day. They are the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, home to the collections built up by several generations of the eponymous German family, the Prado Museum, created on the basis of the Spanish royal collections, and the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, devoted to art from the 20th century up to the present day, with Picasso's *Guernica* as the keystone of its collection. Let's imagine, one fine autumn morning, we pay a visit to the Prado's galleries, stopping on the second floor of the Villanueva building in the rooms that house the Spanish still-lifes from the Golden Age. We pause before a series of works by Meléndez, Sánchez Cotán, Arellano and Zurbarán.

These paintings vie with each other to capture the color, light and very essence of the most varied objects and foodstuffs. Our attention—and appetite—are engaged by an unpretentiously framed painting. The setting is a simple, sparsely furnished room depicted in natural tones and the house is noble, austere. Perched on an old wooden table is a glass jug of olive oil that casts a golden glow over the room. To the right of it is a brilliantly white, monastically simple plate which holds finely cut, glistening slices of ibérico ham. In the corner, a skillfully woven basket contains half a dozen oranges, mandarins, lemons and a few sprigs of orange blossom. Almost jutting out of the foreground of the picture is a chunk of Jijona *turrón* (a sweet paste made with almonds and honey), emerging delectably from its crumpled brown paper wrapping.

Now let's pretend that all these foodstuffs are not just depictions on the canvas, but that the actual products are really on a table in front of us. We can smell them and appreciate their shapes and textures. We are tempted to sample some of the oil and a piece of that ham on a chunk of bread, peel ourselves an orange and taste a little

bit of the sweet turrón. This leap is precisely what separates the solemnity of the Prado from the many museums dedicated to different foodstuffs where traditional museum rules are essentially thrown out the window, and where it is forbidden *not* to touch and, especially, *not* to taste. We are so used to the formality of art and science museums that it might seem pretentious or inappropriate for these little institutions dedicated to food products commonly found in the average Spanish kitchen cabinet to claim association with the muses. However, a closer investigation reveals that the muses were the daughters of Mnemosyne, whose name means "memory", and the whole purpose of these newly-created gastronomic museums is to safeguard, conserve and associate these accumulated memories with certain products that would otherwise be consigned to oblivion. The museums' progenitors are enthusiasts whose professional experience has involved them in the often arcane and demanding worlds of olive oil, ibérico ham, Valencian citrus fruits, Jijona and Alicante turrón, and countless other equally genuine and exceptional Spanish products.

The aim of each of their projects is to preserve the history of a product that has been integral to the landscape and life of certain towns and even entire areas of Spain, a product that has shaped the lives of generations of men and women. Growing and/or processing these products will have influenced and orchestrated festive calendars, traditional culinary repertoires, family incomes, crafts and language, to mention just a few examples. In addition to reflecting the aforementioned aspects, these little museums also aim to inform consumers about characteristics that are specific to their particular products and representative of their excellence, part of their job being to slough off erroneous clichés and misconceptions that are perhaps associated with them. They all share the same mission statement: "To conserve and to make known". To this end, their exhibition spaces feature instruments dating back hundreds of years alongside educational videos, old photographs, well-designed information panels, historical documents, traditional tools and equipment and didactic computer programs. A few gastronomic museums are already firmly established as institutions, while others are just starting to convert their aspirations into reality. Thanks to the efforts of local councils and businessmen, each of the four products in our imaginary still-life—all unchallenged staples of Spanish gastronomy—already has its own museum from which to tell its story. What follows is a gastronomic and cultural itinerary embracing all four: we visit the *Museo del Olivar y del Aceite* (Olive Grove and Oil Museum) in Baena (Córdoba), the *Museo del Jamón-Centro de Interpretación del Cerdo Ibérico* (Ham Museum and Ibérico Pig Interpretation Center) in Aracena (Huelva), the *Museo de la Naranja* (Orange Museum) in Burriana (Castellón) and the *Museo del Turrón* (Turrón Museum) in Jijona (Alicante).

Museo del Aceite, Baena (Córdoba)

Olives galore

Baeza stands out as a flash of white amidst the monotonous silver grey of the gently rolling countryside and the unruffled sunny Córdoba sky. The little houses huddle on a hill that rises above serried ranks of olive trees, grove upon grove stretching as far as the eye can see. Olive pits excavated during an archaeological dig in nearby Torreparedones attest to the fact that olives were being grown here as early as the 7th century BC.

In April 2003, Don José Alcalá Santaella's olive oil mill, which stands among the houses along Baeza's Cañada Street, became the Museo del Olivar y del Aceite. One gets the impression that the mill was frozen in time just as a delivery of olives was expected from the groves. Most of the oil mill's machinery, dating back to the late 19th century, has been preserved so that the traditional oil-making process can be traced step by step. In the old days, three millers would have worked here at harvest time, processing between 2,000 and 3,000 kilos (6600 lbs) of olives a day which had been gathered in El Chitadillo and La Vela.

However, this museum aims to do more than just demonstrate the traditional oil extraction process. It also tries to recreate, in an instructive way, the entire culture that permeated the local people's lives and evolved around what it refers to as "the concentrated essence of civilization". Old black and white documentaries shown in the audio-visual room are testaments to the hard work involved in harvesting the olives and the celebrations that followed. An interesting exhibition panel engages visitors in a trivia game centered on the language of the olive oil world, and as we play we learn that a *vecero* is an olive tree that bears fruit on alternate years, and a *macaco* is a little esparto grass basket hung around the neck for holding olives as they are picked. There are also charming recordings of traditional songs about the olive tree and its oil that would still have been heard in the streets of Baena

and the surrounding countryside not so long ago. "At this stage of the tour, there is always someone who gets sentimental and begins to reminisce about his youth, particularly people who emigrated to Catalonia or Germany", says Magdalena, one of the museum guides.

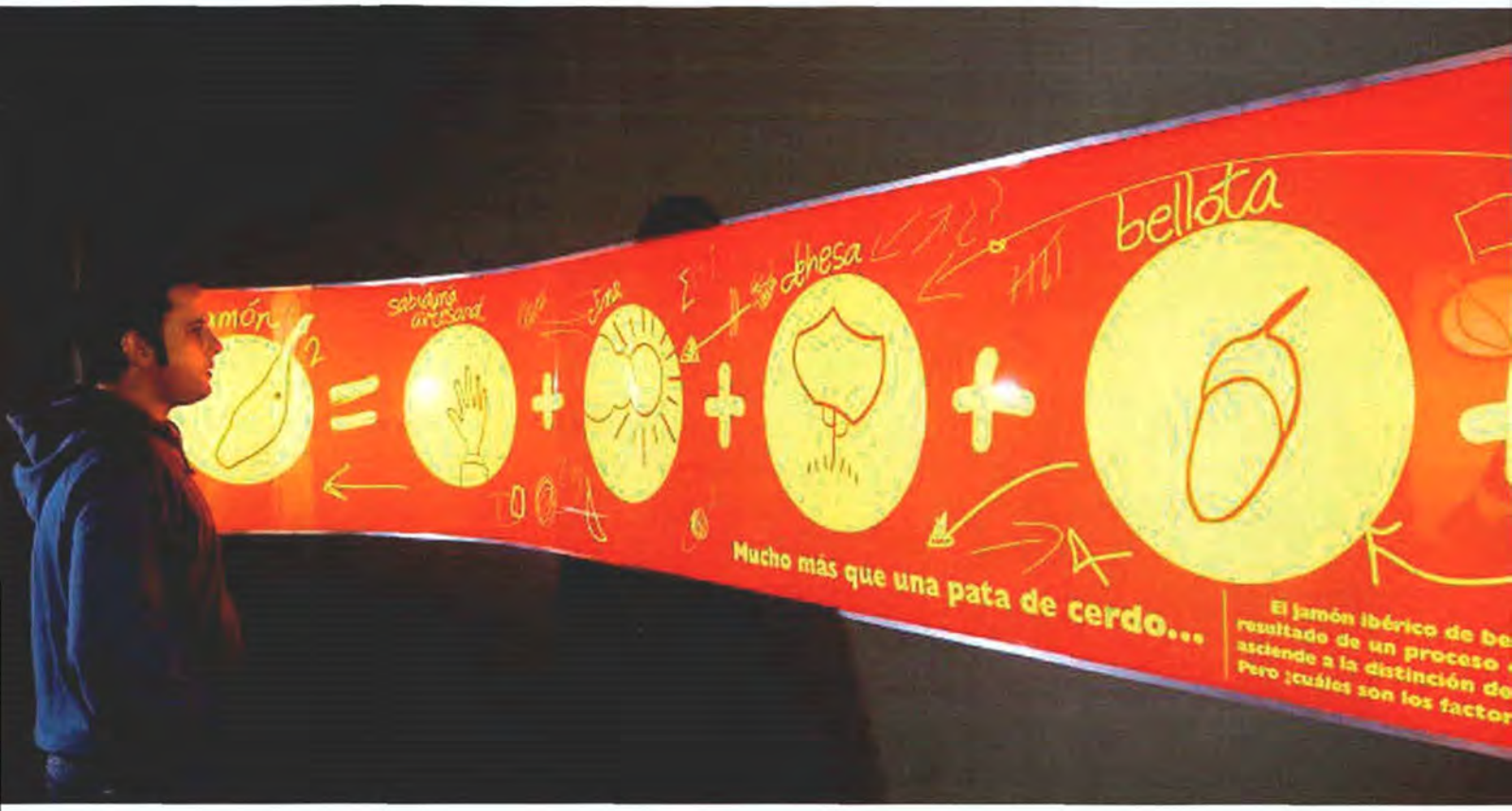
But still there is more to come as we head to the kitchen. This section of the itinerary dealing with olive oil in cooking does a good job of promoting the product's many virtues—as a vital ingredient in *salmorejo* (a cold soup, typical of southern Spain, made with tomatoes, bread, oil, garlic and vinegar), salads and artichoke dishes. An age-old breakfast specialty known as *tostón molinero* (miller's toast) made by coating bread with lots of olive oil and then baking it in the oven sounded particularly delicious.

Attention is also devoted to training consumers to interpret the information available to them. Dotted around the exhibition hall are various computers on which thousands of olive oil bottle labels can be called up. This is not just so that they can be appreciated as works of art but it's an effort to teach

visitors to interpret them as documents, dense with essential information for shoppers seeking reassurance about health and quality standards. The collection is backed up with examples of other uses for oil and the olive tree not directly related to nutrition, such as in medicines and cosmetics, olive-wood furniture (a specialty of the nearby village, Castro del Río) and twig basketwork. The most surprising by-product is a bio-fuel made from a substance known as *alperujo*, an amalgam of the *orujo* (the paste of olive pits and skins) and *alpechín* (olive juice) left behind after the oil is extracted.

The Museo del Olivar y del Aceite is a bright, well-designed museum whose educational remit is particularly patent in a special children's area where they can work, paint and learn through structured play. It also carries out two interesting initiatives linked to the museum. One is the Terra Olea Project, a club whose members are enthusiasts and promoters of olive culture in the Baena area, in Mirandella (Tras os Montes, Portugal) and in the French department of Gard. The other is an event that takes place each olive harvest time, in November, when the museum takes to the streets with the *Festival del Aceite de Oliva Virgen de Baena* (Baena Virgin Olive Oil Festival). Lasting for several days, the festivities include tasting workshops, seminars, concerts, awards and—especially noteworthy—the Oro Virgen de Baena tapas route, a competitive event to generate creative tapas recipes that use olive oil as their star ingredient. *Lomitos con granadas* (pork loin with pomegranate) and *salmorejo de espárragos trigueros con perdiz y fideos fritos* (sprue asparagus salmorejo with partridge and fried noodles) are just some of the irresistible examples of dishes featured at the festival.

Museo del Jamón-Centro de Interpretación del Cerdo Ibérico, Aracena (Huelva)



Oak-woods of Andalusia

The holm-oak, gall-oak and cork-oak are the trees commonly found in *dehesas*. A dehesa is a unique ecosystem whose Spanish name derives from the Latin *defensus* (fenced-in, protected), consisting of an area of natural woodland that has been taken in hand so that it can be husbanded efficiently. The town of Aracena in the Huelva Province is surrounded by dehesas. Looking down from the hill at the top of the town, between the castle and the fortified church, one surveys a landscape of woods and low scrubland against which scattered patches of different greens stand out: these are the oakwood.

"The dehesa is one of the secrets of the cured ham formula", we are informed by the town's mayor, Manuel Guerra, who is justly proud of Aracena's natural environment. The formula in question is the subject of the permanent exhibition and the heart of the *Museo del Jamón-Centro de Interpretación del Cerdo Ibérico* (Cured Ham Museum and Ibérico Pig Interpretation Center), inaugurated just over a year ago. Built during the Franco era, the building it occupies was originally intended to house a museum of folk arts and crafts, but this plan never came to fruition. It stands in a quiet part of town not far from Plaza de Doña Elvira, beside the Regulatory Council for Jamón de Huelva (a PDO product).

The formula that provides this museum with its *raison d'etre* and thematic structure could be expressed as the following mathematical equation: ibérico pig + acorns from the *montanera* (dehesa pasture where the pigs graze and forage—see *Spain Gourmetour* No. 68) + dehesa + climate + artisan know-how = ibérico ham. Visits are conducted in groups and escorted by well-informed guides who gradually reveal the formula's secrets and finer points. Visitors learn all about the dehesa (the ibérico pig's environment where it feeds on montanera acorns from November to February), the history, morphological characteristics and main breeds of ibérico pig. The annual *matanza* (pig slaughter)—both domestic and industrial—is also explained, which includes information about how hams are dried and how they should be sliced and sampled. The tour is complemented by videos and an exhibition of the equipment traditionally used in the ham-making process. An overview of the Huelva dehesa focuses on a surprising photograph of a *concejil* (swine-herd) who, in the old days, would have herded pigs owned by local families to graze on the montanera, far from the land-owners' dehesas. The itinerary, which lasts just 30 minutes, covers the three-year period beginning with the birth of

Museo del Jamón-Centro de Interpretación del Cerdo Ibérico, Aracena (Huelva).

the piglet and ending when the ham is ready to eat.

Guerra explains the purpose of this recently launched project. "What we have tried to do is to enhance the way in which the product is perceived. We try to debunk the usual clichés and misconceptions about ibérico ham and show the delicate balance necessary to create the end result, pointing out that, for this very reason, production is limited." The tour ends in a little shop with a tasting room so that visitors can do some sampling on the spot.

The start of the matanza season in November brings the *Feria Regional del Jamón y del Cerdo Ibérico* (Regional Cured Ham and Ibérico Pig Fair) to the streets of Aracena. Not only are there interesting academic and technical lectures, but there are also plenty of opportunities to sample ibérico pork products and other attractions. This is the time to try the classic Aracena tapa known as *castañetas* (crispy, fried ibérico pig salivary glands, *Spain Gourmetour* No. 68), and to try your luck in a lottery in which the winning ticket-holder wins his weight in ham. The most recent winner, a visitor from Madrid, weighed in at 115 kg (250 lbs)—now that's a prize worth giving up your diet for.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGAINST OBLIVION

The passing of the *Plan de Estabilización* (Stabilization Plan) in 1959 during the Franco dictatorship, the restoration of parliamentary monarchy in 1975 and entry into the European Community in 1986 marked three decades of radical changes in the rural Spain vividly portrayed in the works of the novelist Miguel Delibes (b. Valladolid, 1920, Cervantes Prize winner 1993). Today, generations who know what it was like to have worked hard on the land and fought for ownership of a small piece of it mix with others that are in their element surfing the net and shopping in big department stores. In the 1950s, landscapes, people and occupations straight from the pages of *Don Quixote* were still very much a reality in Spain. Today, however, in the urban Spain depicted for the rest of the world by film director Pedro Almodóvar, there are few remaining survivors. Barely 30 years have seen centuries-old occupations, tasks and know-how disappear. Motivated by a mixture of resignation and nostalgia, many towns and villages have started to rescue mementoes of ways of life that would otherwise be consigned to oblivion: farming implements, traditional clothing, household equipment, old photographs... Countless objects, leftovers from a disappearing world, have been collected from barns, attics and dusty corners to provide the material for the many folk museums that have been set up in rural districts of Spain. All these projects share common ingredients: a traditional way of life on the verge of extinction, a group of committed people who love their native area and are determined to honor its memories and EU funding. They share a traditional building rehabilitated and converted into a museum and the inclusion of that museum in a sustainable development program, generally as an attraction aimed at city dwellers who head for the countryside during their holidays. There is a particular concentration of projects of this type along northern Spain's Cantabrian coast (Red de Museos Etnográficos de Asturias, www.redmeda.com). When planning a visit to a particular area of the country, it is worth finding out about its museums. And a word to the wise: try to find a local to show you around your folk museum of choice. Their enthusiasm and first-hand knowledge are sure to bring a collection of suddenly redundant objects to life.

Orange and lemon trees

Leaving Andalusia behind us we now head for the part of Spain's east coast known as Levante. The journey between Valencia and Burriana takes us through landscapes where not a glimpse of soil can be seen between ground-hugging, close-canopied trees. This is citrus-growing territory, where wave after green wave of trees glisten in the sun. The scenery changes gradually as the great regional capital, with its tower-block skyline, gives way to haphazard suburbs. With Valencia as a backdrop, we pass a few little villages, low, bare hillsides, dozens of isolated farmhouses, the occasional ruined fortress, a factory... but the serried ranks of orange, lemon and mandarin trees are a constant feature throughout.

In Burriana, a modernist building dating from 1908 houses the bilingually (Castilian/Valencian) named *Museo de la Naranja-Museu de*

la Taronja (The Orange Museum), brainchild of Vicente Abad, who has dedicated his life to studying citrus fruits. He is also the immensely enthusiastic head of this museum which aims "to conserve and to tell people about the history of citrus-growing in Spain."
Inaugurated in 1997, the museum's collection is divided into four sections: agriculture, trade, modes of transport and retail and advertising. The itinerary is designed to provide visitors with an informative overview of the history and characteristics of citrus fruits from the first plantations in Valencia in the 18th century up to the present day. Perhaps because of Mr. Abad's academic studies (he wrote his doctoral thesis on the history of citrus fruits), this museum has an exceptional resource in the form of its archives and library. It contains in excess of 7,000 books and magazines, more than 2,000 photographs covering the history of Valencian agriculture and over 4,000 trade labels. Originally the label's primary function was to identify the produce of specific exporters, but today they are also recognized as examples of artwork by Valencian draughtsmen and lithographers. It is the photographic collection that perhaps best reflects the rapid changes rural Spain has undergone. Images of early growing techniques, old warehouses with women seated on the ground sorting oranges, illustrations of bulls hauling boatfuls

Museo de la Naranja, Burriana (Castellón).

of orange-filled boxes and other equally folkloric photographs lie side by side with shots of cutting-edge cultivation machinery and ultra-modern modes of transport. The museum's informative and educational task is complemented by two other activities. One is *La Fruta Dorada* (The Golden Fruit), a traveling exhibition that has already been taken to New York, Toronto and London. It consists of 36 panels backed up by exhibits from the museum's holdings, tracing the history of citrus-growing and the orange trade. The other is the annual *Certamen Internacional de Fotografía de la Naranja* (International Orange Photography Competition) in which citrus fruit is the artistic subject. The top prize of the 13th edition of the event, in 2006, went to a contestant in Buenos Aires. The museum's website (see box) features works submitted in the last ten years. If you have a camera, a good eye and Valencian oranges, lemons, mandarins or grapefruit in your fruit bowl, why not give it a go? Your pictures could form part of the website's collection this time next year.

Alicante almonds

Almond trees come into flower around Jijona in mid-February, showing up as patches of white in the small holdings that surround this Alicante town. By the following December, these masses of blossom will have been transmuted into the turrón that is so much a part of the Spanish family's Christmas tradition. The *Museo del Turrón* (Turrón Museum) was created in the 1960s on Juan Antonio Sirvent Selfa's initiative, a member of a family of master turrón makers that has been making Christmas sweets in Jijona since the 18th century. The museum's premises have expanded over the last 30 years. It started off in

WEBSITES

www.museoaceite.com
The Museo del Olivar y del Aceite's website includes a presentation about the town of Baena, a short history of the museum which gives an idea of the exhibits in its various rooms, a virtual visit and access to its documentation center and relevant links. (English, Spanish)

www.aracena.es
This is the Aracena Town Council's website, which has a section dedicated to the Museo del Jamón-Centro de Interpretación del Cerdo Ibérico. (Spanish)

www.museonaranja.com
The Museo de la Naranja-Museu de la Taronja website gives information about the museum's patrons and friends, links to pages relevant to citrus-growing and includes a virtual visit to the museum. The archive and library service are particularly good, providing access to a catalogue of over 7,000 titles and its marvelous label collection. This is also where to find out more about the International Orange Photography Competition and to see works submitted over the last few years. (Spanish)

www.museodelturron.com
The Museo del Turrón site provides a history of the museum, a virtual visit, relevant links, a bibliography and photographs. (English, German, Spanish, Valencian)

Museo del Turrón,
Jijona (Alicante)

the El Lobo turrón company's old carpentry workshop, where tools and equipment were deposited as they were eventually superseded by more modern ones in the turrón-making process. Today the museum is an established institution occupying Turrones El Lobo-1880's new facilities.

This museum's mission is to make the public more aware of the centuries of history behind turrón, which the company sees as contributing an intangible yet undeniably appealing element of added value to their product. The collection is exhibited on three floors, each devoted to a thematic area: the raw materials that go into turrón (sugar, honey, almonds and eggs), the manufacturing process (differentiating Jijona turrón from both the Alicante type and marzipans) and selling the product (early turrón stalls, advertising, packaging and the history of the company itself). The museum visit also includes the current factory floor and thus a chance to see how the turrón that is part of Christmastime desserts in millions of homes is made today. Overall, this museum clearly demonstrates how traditional recipes and skills work hand-in-glove with the latest industrial technology, combining an artisan past with an innovative future. One comes away with vivid mental images of bees making honey in the hive, master turrón makers stirring the thickening mix with sticks known as *punxet*, and a glamorous, memento-laden Rolls Royce that was used for distributing turrones at the beginning of the 20th century.

Many other parts of Spain also have comparable "seats of the muses". There are dozens of food-related museums scattered all over the country, among them the *Museo del Cereal* (Cereal Museum) in Arévalo (Avila), the *Museo del Pan* (Bread Museum) in Tona (Barcelona), the *Museo de la Leche* (Milk Museum) in La Foz del Morcín (Asturias), the *Museo del Queso* (Cheese Museum) in Villarejo de Periesteban (Cuenca) and the *Museo del Azafrán* (Saffron Museum) in Monreal del Campo (Teruel).

The four top quality products whose museums we visited—olive oil, ibérico ham, Valencian citrus fruits and Jijona and Alicante turrones—are all classic elements of Spanish gastronomy. But there are many more products, distributed all over the world, just waiting to be discovered. So next time you go food shopping, look closely at the products on the shelves and focus on those with a label that reads *España*. You just might have a contemporary museum piece in your hands.

Bingen Urquijo Garay *is an archivist and former intern at* Spain Gourmetour. *His book* Las putxeras de Balmaseda *comes out soon.*

Gastronomy in the Paradors

TRADITION TODAY

The gastronomic philosophy followed by the Spanish Paradors upholds tradition while keeping in touch with the tastes of modern-day customers. There is no doubt that the best way to obtain a broad overview of classic Spanish gastronomy is to pay a visit to a few Paradors. Our selection covers those in Santiago de Compostela (A Coruña), Gibralfaro (Málaga), Lerma (Burgos), Mérida (Badajoz) and Vielha (Lleida).

TEXT
CARLOS TEJERO

TRANSLATION
JENNY McDONALD

PHOTOS
TOYA LEGIDO/ICEX
TOMÁS ZARZA/ICEX
CARLOS TEJERO/ICEX

Ask anyone on the street in any large city in Spain where the hotel is and they'll want to know to which one you are referring, but ask where the Parador is, and there'll be no hesitation. There can be only one.
"Parador" might seem a strange name for a hotel. While it has always been a common noun which means "a stopping place", over time it has practically become a brand. The name has obviously not been registered and is available for anyone to use but, strangely enough, it has not been adopted (unlike *hotel*, *hostal*, *hospedería*, *posada*, etc.) by any other tourism establishment and has been voluntarily set aside for the exclusive use of the *Red de Paradores*, a state-owned hotel chain.
But then they were the first off the mark. When the first Parador was founded, back in 1928 in the Gredos Mountains in the province of Ávila, there was nothing like it in Spain. At the time, tourism was a minority activity but one that promised growth in line with the burgeoning middle class. It was in the 1920s that the first instruments for promoting tourism were created: provincial and local tourism boards, the official hotel guide and official complaints registers. That was when the Marquis de la Vega Inclán, in his role as Royal Commissioner for Tourism, adopted an idea that had been around since the early years of the century: the concept of tourism. At the time, tourism was mostly associated with health and physical wellbeing and tended to focus on spas, but cultural and artistic aspects also played a part. Spain's historical heritage at the time was both rich and decrepit. Architectural jewels of all sorts were in a state of collapse, and private capital had no intention of investing in crumbling ruins far away from the main tourism centers of the time (San Sebastián, Santander and some spas in northern Spain). It was the state that took the first step with the dual intention of restoring heritage while setting up a commercial activity in the form of hotels. The word chosen was "Parador" and it took hold over the next few decades—very troubled times in Spanish history—during which there was practically no private investment in the tourism sector.
Others followed in the Gredos Parador's footsteps, which was inaugurated between 1930 and 1933, by setting up establishments

in Oropesa (Toledo), Úbeda (Jaén), Ciudad Rodrigo (Salamanca) and Mérida (Badajoz). A number of *albergues*, which no longer exist, followed suit, as did the Hostería del Estudiante (in Alcalá de Henares, Madrid), an exceptional case which was, and still is, not a hotel but a restaurant. These were the seeds planted by the state-owned network of Paradores Nacionales de Turismo (now Paradores de Turismo de España, S.A.).
After the inevitable interval of the Civil War and the post-war years, Paradors were promoted and really took off, with 40 new establishments opening during the 1950s. Then came the boom of the sixties and seventies and with them the appearance of mass tourism, during which time Spain became one of the leading international destinations. Tourism became Spain's prime source of income. It was good business, and the Parador chain was in from the beginning. The chain opened some new establishments, ones with no history behind them but in privileged locations such as Aiguablava in Gerona and Fuente Dé in Cantabria, but the focus was still on the restoration of historic buildings.

Paradors today

Today things are very different. Private initiative realized years ago that there was money to be made from the sort of "cultural tourism" that the Paradors had pioneered. There are now dozens of castles, palaces and monasteries that have been converted into hotels in an effort to satisfy customers who are increasingly interested in feeding their souls with history and their stomachs with quality food.
Still a fully state-owned company, the network today comprises 91 establishments all over Spain, with the exception of the Balearic Islands, although there are plans for a Parador in the 18th-century Almudena Castle in Ibiza. Today, 14 are in castles, 14 in former convents, 8 in palaces, 4 in manor houses, 3 in other types of historical sites and the remainder are in new buildings, 16 of which were built in line with the traditional local architectural style. Altogether they offer 6,000 rooms

Parador de Mérida

Parador de Santiago de Compostela, Hostal Dos Reis Católicos

and receive almost 2 million guests a year, 55% of whom are from Spain and 45% from abroad, mostly from Great Britain, Germany, France and the United States, in that order.
In 2005, the Parador network posted a turnover of 279.2 million euros, with net profits reaching 25.3 million euros, up 16% from the previous year. Not only is it a state-run enterprise, but it is an efficient one as well, achieving exceptional results in spite of the enormous costs of upkeep, decoration, etc., costs that are not incurred by hotels which are normally indifferent to preservation and the promotion of the national heritage. Many Paradors, especially the most emblematic ones, frequently purchase works of arts and furnishings to add to their already plentiful collections.
The network employs almost 5,000 people, many of whom devote their entire careers to the Paradors. A large number of today's chefs de cuisine started out as kitchen assistants and gradually rose up the ladder (apprentice, cook, line cook, sous-chef), working in different Paradors and gaining, as they went, extensive knowledge of regional cuisines. However, unlike restaurateur-chefs, many of whom become stars in their own right, these top professionals often receive less public recognition than they should because, as members of the chain, their personality is eclipsed by the institution that employs them.

Meals and menus

Paradors tend to be unfairly omitted from most culinary guides which often include many less-deserving establishments. But the results speak for themselves: Paradors served a total of 2.7 million meals (lunches, dinners, banquets, etc.) in 2005. "We are proud to report that almost half of our income comes from catering", says Victor Teodosio, catering manager for the whole network. "No other hotel chain in Spain can say the same".
Cuisine in the Paradors has always given pride of place to traditional recipes, but respect for ancestral eating habits sometimes enters into conflict with dietary or aesthetic considerations, and sometimes with both. In December 2005, the company decided to modernize its

philosophy without betraying its original spirit. "The idea was to update traditional dishes by lightening sauces, revamping cooking times and modernizing presentations".

Flexibility was another new concept. A creative range of selections were designed to enable diners to opt for a given sampler menu, to draw one up themselves or to select various dishes to share at the table, but always keeping things in perspective.

"About 50% of the menu is dedicated to regional specialties and the other 50% is traditional Spanish cuisine with some international touches" (the omnipresent *carpaccios*, *foies*, etc.). So each chef is free to include the dishes he or she feels are most appropriate for the specific region where the Parador is located, but they all offer dishes from other parts of Spain. These will of course be faithful to traditional methods because of the vast knowledge acquired by chefs who, as stated above, travel around from Parador to Parador during their professional careers.

But that's not all. The Parador network has also drawn up specific menus for vegetarians, celiacs, diabetics and children. It introduced the concept of "named restaurants", that is, it personalized the restaurants in certain Paradors (with names such as Azafrán, Enxebre, Mar i Vent, La huerta del rey, etc.) to escape the anonymity of being just "the Parador restaurant". It also modernized and extended the wine lists and increased the number of gastronomic events held in Paradors, which reached 106 in 2006.

What's more, this is all on offer at affordable prices, which is another characteristic of the Paradors that might not be popular with those looking for exclusiveness—their excellent value for money.

A hotel that has received guests which include Prince Rainier of Monaco, Grace Kelly, the Rolling Stones and Bill Clinton can be expected to be beyond the reach of more down-to-earth budgets, but this is not so with the Paradors. They are not overwhelmingly inexpensive but both their accommodation and their gastronomy are affordable for the average upper middle-class person. Therein lies the Parador's charm: they are unique places that are available to everyone.

Parador de Santiago de Compostela, Hostal Dos Reis Católicos

The jewel of the crown

Most Paradors are 4-star establishments, the only exceptions being Reis Católicos in Santiago de Compostela and San Marcos in León which have 5 stars. The facades of both are spectacular, but inside, the interior retains more or less its original layout, whereas the latter was entirely rebuilt. This fact, plus its age, make the Santiago Parador the network flagship.

Built under the orders of the Catholic Monarchs in 1499 as a hospital for the pilgrims going to Santiago where, according to tradition, the remains of St James lie, it is unlikely that there is a hotel in such an old building anywhere else in the world. Just imagine what an American tourist must feel as he or she prepares to go to bed in a room whose granite walls were built just a few years after Christopher Columbus discovered the American continent.

The building, located in the Plaza del Obradoiro, is in one of the most monumental locations in the world and was named a Heritage of Mankind site by UNESCO in 1985.

Daniel Turrado

Visitors first lay their eyes on the cathedral but then they see the Parador with its fantastic Plateresque facade. A walk around the public areas is like a walk around a museum, complete with paintings, tapestries and unique furnishings. "We have an inventory of 802 works of art", says Antonio López, the Parador's manager. "Each one is electronically tagged, so any movement is immediately detected by the security cameras".

Antonio, who has worked in another 20 Paradors during the course of his career, is passionate about his job, his hotel and its history. "This place is so peaceful", he says as we stroll around one of its four Manueline-style courtyards, "even when the hotel is fully-booked, as it is now". All we can hear is the sound of our own footsteps, the murmur of the central fountain and the chirping of the sparrows as they flutter around the gargoyles. Every day at 12 noon the Parador offers its customers a guided tour of the building.

The Santiago Parador has two restaurants. Enxebre (a Galician word meaning tradition) is informal, relaxed and specialized in tapas and typical dishes such as *pulpo a feira* (Galician-style octopus), fried sardines, and pork shoulder that are on offer in the multitude of bars found in the old part of the town. Dos Reis restaurant, on the other hand, meets the needs of a luxury hotel.

The latter is located in the former stable block. Its large, stone, vaulted dining room, complete with round arches, seats up to 76. At the head of the kitchen is Daniel Turrado, a determined proponent of traditional cuisine. "It is the only cuisine that stands the test of time. Providing you use quality produce and know how to adapt to modern tastes while respecting the basics, you can't go wrong". Daniel insists that traditions do not have to be static. "You can still innovate with traditional dishes".

The distinction this chef makes between "popular" and "traditional" cuisine is clear in his recipe for the *caldeirada*, given at the end of this article. His is a personal interpretation of this Galician dish, one that looks very different but has exactly the same ingredients and flavor as the time-honored recipe. It is a typical sailor's stew made of potatoes and whatever fish is on hand—an extremely simple recipe that offers a tasty and satisfying

result. But Daniel refines things by creaming the potatoes, topping them with turbot, scallops and lobster, and finishing off the dish with a few drops of a typical Galician dressing made of garlic with *pimentón* (a type of Spanish paprika). So, instead of the usual soupy stew, we end up with a dry but creamy dish made of top-notch ingredients with no fat but plenty of flavor: a delicious but not overwhelming result.

Mediterranean watchtower

In Málaga there are two Paradors, one of which is the Málaga Golf, which mostly serves golf-lovers, and the other is the Málaga Gibralfaro. We decided to feature the latter because of its privileged location perched atop a mountain next to the 14th-century Moorish castle and its magnificent views of the city and the bay. Although it was built relatively recently, in 1948, its arches, stone walls and curved tile roof fit perfectly into the pine forest surrounding it. Since this is not a historic building, its decoration is different to that of other Paradors. The ambiance is "Mediterranean", with blues and yellows in the rooms and simple, comfortable furnishings. The restaurant is an exceptional place. However outstanding the meal, everyone's eyes are constantly drawn to the surrounding views. Three lithographs by Picasso are exceptionally interesting. The city of Málaga, where the artist was born in 1881, has a Picasso museum containing 155 works assigned to it by his heirs. In fact, one of his grandsons, Bernard Ruiz-Picasso, is a regular at the Parador, as is the actor Antonio Banderas, who also born in the area.

Bartolomé Rodrigo has been a chef here for nine years. He heads a team of eight in a kitchen that serves about 110 lunches and dinners each day. The Gibralfaro Parador has one of the highest occupancy rates in the network (about 90% all year round). Bartolomé, like all the Parador chefs, has worked in a number of them so he knows a lot about Galician, Catalonian and Castilian cuisine. However, being an Andalusian himself, his heart lies with Andalusian dishes. "Fried foods, especially the classic *pescaíto frito*, are what immediately spring to mind in connection with Málaga, but there is also a longstanding tradition of

Bartolomé Rodrigo

Parador de Málaga, Gibralfaro

soupy rice dishes with fish or vegetables, *gazpachuelo* which, in spite of its name, contains no tomato, *zoque*, a sort of vegetable dip and for dessert, *borrachuelos*, which are sautéed pastries with flour, sweet wine, etc. served with cane syrup." Sugar cane has been cultivated in this part of Spain, especially in Granada, since the 10th century when it was first introduced by the Arabs. It was then taken to America by the Spaniards. Clearly, crossover cuisine is nothing new.
All these traditional dishes have been reinterpreted by Bartolomé in an effort to make them lighter, except for fried foods. "It's best not to meddle with them. Provided that the raw materials are top quality and the oil is extra virgin, they are perfect as they are." He also proposes new recipes such as salt cod with *ajoblanco* (a cold garlic and almond soup). "Salt cod is perhaps the only ingredient that is popular all throughout Spain. Every region has their favorite cod dish. In Málaga we often make salt cod salad with potato, oranges and black olives". Bartolomé is an enterprising, creative person who makes sure he keeps in touch with the latest advances (the Parador network constantly offers training courses to its staff). He enjoys experimenting, having prepared chewing gum ice cream for example, but his feet are firmly on the ground and his eyes on the sea. So, when asked about the dish that best represents this Parador and Malagan gastronomy, he chooses a surf and turf dish: "sea bass, one of the best fish caught along our coast, in combination with stewed oxtail, an Andalusian classic".

Parador Palacio Ducal de Lerma, Burgos

Monumental charm

About 200 km (124 miles) north of Madrid, just off the A-1 highway on a hill overlooking the Arlanza Valley lies the town of Lerma. Two buildings mark its profile, the Collegiate Church of San Pedro and the Ducal Palace. Both were built by the Duke of Lerma, one of the most Machiavellian figures in Spanish history.

Otherwise known as Francisco Gómez de Sandoval, this wily character governed Spain during much of Philip III's reign, an indolent monarch who enjoyed partying more than politics, until he was disgraced in 1618. He avoided imprisonment thanks to skilled negotiations with Pope Paul V, who appointed him cardinal to save him from going to trial.

To maximize his power, the duke decided to set up a sort of parallel court in Lerma. He built the palace to provide a place of rest and entertainment for the king, as well as several convents and churches, a hospital, a fabric and dyeing factory, a printing press, etc. This was a time of splendor but one that faded rapidly when the duke's unpopularity grew.

Joaquín Gutiérrez, the Parador's manager, tells these and other stories with great enthusiasm. While many of the network's chefs are very knowledgeable about Spanish regional cuisine, some of the managers, such as Joaquín or Antonio López (Santiago), are equally knowledgeable about history and art, which is almost an obligation for them considering the buildings for which they are responsible.

The Lerma Parador is located in the majestic Ducal palace that dominates the main square. The Parador network took over this Herrera-style building in 1996 and invested 11.3 million euros in restoring it. It was inaugurated seven years later. All 70 rooms have wonderful views, whether they face onto the square or the river banks. The cloister, with its 40 Tuscan and Ionic columns that give a solemn air to the galleries, is one of the communal areas, and it lies in a courtyard that was wisely encased in glass so it could be used as a large lounge, avoiding exposure to the Castilian climate's extremes.

The opening of the Parador brought much-needed life to the town of Lerma. Situated on the main road

Cristóbal Sáez

between Madrid and Bilbao, it grew from having three or four restaurants to a total of 18 today, not bad for a town with just 2,500 inhabitants. Cristóbal Sáez, the chef, spent time at the Parador in Sos del Rey Católico (Zaragoza) before coming to Lerma, and Zaragozan influence can be seen on the menu. "The cardoon is a popular vegetable in Aragon, Navarre and La Rioja but is hardly known here. I included it on the menu from the start and it's been a great success". But the emphasis in this land of bitterly cold winters is on stews and roasts. The former includes garlic soups (mainly garlic, bread, egg and pimentón)—"very popular with foreign guests"—and *olla podrida* or "rotten pot", a standard Castilian dish but served under a different name. "If I were to use the traditional name, nobody would order it, so I call it 'Beans from Ibeas' (a local village) which includes all the parts of the pig (blood sausage, chorizo, ear, belly, etc). It's a great favorite with Parador customers".

The star among the roasts is suckling lamb, or milk-fed lamb which, in this area, is of exceptional quality, as denoted by its Protected Geographical Indication (PGI). "Local lamb has a special flavor that comes from the pastures and is passed on in the ewes' milk". Cristóbal has chosen this dish to represent Lerma Parador's gastronomy and has "updated" it. But is it really possible to update such a classic? "I use smaller lambs—5 kilos (11 lbs) rather than the usual 7 (15.5 lbs). That makes them less fatty so they retain all the flavor." It is important to roast them over a wood fire, and the accompaniment he recommends is bread made with oil and a good local red wine. These do not exactly reduce the calorie count but they certainly do enhance the meat.

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Rooms with a view

A conical slate roof, reminiscent of the typical Pyrenean stable, covers the round, spacious restaurant at the Parador in Vielha (Lleida). The glass walls afford a panoramic view in different shades of green (or white, depending on the time of the year) from this exclusive spot. The Parador is not in a historic building, but the location is monumental: a superb spot overlooking the Aran Valley, one of the most beautiful in the Pyrenees. Built in 1966, the architectural style is now dated but the interior was renovated in 2001 and is very welcoming. In addition to an outdoor swimming pool, there is a spa that was inaugurated three years ago and has been a great success with customers. This was the first spa in the Parador network, but from now on these will be included in all new or newly-refurbished establishments. "Spas have become yet another competitive element in hotels", says Francisco Contreras, manager of the Vielha Parador. "In a few years time, a spa will be as essential as satellite TV in the rooms".

The Vielha Parador receives many guests from nearby France, and businesses based in Toulouse (a French town with 700,000 inhabitants just two hours away by car) frequently choose it as the venue for their conventions and celebrations.

The French influence is reflected in the restaurant's menu (duck confit, onion soup, etc.) but the focus, obviously, is on Catalonian cuisine and Aran Valley specialties. "Game, which we usually prepare *en civet* (in its own blood), also mushrooms, mostly ceps and milky agarics which we cook on the griddle or sauté with white or black butifarra (a typical Catalonian sausage) and, of course, Aran Valley stew are on the menu", comments Julián Roque, who has been chef here for three years and has chosen this dish as the Parador's most representative gastronomic offering. Aran Valley stew is a mixture of white beans with chickpeas, noodles, veal shank, chicken, pork belly, butifarra and vegetables (cabbage, carrot, celery,

Julián Roque

Parador de Vielha, Lleida

leek, etc.). It's a thick, hearty stew that is served in both winter and summer.

Julián acknowledges that this traditional dish cannot be updated without altering its flavor and potentially losing some popularity. "I tried to serve it in a more stylish way, separating the meat from the rest so that customers could make their own combinations, but I had to give up the idea because they wanted a stew that looked like a stew".

Parador de Mérida, Badajoz

Monastic peace

The Mérida Parador is in the heart of the city of Mérida, founded by Augustus in AD 25 and designated capital of Lusitania. In 1993, UNESCO declared the archaeological wonder a Heritage of Mankind site. It includes a theater, a bridge, an aqueduct and a temple for Diana, among other outstanding ruins.
This Parador, which was one of the first, was created in 1933 as a 17th-century Franciscan convent and was later used as a hospital and a prison. It is an attractive, whitewashed building with large windows, each with a decorative wrought iron railing and two belfries topped by storks' nests. The quiet courtyard, the chapel, which is a lounge today, and the "garden of antiques", a beautiful garden with Roman columns, bases and other ruins are the communal areas that lead to the seclusion of the rooms, furnished in Castilian style.
The restaurant has been managed for 11 years by Juan Sanguino, himself from Mérida, who is clear about what it means to update traditional dishes and has even breathed new life into ancient, forgotten ones. Juan is an expert in Roman, Visigothic, ancient Andalusian and Sephardic cuisine, all cultures that influenced Spanish history to different extents in different areas but with more or less similar importance in this part of Extremadura.

Mérida is home to the Spanish National Museum of Roman Art, and Juan had the opportunity to get to know a number of professors and experts, including Carmen Gasset (who died last August), former President of the Foundation for Roman Studies and author of the book *El arte de comer en Roma* (The art of eating in Rome). As a result of such contacts, he started to explore Apicius' cuisine, whose book *De re coquinaria* is considered the oldest in the history of gastronomy. "We had to add quantities because the original recipes only listed the ingredients and gave vague instructions for preparation". Then, with the help of his son, Juan turned his interest to other ancient cuisines. This resulted in their book *De cocina antigua: viaje gastronómico desde Roma a Al-Andalus* (Ancient cooking: a gastronomic journey from Rome to Al-Andalus), published in 2004. Juan continues with his research and will soon be publishing his second book, *La cocina del Descubrimiento* (The cuisine of the discovery). Dishes of this sort are served in Mérida on special occasions, but the most common type of dishes are specialties from the Extremadura region, suitably updated by Juan. "We don't add as much pimentón (a basic spice in this part of Spain) and, for example, we prefer to serve *tench* (a freshwater fish often served fried in Extremadura) off the bone, minced and in balls".

Other typical local dishes are the Extremaduran *gazpacho* (cold vegetable soup, in this case different from the Andalusian version in that it contains no onion and is served chopped rather than crushed), *migas* (bread soaked and fried with pepper, chorizo and pork belly), sautéed dessert truffles (*Terfezia Arenaria*, a hypogeal mushroom known as the truffle's "poor relative") and stewed lamb. But Juan has selected veal sirloin, which he describes as *al castúo*, a term used in Extremadura that means "authentic" and "rural". The veal comes from the local Retinta variety, which is a red meat (covered by a PGI) and is reared in semi-freedom in the local pastures alongside merino sheep and ibérico pigs, competing with them for the grass and acorns.

This traditional dish is garnished with sweet-sour figs (lightly pickled in vinegar) and covered with slices of ibérico ham, but Juan adds a "crossover" touch by diluting a little foie gras in the sauce and adding a few sautéed green asparagus spears.

Juan Sanguino

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

Galician seafood stew

(Caldeirada Dos Reís)

Parador de Santiago de Compostela.
Hostal Dos Reís Católicos.
Chef Daniel Turrado

SERVES 4
2 lobsters, 500 g / 1 lb 2 oz each; 1 wild turbot; 4 scallops; 2 Galician potatoes; 1/2 onion; 1 bundle turnip greens; 4 cloves garlic; 300 ml / 1 1/4 cup / 1/2 pint extra virgin olive oil; 2 bay leaves; 30 g / 2 heaping tbsp sweet pimentón (a type of paprika from Spain); salt and pepper

Preparation
Cook and cream the potatoes, adding a few drops of oil and some salt. Set aside a whole leaf. Wash and cook the turnip greens, refresh in cold water to preserve the color, then chop, sauté and season with salt. Form into a small parcel wrapped in the leaf set aside previously. Sear the four turbot supremes and the seasoned scallops. Cut the lobsters lengthwise in their shells in two. Season with salt and pepper and sear. Then remove the shells and retain the flesh from the tails and claws. Finish cooking everything in the oven at 185°C / 365°F for 4 minutes.

For the Galician dressing:
Brown the garlic in oil with the onion and bay leaf. Add the pimentón, then add a splash of cold water or wine vinegar (stirring to prevent the mixture from boiling over). Leave to stand then strain.

To serve
On a bed of creamed potatoes, carefully arrange the fish. Garnish with the turnip green parcel and sprinkle with a few drops of dressing.

Recommended wine
Condes de Albarei, 100% Albariño, from the DO Rías Baixas. It's a great accompaniment for shellfish or fish dishes.

Sea bass and oxtail with crisp bread

(Mar y montaña de lubina y rabo con pan crujiente)

Parador de Málaga, Gibralfaro.
Chef Bartolomé Rodrigo

SERVES 4
4 sea bass, approx. 300 g / 10 1/2 oz each; 1 spider crab; 1 oxtail (either beef or veal); 100 g / 3 1/2 oz leeks; 100 g / 3 1/2 oz potatoes; 100 g / 3 1/2 oz onion; 4 carrots; 4 cloves garlic; 300 ml / 1 1/4 cup / 1/2 pt extra virgin olive oil; 2 bay leaves; 30 g / 2 heaping tbsp sweet pimentón (a type of paprika from Spain); two slices of bread; salt and pepper

Preparation
Cook the crab for 15-20 minutes in salted water. Leave to cool and remove the flesh.
Cook the oxtail with the potatoes, onion, carrots, garlic and pimentón for 1 1/2 hours. Leave to cool, then debone.
Wash the fish and fillet.
Make a stock with the leeks and crab shells. Cook for 5 minutes.
Place the crab filling between the two fillets of sea bass and bake in the oven for 6 minutes at 120°C / 248°F.
Shape the oxtail meat into 200 g / 7 oz rolls (one per person), place between two slices of bread and bake for 3 minutes.

To serve
Serve the fish at the center, add the bread with the meat roll inside and top with a bouquet of herbs. Finish with a stripe of crab juice.

Recommended wine
A good partner for this combination of seafood and meat is a red Andalus Príncipe de Hohenlohe Petit Verdot 2001, from the DO Málaga-Sierras de Málaga.

Roast suckling lamb
(Lechazo asado)

Parador Palacio Ducal de Lerma, Burgos.
Chef Cristóbal Sáez

SERVES 8
1 suckling lamb, approx. 5 kg / 11 lb; 1 1/2 kg / 3 lb 5 oz potatoes; 1 lettuce; 1 endive; 1/2 kg / 1 lb tomatoes; 300 g / 10 1/2 oz onion; 100 g / 3 1/2 oz lard; 200 ml / 3/4 cups / 7 fl oz olive oil; 300 ml / 1 1/4 cup / 1/2 pt water; salt

Preparation
Slice the potatoes, chop the onion and place in the bottom of an earthenware dish. Cut the lamb into quarters, brush with lard, add oil and salt. Roast in a wood-fired oven at 180ºC / 356ºF for 30 minutes. Turn, add the water and roast for a further 30 minutes.

To serve
Serve in the dish in which it was cooked, with a side of lettuce, endive and tomato.

Recommended wine
A red Lerma Crianza 2003 (aged for 14 months in wood), 100% Tempranillo, Vino de Calidad del Arlanza (Burgos).

Aran Valley stew
(Olla aranesa)

Parador de Vielha, Lleida.
Chef Julián Roque

SERVES 6
125 g / 4 1/2 oz white beans; 125 g / 4 1/2 oz chickpeas; 200 g / 7 oz pork belly; 200 g / 7 oz veal knuckle; 250 g / 9 oz stewing hen; 300 g / 10 1/2 oz white butifarra sausage; 300 g / 10 1/2 oz black butifarra sausage; 300 g / 10 1/2 oz cabbage; 300 g / 10 1/2 oz potatoes; 150 g / 6 1/2 oz noodles; 2 carrots; 1 onion; salt and pepper. **For the meatballs**
100 g / 3 1/2 oz ground veal; 100 g57 / 3 1/2 oz ground pork; 20 g / 1 oz fresh breadcrumbs; 1 egg; 1 clove garlic; 1 sprig parsley; 1 tbsp flour; extra virgin olive oil; salt and pepper

Preparation
Place the beans in a pan of cold water (after first soaking for 12 hours) with the pork belly, veal knuckle, stewing hen, carrots and onion. Bring to a boil and add the chickpeas (which must also be soaked for 12 hours). When half cooked, add the cabbage and potatoes and simmer. When the vegetables are soft, add the noodles and butifarra sausages. Check the seasoning, then remove all the meat, cut into pieces and return to the pot.

For the meatballs:
Mix all the ingredients together, shape into balls and fry. Drain, then add to the pot, bring to a boil and remove from the heat.

To serve
Serve in individual earthenware bowls.

Recommended wine
Raimat Cabernet Sauvignon 2001, from the DO Costers del Segre.

Veal sirloin *al castúo*
(Solomillo de ternera al castúo)

Parador de Mérida, Badajoz.
Chef Juan Sanguino

SERVES 4
600 g / 1 lb 5 oz sirloin; 4 sweet-sour figs; 4 slices ibérico ham; 200 ml / 3/4 cups / 7 fl oz veal stock; 25 g / 1 oz foie gras; 100 g / 3 1/2 oz green asparagus; 100 ml / 1/2 cup / 4 fl oz extra virgin olive oil; salt and pepper

Preparation
Make a veal stock with bones, trimmings from the sirloin and vegetables (carrot, onion, tomato, etc.).
Cut the sirloin into four medallions and season with salt and pepper.
Cook the stock and add the foie gras and fig juices. Blend and strain through a chinois. Cook the asparagus until al dente. In one skillet, sear the veal medallions with very hot oil. In another, sauté the asparagus.

To serve
Place the sirloin in the center, top with a slice of ham and half a fig. Pour over some sauce and arrange the asparagus spears to one side.

Recommended wine
Torre Julia Reserva 2001, 90% Cabernet Sauvignon 10% Tempranillo, from the DO Ribera del Guadiana.

From fields and mountains to factories and gourmet shops, game has become a product with an added value far beyond the simple, traditional hunter's reward. Large and small game, feathered and furred, wild and farmed, are being turned into conserves with long shelf lives, making gourmet flavors available for any occasion. Traditional dishes such as escabeche and well-seasoned pâtés are superb ideas for holiday gift giving.

GOURMET GAME in a can

TEXT
JANET MENDEL

PHOTOS
JUAN M. SANZ/ICEX

It's a chilly winter's day with clouds hanging over the hilltops and a group of hunters are gathered over steaming cups of coffee to draw lots for the blinds they will occupy on the partridge hunt. Some of the hunters came from abroad and are staying at a nearby hunting lodge while others have driven down from Toledo for the day bringing dogs, guns and gear with them.

The hunters move out in SUVs, bumping along rutted dirt tracks and fording a small stream. Leaving the vehicles, they trek cross-country to the first shooting site. Sun breaks through the cloud cover, glinting on flat outcroppings of shiny granite. Tramping boots release a powerful scent of wild thyme, marjoram and red lavender.

Each gun is flanked by a loader, who keeps the guns ready to fire, and a *secretario*, who spots and recovers the downed birds. The hunters and their entourages spread along the ridge taking up ten blinds. The beaters announce the start of the hunt with a blast on a conch shell. They move along the ravine's embankment, thrashing the bushes, banging, and yelling, *"¡Vamos! ¡Vamos!"* (Let's move! Come on! Let's go!).

Suddenly, with a rush of wings, a covey of partridges loft skyward. The birds seem to scatter in the air, some soaring high, others dipping towards the next ridge. The first shots ring out, followed immediately by many more. The beaters continue, flushing birds before them.

When the beaters reach the end of the line, they signal the end of the shoot with a horn and everyone scrambles to find the downed birds. The secretarios string them on leather thongs and the whole hunting party walks overland to another line. At the end of the second shoot (typically there are four or five lines in a day of hunting), the secretarios spread all the birds in a clearing on the ground and arrange them in braces.

In bygone days, hunters brought their small game home. Some of it would be cooked fresh in time-honored dishes such as stewed partridge, hare with pasta and rabbit with beans. What couldn't be consumed freshly-shot was preserved in a strong marinade of vinegar, wine, herbs and escabeche and sealed in earthenware pots or glass jars that would be further processed in boiling water to sterilize the contents. Game in escabeche could be kept for months.

Nowadays, behind the hunters comes the poultryman. He buys the birds from the hunt's organizer and hauls them in refrigerated trucks to a processing plant. There they are cleaned, plucked and readied for sale to restaurants, specialty meat shops and small processing plants where the game is turned into gourmet-quality conserves.

Large game, such as wild boar and red, roe and fallow deer, is less of a gastronomic tradition in Spain. Hunted for trophies in organized shoots called *monterías*, the animals, after a veterinary inspection, are butchered and the meat is shipped to

Germany and France for sale. Only a few Spanish restaurants have become known for their venison and boar specialties. Now in Spain a whole new industry has developed for turning these meats into high-quality products, including canned preserved game, pâtés and sausages.

In the factory

Taller Gastronómico Montes de Toledo in Los Yébenes, Toledo, is one such small company. It buys game from the poultrymen, from farms specialized in raising game birds and from licensed butchers registered to process deer and boar. In a small factory, partridge, quail, venison and boar are turned into delectable gourmet game products in tins: partridge pâté with Port, hare with truffles, boar with Armagnac, squab with brandy, stewed partridge and venison, quail escabeche, boar and venison sausages and boar's "ham". "We start with raw materials that have been inspected by veterinarians and are fully documented," says Miguel Camacho, director of Taller Gastronómico. He maintains that small game, such as partridge used for canned conserves, comes from both wild and farm-raised birds. Large game, such as deer, derives entirely from hunts.

The partridge pâté produced by Taller Gastronómico and served at many restaurants in the Toledo area is smooth and unctuous. According to Miguel, it's made primarily with chopped partridge and partridge liver while duck and pork fat give it a creamy, mousse-like consistency. Restaurants serve it on toast with pickled red onions. It's such a delight!

The winemaker Carlos Falcó, Marques de Griñon, serves game conserves at his estate, Dominio de Valdepusa, in the Toledo province. "We use these all the time because game is an essential part of the Montes de Toledo regional gastronomy," he says. "Our estate is located in one of the best game regions in the world. These products go perfectly with all of our estate red wines. We use our Syrah and Svmma Varietalis (60% Syrah) with canned partridges and with *cecina de ciervo*, cured venison, and the more tannic wines (Cabernet Sauvignon-Petit Verdot-Emeritvs) for big game such as venison and wild boar."

Restaurateurs such as Adolfo Muñoz from Restaurante Adolfo in Toledo use game conserves in their menus. "These are quality local products with a traditional flavor," says Adolfo. "We use them as a garnish, in emulsions to accompany certain dishes and also with rices." Adolfo suggests entrees such as hare pâté with poached eggs, risotto with cheese and braised quail and partridge in escabeche with flame-roasted vegetables.

Stewed partridge and partridge escabeche are very traditional dishes in Spain, but pâté is definitely a French import. One story of how it came to be part of Spanish gastronomy comes from the

restaurant in Hotel La Perdiz (The Partridge Hotel) in La Carolina, Jaén, on the main highway from Madrid to Andalusia. When the hotel opened in 1967, partridge in escabeche was the restaurant's signature dish, so during the shooting season its refrigerators were stocked with up to 5,000 partridge at one time. But what do you do with 5,000 partridge livers? The answer lay in the region's culinary heritage. The Sierra Morena, in the north of Jaén, was settled between 1767 and 1769 by French, Flemish, German, Italian and Swiss immigrants who used the liver to make pâté. Encased in a thin layer of beef fat and melted butter, partridge pâté became the restaurant's most popular appetizer.

Most canned pâtés incorporate about 20 percent of the selected game, which is combined with additional chicken and/or pork meat and sometimes liver, pork fat for a smooth, spreading consistency, milk, eggs, salt, pepper, herbs, other flavorings such as Port and nitrite and nitrate for conservation.

Game pâté, a new tradition

While game pâtés may derive from French cuisine, in the past 40 years they have become completely naturalized in Spain, says Félix Toledano Soto, manager of Conservas Félix Soto, located in Ciudad Real (Castile-La Mancha). The firm, founded in 1927 by Félix's grandfather, started making artisanal conserves such as partridge and quail in escabeche. Now the company has expanded into gourmet products such as game pâté with foie, authentic duck liver and partridge in a truffle sauce. The escabeche preparations are still made in a traditional manner, but refined ingredients such as aged Sherry vinegar—actually vinegar from Manzanilla de Sanlúcar de Barrameda—give it a gourmet touch. The products can be used in many different dishes. Félix Toledano suggests using canned partridge or quail to stuff piquillo peppers and using the liquid to make the sauce.

Félix Soto markets its game conserves under its own label as well as the El Corte Inglés and Carrefour brand names.

Also located in Castile-La Mancha is Polgri, a small farm in the Albacete province which produces a range of game products marketed nationally and for export. According to Miguel Denia, who is in charge of quality control at the factory, Polgri uses farmed game animals exclusively for its products which include partridge and quail in sauce and in escabeche, pheasant in cava sauce, rabbit in tomato sauce and duck confit. "We want to make sure our product is the same every time you open a jar," says Miguel. "We don't want any surprises."

Specialized *granjas*, farms where game birds are raised, are almost exclusively in Catalonia, in the province of Lérida, says Miguel. The birds are sent to slaughter according to market demand. They arrive at the Polgri factory having passed a veterinary inspection and are cleaned, plucked, frozen and ready for processing. After

trimming, the birds are scalded to remove traces of blood and then they are packed raw in cans. The sauce, which is prepared separately, is added to the cans which are then sealed and cooked in an autoclave, a special container which sterilizes its contents under pressure. He says that the factory employs stringent hygienic standards "equal to those of a hospital operating room."

Polgri, which also produces canned vegetables and regional dishes, encourages consumers to be creative when combining products, such as serving partridge in escabeche on a bed of stewed chard or as filling for cannelloni.

Another small company, Maita y Edulis, is situated in the sierras of northern Spain in Guadalaviar (Teruel, Aragón), an unspoiled region known for its game and wealth of wild mushrooms. In fact, the company's name derives from *maita*, wild strawberries, and *edulis*, from *Boletus edulis*, a wild mushroom, also commercialized by the company.

Innovative canning procedures

Maita y Edulis specializes in big game products and also has a line of gourmet pâtés, says the company's manager, Javier Martínez. An innovative procedure patented by the company last year allows the meat to be canned in olive oil instead of the more common water or sauce.

Olive oil, says Javier, is a natural preservative and it insulates the meat from the metallic can so the product does not acquire any off-flavors and retains its natural taste. "A chef can use the meat to prepare any dish," he says.

Boar, deer, roe deer and fallow deer that have been shot on a *montería* (organized hunt) are first inspected by a veterinarian in the field and then sent to a butcher authorized to cut up wild game. Regulations are very specific about the commercialization of game. A processor, for example, cannot buy directly from a hunter, but rather he must go through slaughterhouses that are authorized to process game. Under strict sanitary controls the meat is shipped, fresh or frozen, to processors such as Maita y Edulis.

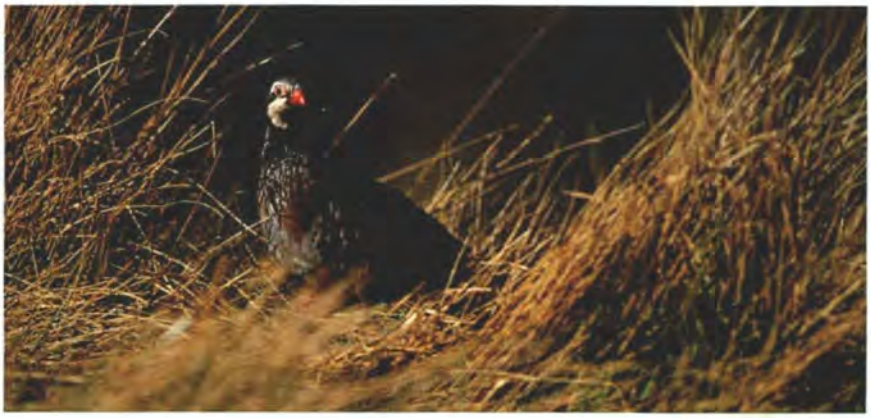
Javier says that the raw ingredients for the conserves come from local shoots and also from Castile-La Mancha, Extremadura and Andalusia. He receives the dressed meat at the company's processing plant. Whole loins or cut-up pieces of venison and boar are canned in oil in one-kilo containers with no salt or additives. The meat can then be used straight from the can or it can be incorporated into a prepared dish.

"Our customers, here and abroad, are mostly in the restaurant trade," says Javier. "Our products simplify menus because, unlike frozen meat, they are instantly ready to use. If a party of 20 walks into your restaurant and orders venison, the meat does not require thawing. You take out what you need and there's no wastage." Furthermore he says it is economical because the game is acquired and processed during hunting season when it is

inexpensive, it keeps on a shelf for up to five years and is available all year round.
Maita y Edulis also produces a range of pâtés in small cans such as venison, boar, pheasant, partridge, hare and wild duck, and each is flavored individually with truffles, Port, Armagnac or aromatic herbs.

In the restaurant

Andalusia, the region in southern Spain, also has a long tradition of hunting and conserving game products and Restaurant Juanito, located in Baeza (Jaén), offers testimony.
"We specialize in red-legged partridge dishes from this region," says Juan Luis Salcedo who, with his brother, now runs the restaurant opened by his parents 53 years ago. Their specialties include partridge in escabeche marinade, partridge stewed with beans and partridge pâté, all confected with extra virgin olive oil pressed on the family's estate. However, no products are canned. "We buy wild partridge during the hunting season and farmed partridge the rest of the year," says Juan Luís.
Not far from there is the natural park and hunting preserve in Cazorla, a rugged area rich in wildlife and game and Cárnicas Sierra de Cazorla in Chilluevar (Jaén) is also located in this vicinity. It's a modern food processing plant that grew out of a family business which produced traditional sausages and cured meat. "Our specialty now is pâté—partridge, venison and boar," says Antonio Jodar, whose brother Baltasar manages the company. "It's a select market, so there's less competition than in traditional *chacinería* (sausage making)." Instead



GAME SAUSAGES AND CURED MEATS

Chacinería, or sausage making, is one of Spain's most established culinary traditions. In the past, it provided a way to cure and conserve parts of the pig after the winter hog slaughtering.
Many of the traditional seasonings for pork products are now being used to produce wild boar and venison sausages. They are principally *chorizo* and *salchichón*.
Chorizo is traditionally flavored with garlic and either the pulp of dried sweet and hot peppers or *pimentón*, a type of paprika from Spain, and ground peppers. Chorizo made from boar or venison also incorporates pork fat to give it succulence, as game meats are extremely lean.
Salchichón is similar to salami, but of a very coarse grind which shows flecks of both lean pork and pork fat. Salchichón made from game also contains pork meat and fat and it is spiced with peppercorns and other seasonings. Some manufacturers use truffles, herbs, walnuts, pistachios or pine nuts in their version of salchichón.
Both of these unusual sausages are dry-cured, served sliced as cold cuts and accompanied by bread. They can be incorporated into cooked dishes, for example, chopped and mixed into scrambled eggs or combined with a spicy red bean salad. Their flavor is more pronounced and gamy than ordinary sausages made of pork and they go very well with full-bodied red wines.
Another age-old product is *cecina*, which is air-dried meat and most typically beef. Today wild boar and venison are being cured in the same way. Sealed in vacuum packs, cecina keeps without refrigeration for up to a year. Serve it sliced paper-thin, drizzled with a little extra virgin olive oil, a grind of black pepper and a pinch of oregano.

WEBSITES

www.carnicascazorla.com
Cárnicas Sierra de Cazorla's website, which provides information on its products, including pâté and canned game, recipes and advice on food hygiene. (Spanish)

www.eltallergastronomico.com
Website for Taller Gastronómico Montes de Toledo, a specialist in the production of game products. (English, French, Italian, Spanish)

www.felixsoto.com
Website for Felix Soto, a specialist in small game conserves. Provides information on its products and serving suggestions. (English, French, Spanish)

www.juanitobaeza.com
Website for Juanito Restaurant in Baeza (Jaén), where extra virgin olive oil is the fundamental cooking ingredient and products derived from hunting constitute an important culinary component. (Spanish)

www.mayesal.com
Website of the canning company Maita y Edulis. In addition to an overview of its products, the page also provides a recipe book focusing on dishes using canned ingredients. (Spanish)

www.naturalezaycaza.com
Useful portal on everything related to game, including a search engine for different types of hunting parties such as monterías, recechos, esperas and small game hunting. (Spanish)

of making conventional pork sausages, now the company produces boar and venison chorizo (see box: Game Sausages and Cured Meats). Some of it is marketed in jars and conserved in extra virgin olive oil for which Jaén's Cazorla region is famous.

Products arrive already cleaned from packing plants in Toledo that are certified to process wild game, and authorized personnel monitor the preparation and sterilization of canned products to assure hygienic standards.

Because game preserves have a gourmet status, they make great presents. Quite a few small companies specialized in their production market special assortment packs, wrapping several different items in attractive cartons, wooden chests and boxes. They certainly do make a delightful and delicious holiday gift!

Janet Mendel *is the author of* Cooking from the Heart of Spain *and* My Kitchen in Spain *(HarperCollins, US),* Traditional Spanish Cooking *(Frances Lincoln, UK),* Cooking in Spain *and* Great Dishes from Spain *(Santana Books, Spain).*

A-HUNTING WE WILL GO

For hunting *aficionados* there is no better destination than Spain. With diverse ecosystems and a huge variety of species, Spain is the European country with the richest tradition of hunting according to the Federación Nacional de Caza (National Hunting Federation). On a fairly small geographical scale, the peninsula is able to reproduce most of the continent's diversity, including alpine, Mediterranean, Atlantic, forest, scrub and mountain fauna as well as steppe lands.

In terms of small game, the principal species are red-legged partridge (Spain is considered the partridge capital of Europe), quail, a wide variety of wild duck, wild dove, snipe, rabbit and hare. Large game hunts focus on deer, roe deer, fallow deer, wild boar, mountain goat and ram.

Every single region of Spain has *cotos* (hunting preserves) which are rich in game and where hunting is allowed in season and with permits. Large private estates often offer organized hunts.

One such estate is Coto El Guijoso near El Bonillo in the province of Albacete. The estate, the domain of Sánchez-Muliterno wines, comprises 3,000 hectares (7,400 acres) of land alternating with cultivated fields, vineyards, scrubland and juniper and ilex forests. Partridge is hunted both *en mano*, by small groups of individual hunters with dogs to flush the birds, and *ojeo*, with beaters who drive the partridge towards hunters positioned in blinds. There is also rabbit and hare hunting with greyhounds. "Last season we took 5,000 partridge and 7,000 rabbits," said Juan Sánchez Muliterno, winemaker and owner of the estate. "We have accommodations for up to 30 people, a lodge and facilities for business conferences." Hunters can have their take cold-packed for transporting home and in addition to hunting, guests can participate in wine tasting classes and visits to the bodega.

A *montería* is a traditional deer hunt in the Montes de Toledo of Castile-La Mancha and the Sierra Morena of Andalusia. The day starts with a typical breakfast which consists of *migas*, breadcrumbs fried with chorizo, or *gachas*, garlic-flavored porridge, with warming shots of brandy, or *aguardiente*, for those who wish. The hunters are positioned in blinds and a pack of dogs flushes game towards the guns. Montería organizers arrange the mounting of trophies as hunting areas abound with working taxidermists.

Each autonomous community (Castile-La Mancha, La Rioja, Galicia, Catalonia, etc.) regulates hunting in its region by setting dates for open season on various species, designating limits and issuing hunting permits, usually through the Department of the Environment.

A finger on the pulse

Pulses, a basic of the Mediterranean diet since ancient times, are an integral element in Spain's traditional culinary repertoire. Though consumption has declined since the 1970s, they are now showing signs of a revival. While they tend to be associated with hearty stews, pulses can be used in cooking in many different ways and are highly nutritious. Even so, all the sectors involved in their production recognize the need for a change of approach: pulse producers and pulse consumers must insist on quality.

Provenance MATTERS

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What is there to say about pulses? "Quite simply that they're delicious" was Julia Bombín's categorical response, owner of Madrid's Los Asturianos restaurant. Though she was referring specifically to Asturian *fabas* (white haricot beans), she is not the only person who feels this way. Farmers, packers, chefs... everyone we spoke to while researching this report were unanimous on the subject of top quality Spanish pulses. In fact, chefs were among their most enthusiastic supporters and it was they who were most insistent on sourcing pulses that come with a quality guarantee.

Humble but delicious

Antonio J. González, proprietor of El Rincón de Antonio in Zamora, is a stout defender of pulses, especially Fuentesaúco chickpeas. The innovative menu in his Michelin-starred restaurant makes a point of using local products. For González, "A menu without chickpeas isn't a real menu. They have endless possibilities in cooking. It all depends on the cook's imagination". One of his aims is to introduce chickpeas into cutting-edge cuisine because they are an ingredient "with which you can do new things". He considers them an untapped resource, and reports that they are very well received by foreign diners at his restaurant.

Carlos Cidón, prestigious chef and proprietor of León's Vivaldi restaurant where he prepares *cuisine d'auteur* with Castilian produce (see Recipes, page 80), feels the same. He bemoans the fact that "modern cuisine doesn't use these wonderful products", going on the say that pulses are a very significant foodstuff that has not yet been capitalized on, and that "the main appeal of these dried vegetables for cooks is that they have different flavors and thus distinctive tastes. That creates a dynamic interplay when combined with a whole range of other ingredients." Pulses contribute "creamy textures, delicacy on the palate and a certain meatiness", says Cidón. "Handled properly during cooking, they make deliciously refined dishes".

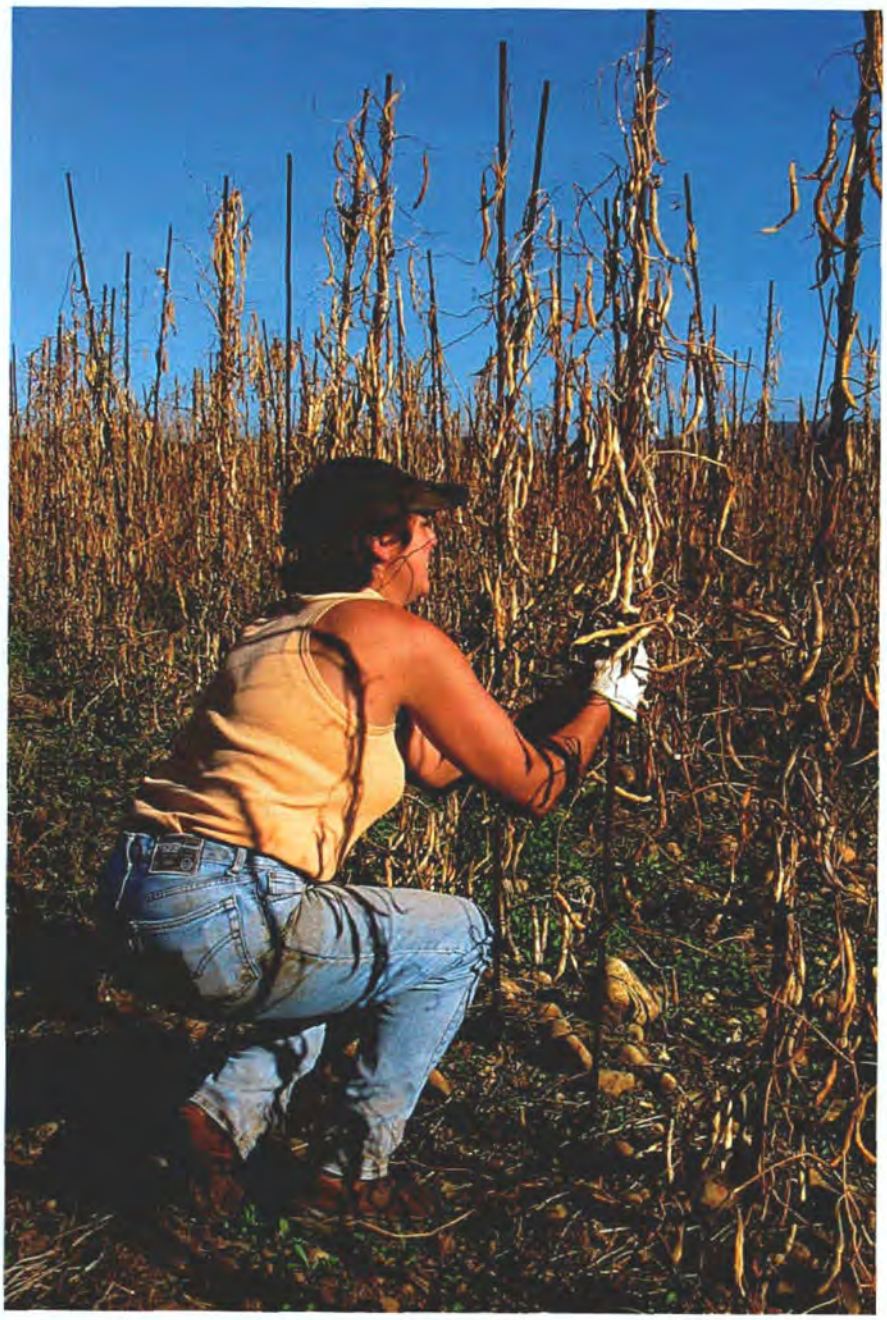
Another supporter is Luís Alberto Martínez who runs Casa Fermín in Oviedo (Asturias) with his sister. He is also Asturias' provincial delegate for Eurotoques, the international organization founded by Pierre Romeyer, Paul Bocuse, Juan Mari Arzak and Pedro Subijana in 1986, in which over 3,500 chefs from 18 countries are members. He is a staunch supporter of Asturian fabas, which he considers to be a key ingredient in Asturian gastronomy. "These beans are such a luxurious, elegant product that you can do almost anything with them," he maintains. "They really are delicious– outstandingly so".

Asturian fabas appear most classically in the local regional dish known as *fabada* (a bean stew made with Asturian fabas, black pudding, pork fat and chorizo), "a dish that calls for patience and gentle handling, very subtly flavored and lovely to look at, that requires all the ingredients involved be of the very best quality". As this top Asturian chef declares, "To prepare a dish that makes you sit up and take notice, the product comes first, second and third. Only then does technique take over".

Quality with history

There is a long tradition in Spain of growing and eating pulses. Like cereals, they are associated with the first signs of mankind's evolution in the gastronomic area. Lentils and chickpeas have been known in the Mediterranean basin since ancient times and are a significant component of the traditional Spanish diet. In farming terms, they are crops which have adapted perfectly to our soil types and environment, with which they interact in exemplary, mutually beneficial symbiosis.

The Spanish-produced pulses that are covered by the Protected Geographic Identification (PGI) are: Lenteja de La Armuña (lentils), Garbanzo de Fuentesaúco (chickpeas), Judías de El Barco de Ávila (beans), Lenteja Pardina de Tierra de Campos (lentils), Alubia de La Bañeza (beans) and Faba Asturiana (beans). Galicia's Faba de Lourenzá (beans) is currently in the process of acquiring PGI status. Significantly, five of these six come from Castile-Leon. Under the terms of Protected Geographic Identification regulations, the link with a specific geographical area must apply to at least one phase of the production-transformation-processing sequence. As we shall see, the link with a specific area and its soil is key for pulses. Those mentioned previously are also discernibly benefiting from another characteristic of this European badge of quality: the way their reputation precedes them.



PGIs are part of the European system for developing and protecting food products aimed at stimulating varied agricultural production, providing protection against misuse of names or imitation and helping consumers by providing them with information about the specific characteristics of products. The chefs we spoke to were all adamant about the importance of working with foods whose quality has been guaranteed to achieve, at the very least, good dishes. The PGI Regulatory Council's work is crucial in this respect. Carlos Cidón expresses the point lucidly when he says, "I am filled with admiration for PGIs and other quality guaranteeing bodies because in today's world they are Don Quixote-like idealists. The future quality of our pulses depends on them. These stamps of quality provide us all with a guarantee, and we must seek them out and eat the products that have earned them".

Legumeland

Although pulses are grown all over Spain, the biggest concentration is found in Castile-Leon, the region that occupies the north-western half of the Castilian meseta. The adage *"Ancha es Castilla"* ("Castile is wide") is true in more ways than one: the implication is that Castile is a broad-minded, limitless place where one is free to do as one pleases but, traveling through it by car or train, one also realizes how aptly it describes its geography. It extends

over 94,224 km² (36,380 sq mi), and mile after mile, on either side of the road or railway, vast expanses of cultivated land stretch into the distance, punctuated only now and again by the odd hill or occasional tree. Owing to its height above sea level and to the mountains that surround it and obstruct the maritime influence, the climate in this area is continental. The landscape is so bare that travelers can find it quite overwhelming. In his book *Judíos, Moros y Cristianos* (Jews, Moors and Christians), Camilo José Cela, who won the Spanish Nobel Prize for Literature, writes: "The thing about Castile is that it is neither lovely nor ugly, not even varied or monotonous, but surprising, strange and even a bit mysterious. That is why it is hard to get to know Castile and, even more so, to love it. But that is also why, perhaps, when you do get to know it, you love it and never turn away from it again." The same thought might be applied to the pulses produced there.

Pulses from Castile are very prestigious. Felipe García Corrales, president of the Regulatory Council of PGI Garbanzo de Fuentesaúco, told us: "They have always had a reputation for quality, much more so than other chickpeas", going on to explain that this justifiable reputation is now backed up by the PGI badge. In Fuentesaúco, the village in the Zamora province where he himself grows chickpeas, documents associated with the pulse

date back to the early 12th century. Production of this type of chickpea, like other pulses, has dropped dramatically in Spain since the 1980s. Efforts are currently being made to restore it as a crop but, as Felipe García observes, "It's not that straightforward, it will take time". The Regulatory Council's president, a confirmed chickpea enthusiast, is adamant that "it will take all our determination to ensure a future for them". The right soils are essential, he explains, because these together with the climate are what give chickpeas their desirable characteristics. "What makes these chickpeas good is their flavor and butteriness. We always used to say that, to demonstrate what made them special, you should throw them against the wall after they were cooked, and those that stuck there were the good ones." He also echoed a point stressed by the other Regulatory Councils: production of these pulses is limited so they cannot compete for quantity with pulses from other regions or abroad. They can, however, compete for quality. This Regulatory Council supports the chickpea species *Cicer arietinum L, macrocarpum* variety, *Fuentsaúco* ecotype, which have a characteristically markedly curved, pointed shape, cream or dark beige color and medium-rough, unmarked skins.

Eusebio Montes, who packs Lenteja de La Armuña lentils, is a stout supporter of the Protected Geographic Identification system. "I think it's great," he says. "It was something that we really needed". The fact that the Regulatory Council monitors the entire process the product undergoes has resulted in a greater commitment on the part of producer. "Everybody benefits", he comments. When asked about his product's good points, he replies: "La Armuña lentils are a pleasure to eat just as they are. What's more, they are very fine quality and they yield more than other types".

The Lenteja de La Armuña PGI covers the dried *Lens culinaris medicus* lentil species, *Rubia de La Armuña* variety, which are pale green in color, sometimes speckled, and up to nine millimeters (0.35 in) in diameter. La Armuña is situated north of the Salamanca province through which the Vía de la Plata route runs. This "Silver Way", which connects with the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela, traces the arterial road that linked the important cities of Mérida and Astorga in Roman-occupied Hispania.

Also along its route lies the area of Old Castile known as Tierra de Campos, encompassing part of the provinces of Valladolid, Palencia, Zamora and León. Lentejas Pardinas (brown lentils) are grown throughout this area, and Zamora and León also grow Alubia de La Bañeza beans. The Town Hall in La Bañeza possesses documentary evidence that "as early as 1570, beans specifically from La Bañeza were sold exclusively in the famous Medina del Campo markets, supplied by local farmers."

Both these types of pulses have PGI status. The PGI Lenteja Pardina de Tierra de Campos regulations authorize the use of *Lens culinaris ssp. culinaris, Microsperma* variety, *Europeae* group. These are brown or

GOOD TO EAT AND GOOD FOR YOU

Pulses and cereals have been part of our diet since ancient times. Dried pulses are a source of protein and lentils contain a high proportion of nutrients, particularly carbohydrates, mainly in the form of starch. They contain many vegetable proteins though they are deficient in methionine, an essential amino acid the body cannot synthesize which has to be obtained from one's diet. Nevertheless, as Carlos Cidón explains, "If you combine lentils with cereals such as rice or other foods rich in that amino acid, they are converted into high-value biological proteins comparable with those obtained by animal protein". Lentils also have a low lipid content and are rich in iron, zinc and selenium. The carbohydrates that lentils contain are slowly absorbed which makes them a good food for diabetics.

Beans are rich in fiber, folates, potassium and iron. Like lentils, their main component is carbohydrates and they also contain a lot of proteins, though they also lack methionine. Their soluble fiber content helps combat constipation, lower blood cholesterol levels and helps stabilize glucose levels in the blood. An added bonus is the fact that they contain a lot of potassium and very little sodium, making them a good choice for people who suffer from hypertension.

Chickpeas are also made up principally of carbohydrates. Although they contain a great deal of protein, they do not provide as much of it as lentils and beans, and they too lack methionine. One difference between these and the other two is that chickpeas have a higher lipid content and contain oleic and linoleic acids, both of which are unsaturated. Oleic acid has a beneficial effect on blood vessels, and unsaturated fatty acids are essential for our bodies to function properly, as lacking them is associated with coronary disease and high cholesterol. Like lentils, their slow release of glucose makes them a suitable food for diabetics and people who expend a lot of physical energy.

WEBSITES

http://canales.nortecastilla.es/agroalimentos/dos/indice_legumbres.php

A site about agro-food products from Castile-Leon with a specific section devoted to pulses. (Spanish)

www.legumbresdecalidad.com

Information about Lenteja de La Armuña lentils and Garbanzo de Fuentesaúco chickpeas. (Spanish)

www.faba-asturiana.org

A site representing the Regulatory Council for Faba Asturiana beans. (Spanish)

www.fabalourenza.com

Information about Faba de Lurenza beans produced in Lugo (Galicia). (Galician, Spanish)

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/

Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2081/92 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for gricultural products and foodstuffs. (All 20 official EU languages)

brownish-grey in color and smooth-skinned. PGI Alubia de La Bañeza includes local varieties such as Canela, Plancheta, Riñon Menudo and Pinta of Haricot Bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris L.* subspecies *Papilionaceae*).

A northern exception

The sixth PGI product is Faba Asturiana. Asturias is an autonomous community in northern Spain, quite different from Castile-Leon. This part of the country is known for its mountains, green valleys and the beaches of the Cantabrian coast. The climate here is mild and oceanic. In this environment, the beans known as Faba Asturiana (*Phaseolus vulgaris L.*), a traditional crop in the area, thrive. These are quite large, white, kidney-shaped beans with very smooth skin and a buttery texture on the palate. Producers of these beans are more than satisfied with their performance. Though quite labor-intensive, they are profitable and this is another crop that is perfectly adapted to its environment.
Farming methods have changed radically in the last 30 years, though they can still be described as artisan. The Faba Asturiana is apparently a delicate product that calls for careful nurturing. Growers stress the importance of the right type of soil, as it must be spongy so that the roots get plenty of oxygen.

Guaranteed quality

A Protected Geographic Indication label certifies that these pulses are subjected to a series of inspections from their points of origin onwards, and provides consumers with a guarantee that what they are buying really is what it claims to be. In other words, consumers know that they are about to eat a foodstuff whose quality has been certified. In addition to monitoring their particular products exhaustively, the Regulatory Councils are essentially safeguarding and promoting diversity in the marketplace.
So what constitutes a quality pulse? In all the cases mentioned here, the primary requirement is that the product should taste good and be pleasant to eat. To that end, the Regulatory Councils monitor the condition of the individual seeds, their butteriness, consistency, granularity, hardness of skin and so on, using panels of tasters to do so. The best pulses are those with a thin skin that melts in the mouth and combines with the albumen, or interior part, which should be buttery and smooth. It is also important that as small a proportion as possible breaks up during cooking.
Our sources at the Regulatory Councils for the Lenteja de La Armuña and Garbanzo de Fuentesaúco agree that quality derives fundamentally from the medium in which the pulses are grown. "The soils and subsoils in which they vegetate possess certain characteristics that differentiate them from others, and this is what accounts in large measure for their distinctive, singular qualities", says Nicolás Armenteros, technical director of both councils. The climate too, of course, works hand-in-hand with the soil to contribute special organoleptic properties. "The privileged status of Spain's pulses is revealed in various ways. A report issued by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services), for example, states that Spain is the country in which most attention is paid to the quality of pulses," comments Armenteros. Javier A. Ponga, technical director of PGI Lenteja Pardina de Tierra de Campos, also cites soil characteristics as the explanation for the quality factor. "The soil must contain certain levels of organic matter, phosphorus and potassium", he says. Furthermore, lentils should not be grown in the same plot two years running, and it goes without saying that the best seeds must be selected for sowing.

Pulses and soil: mutual benefit

The benefits of PGI coverage for pulses extend beyond those mentioned as affecting producers, traders and consumers. These crops also benefit the environment in which they are integrated. As Almudena Rodríguez, general director for the agro-food industry at Spain's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food points out, "In its own way, this type of certification helps preserve the traditional varieties we have always had in Spain and to maintain genetic diversity that would otherwise probably be lost".

Mario Cordero, technical director of the Regulatory Council for the Alubia de La Bañeza, explains that producers who belong to this PGI are required to practice integrated farming, which is not quite organic farming but uses environmentally-friendly substances on crops. Integrated production aims to make the best use of available resources while at the same time producing food products that are healthy and of good quality. He also points out that beans, like the other pulses, fix atmospheric nitrogen and therefore do not need nitrogen-rich fertilizers, unlike other crops such as corn. Nitrogen added in mineral form that is not absorbed by plants makes its way into aquifers and pollutes them with nitrates and nitrites. "But beans don't need these mineral fertilizers", explains Cordero. "This benefits farmers in that it cuts costs, and the beans help replenish soil that has been overworked by other crops that call for a lot of fertilizer and absorb a lot of nutrients." According to Ponga, pulses covered by PGI certification are grown "using insecticides and herbicides recommended by the PGI technical experts, which pose no risk to human health or wildlife".

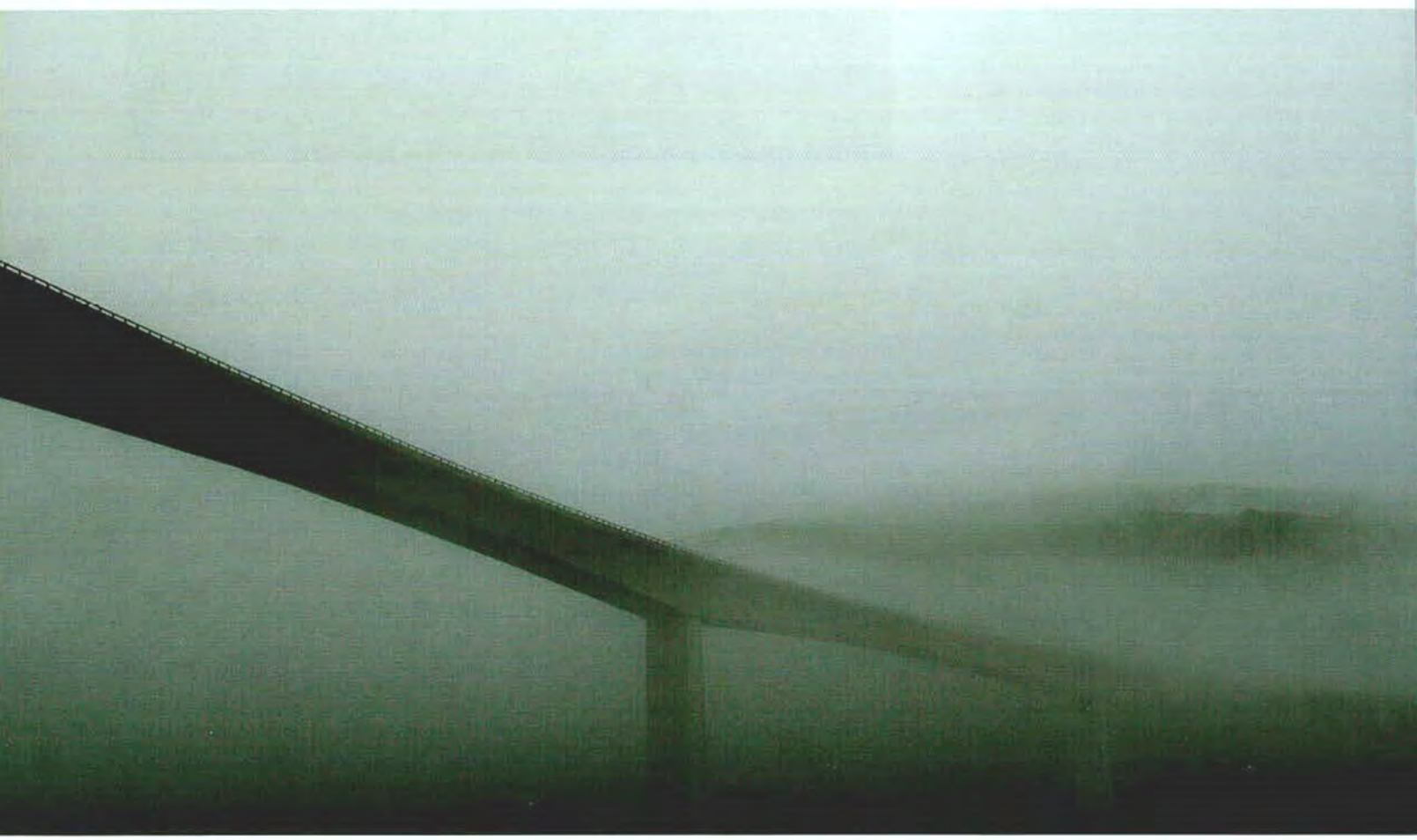
Low-profile but full of potential

So what does the future hold for Spanish pulses? Most of our interviewees are convinced that there is a future for them, but that a lot of hard work lies ahead. The sector is already acknowledging the need to offer a quality product and consumers are becoming increasingly aware of what they are eating. It's a good start, and the next step is for consumers to perceive quality guarantees as reassuring. Also we cannot overlook the relevance of pulses' intrinsic nutritional attributes (see box). Rodríguez adds, "We do have export potential, but this is still a small sector". Some voices are not as optimistic, but there is no denying that, after the drop in pulse production experienced 20 years ago, the sector is showing signs of recovery and the area dedicated to these crops is gradually increasing. One of the main problems that will have to be tackled is the lack of knowledge about these products and the lack of available time to cook them. Indeed, the sector is well aware that one of the obstacles to their acceptability in foreign markets is that people do not know what to do with them, and devote so little time to cooking nowadays. In Spain, as we have seen, pulses are very much a part of the nation's culinary tradition, but even this could prove to be something of a handicap, since they are generally associated with traditional recipes for hearty, flavor-packed dishes of the sort that one tucks into with a spoon. However, chefs that use pulses in their repertoires are showing them to be highly versatile foods that can be used in all sorts of dishes, both hot and cold.

As for the time element, response within the sector is most noted by the emergence of companies dealing in ready-cooked pulses, among them Legumer and La Cocina Vaqueira. Legumer, a company based in Salamanca, deals in Lenteja de La Armuña lentils and Garbanzo de Fuentesaúco chickpeas, aiming to offer consumers quality products with various dry, pre-cooked and meal-ready options. This small, young company is determined to find a market for a product that is both delicious and nutritious. Dishes such as lentils with chorizo or vegetables, or *cocido castellano* (Castile's answer to pot-au-feu) take far less time and effort when all the preparation is done for you. According to Jacinto Martín, one of the company's managers, "The demand is there. More and more people are showing interest", and although there is still a certain resistance in Spain to buying traditional dishes of this ready-made type, "the balance this year has been positive and people who try them once come back for more".
La Cocina Vaqueira, also a family-run firm, has been selling ready-cooked dishes for just over a year. Like Legumer, the company came into being in response to a recognized demand. "There's a gap in the market for ready-cooked dishes because people nowadays have less time to cook at home. And of course a lentil *potaje* or bean stew not only takes time to make but you also have to know how to do it", observes Fina Gavin, the company's managing director. Her professed aim is to sell a product that stands out for its quality, which is why they use beans that bear the Regulatory Council's seal of approval. The products they sell are pasteurized, preservative-free and made according to traditional recipes. According to Gavin, the biggest obstacle to conquering customers is that "some consumers still have a poor perception of ready-made meals, but people who try ours soon realize that this isn't junk food. These are very carefully made dishes and traceability is guaranteed".
Regarding the future for PGI pulses, if they're going to be competitive, there will have to be what Rodríguez calls "investment in technology and innovation", including research into the various different pulses to improve resistance to specific diseases and to increase yields.

***María Benito Casado**, who has local media experience, is currently an intern journalist at* Spain Gourmetour.

10 RECIPES



A key figure behind gastronomic trends in Castile-Leon, Carlos D. Cidón has focused on combining loyalty to regional produce with careful transgression in the use of techniques. He is an observant, enterprising chef and it's a sincere appreciation for his culinary background that has allowed him to embrace pulses and other local products under the protective cloak of haute cuisine. Vivaldi Restaurant (1 Michelin star) in León is his

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center of operations but his teachings and his followers extend far and wide. Cidón seeks out top ingredients and then brings out their best in his cooking, and also in his books, which cover topics such as cheeses, grape varieties and wine matching, mushrooms, tapas and vegetables. Proof of his expertise is evident in these ten recipes, each of them accompanied by a wine selected by Jorge D. Cidón, the restaurant's sommelier.

How to cook beans

Before cooking, rehydrate by submerging them in a pan full of cold water and leave them to soak for approximately 12 hours. Then pour off the water and place them in fresh, cold water (never hot), covering the beans with about 6 cm (2.3 in) of water and then cook. Salt is best added only when the beans are cooked, otherwise they might lose their characteristic creaminess. Cooking time will be between 1 and 3 hours depending on the variety.

It is very important that any water required during cooking should be added cold. This brings down the temperature and helps the starch inside the beans to swell together with the skin. If hot water is added the skins may burst, releasing the starch and making a purée instead of just cooking the beans.

How to cook lentils

Together with dried peas, these are the only pulses which do not have to be soaked before cooking. During cooking, make sure they are covered with cold water to prevent the skin from drying and coming apart. To improve digestion and prevent flatulence, carminative herbs such as fennel, savory, bay, thyme, cumin, parsley or cloves can be added to the cooking water. If more water is needed during cooking, add it gradually.

How to cook chickpeas

Unlike other pulses, chickpeas should be placed in hot water to prevent them from becoming hard (20 grams / 1 heaping tbsp of salt and 4 l / 17 cup / 7 pt of water at 60°C / 140°F per kilo / 2 1/4 lb of chickpeas) and cooked for at least 12 hours. Once they are soft, drain, rinse and place them in a cloth bag to prevent them from breaking up and losing their skins. Then cook in a hot, fatty broth at 60°C / 140°F. The resulting chickpeas should be soft, smooth and buttery and have their skins intact.

It is important to cook them in plenty of liquid. If additional water is needed during cooking, it must be hot as any slowdown in the cooking process will make the chickpeas hard.

Alubia de La Bañeza beans in a pickle sauce with rabbit

(Alubia de La Bañeza escabechada con conejo)

This unusual dish might have disappeared altogether had the La Bañeza Regulating Council not come on the scene to guarantee and promote these top-quality beans. The pickle sauce makes for a surprising combination.

Serves 6

500 g / 1 lb 2 oz Alubia de La Bañeza beans; 2 leeks; 1 onion; 1 clove garlic; 1 bay leaf; 10 black peppercorns. **For the rabbit** 1 rabbit weighing 1 kg / 2 1/4 lb; 6 sheets filo pastry; 1 kg / 2 1/4 lb duck fat; 300 ml / 1 1/4 cup / 1/2 pint white wine; 350 ml / 1 1/2 cup / 12 fl oz vinegar; 375 ml / 1 1/2 cup / 13 fl oz extra virgin olive oil

Cook the beans as explained previously and set aside until cool.

For the pickle sauce:

Reduce the wine plus the vinegar by half, add the vegetables and cook for about 5 minutes. Add the extra virgin olive oil and the beans and cook for another 10 minutes. Leave the beans to stand in the pickle sauce for at least two days.
Place the rabbit and the duck fat in a vacuum pack for 20 hours at 50°C / 120°F. Debone, then wrap the meat in the filo pastry. Roast at 180°C / 356°F for about 10 minutes until crisp.

To serve

Serve the freshly-roast rabbit on a bed of warm beans in pickle sauce.

Preparation time

20 hours for the rabbit confit plus 1 hour to cook the beans over a slow flame

Recommended wine

A good choice to tone down the pickle sauce that combines well with the beans is an As Sortes wine (DO Valdeorras) by Rafael Palacios, made from Godello grapes. The hint of wood in the wine gives just the right finishing touch to the dish.

Lenteja de La Armuña lentil lasagna and Arzúa-Ulloa cheese

(Lasaña de Lenteja de La Armuña y queso Arzúa-Ulloa)

While considering how to make lentil soup more appetizing for a child, I came up with this recipe for a crisp lasagna.

Serves 6

12 sheets of Chinese wonton pasta; 300 g / 10 1/2 oz / 1 1/4 cup Lenteja de La Armuña lentils; 1 onion; 1 leek; 1 carrot; 1 zucchini; 2 Mansilla de Las Mulas tomatoes; extra virgin olive oil. **For the béchamel sauce** 175 g / 7 fl oz / 3/4 cups ewe's milk; 20 g / 1 oz / 1 heaping tbsp butter; 25 g / 1 oz / 2 tbsp flour; 300 g / 10 1/2 oz DO Arzúa-Ulloa cheese

For the lasagna:

Fry the pasta for the lasagna in extra virgin olive oil. Gently cook the lentils with the very finely sliced vegetables. Thinly slice the tomatoes and brown on the griddle.

Cover the base of the dish with the tomato slices, top with a layer of pasta, lentils and cheese. Make two more layers in the same way, then brown in the oven at 180°C / 356°F for about 4 minutes.

To serve

Serve straight from the oven.

Preparation time

Approximately 50 minutes

Recommended wine

A silky, but not dominant, contrast to this creamy dish can be found in the fine sparkle of a cava such as DO Millesime de Raventós.

Faba Asturiana beans with squid, scallops and clams in a green sauce

(Faba Asturiana con calamares, vieiras y almejas en salsa verde)

This recipe combines the famous Asturian bean stew with seafood. The fish is cooked lightly, just enough to flavor the dish without it losing its individuality.

Serves 6

For the beans 300 g / 10 1/2 oz Faba Asturiana beans; 1 carrot; 1 leek; 1 zucchini; 2 l / 8 1/2 cup / 3 1/2 pt light fish stock. **For the clams** 2 onions; 2 cloves garlic; parsley; plenty of extra virgin olive oil; 200 ml / 3/4 cups / 7 fl oz white wine; 500 g / 1 lb 2 oz pullet carpet-shell clams; 12 large grooved carpet-shell clams. **For the squid** 1 kg / 2 1/5 lb jig-caught squid; 2 scallops

Wash the squid and the scallops and stuff the squid with the scallop meat. Freeze, then cut into thin slices using an electric slicer.

Blend the rest of the squid to form a paste. Spread very thinly and dry out until crisp. Fry pieces of this squid paper in hot extra virgin olive oil. Cook the beans with the diced vegetables and the fish stock. Set aside. Drop the grooved carpet-shell clams into boiling water and cook for just 30 seconds. Drain, open up completely with a knife and remove the flesh. This way the flesh will be very tender.

For the green sauce:

Lightly brown the onion and garlic. Add the pullet carpet-shell clams and white wine. Cover until the clams open, then remove the flesh from the shells and blend with the onion, garlic and wine mixture. Blend the extra virgin olive oil with the parsley and strain. Mix with the clam sauce. Add half of this green oil to the beans and cook lightly to blend the flavors. Use the other half as a sauce for the clams.

To serve

Place the beans to one side of the plate and top with the squid slices. On the other side place two whole clams with the green sauce. Garnish with the fried squid paper and drizzle with a few drops of parsley oil.

Preparation time

About 2 hours cooked over a low flame

Recommended wine

These thick beans will seem even smoother with a barrel-fermented Enate Chardonnay (DO Somontano). Its oakiness will help balance the texture, and the verve of the grapes will bring out the shellfish flavors.

Garbanzo

de Fuentesaúco chickpeas with garlic shrimp

(Garbanzo de Fuentesaúco con gambas al ajillo)

The basic idea for this recipe comes from a dish my grandfather used to cook when I was a child. He liked to fry the chickpeas left over from the previous day's stew, and I actually preferred them on the second day. In this case, they are served with shrimp.

Serves 6

300 g / 10 1/2 oz / 1 1/4 cup Garbanzo de Fuentesaúco chickpeas; 6 l / 25 cup broth; 24 shrimp; 2 cloves garlic; chopped parsley; extra virgin olive oil; 200 g / 7 oz stale bread; 300 ml / 1 1/4 cup / 1/2 pt milk; parsley

Cook the chickpeas as explained in the introduction. Cool in a little of the cooking stock and refrigerate for 1 day.
Heat some oil in a skillet and add the chopped garlic. Add the shrimp and, when brown, cook for 20 seconds. Separate the oil from the shrimp.
Add the chickpeas with the broth to the oil used for the shrimp and cook gently to bind the stock. Then add the chopped parsley.
Soak the bread in the milk and add a little parsley, garlic and extra virgin olive oil. When the bread is soft, blend to a paste and paint stripes of this paste onto a sheet of ovenproof paper. Bake at 180°C / 356°F for about 3 minutes.

To serve

Serve the chickpeas, top with the shrimp and garnish with a breadstick.

Preparation time

4 hours, plus time to cook the chickpeas (which must be left to stand for one day)

Recommended wine

This is one of our restaurant's emblematic dishes. The seafood flavors complement the buttery creaminess of the chickpeas and the perfect accompaniment is a white DO Rueda. The José Pariente white from Bodegas Dos Victorias, carefully made from Verdejo grapes, is a very special choice, bringing a fresh lightness to the palate.

Pickled partridge and Bierzo pepper salad with Lenteja Pardina de Tierra de Campos lentils

(Ensalada de perdiz escabechada en conserva con pimientos del Bierzo en salpicón de Lenteja Pardina de Tierra de Campos)

Serves 6

1 can pickled partridge. **For the salad** 200 g / 7 oz / 3/4 cup Lenteja Pardina de Tierra de Campos lentils; 1 onion; 2 carrots; 1 egg; 80 ml / 1/3 cup / 3 fl oz extra virgin olive oil; 30 ml / 2 heaping tbsp / 1 fl oz vinegar; parsley; 80 g / 3 oz Bierzo peppers; 1 mango. **For the onion compote** 200 g / 7 oz onion; 80 ml / 1/3 cup / 4 fl oz Modena vinegar; 75 g / 3 oz / 1/3 cup sugar

For the salad:

Roast the peppers then slice in thin strips. Sauté with garlic. Cook the lentils for about 25 minutes in chicken stock. When cold, mix with the chopped onion, cooked carrot, hard-boiled egg and finely-chopped parsley. Dress with a vinaigrette.

For the onion compote:

Slice the onion in julienne strips and cook in extra virgin oil. Add the Modena vinegar and sugar. Reduce, blend and strain.

To serve

Serve the compote in a mold. Top with the lentil salad wrapped in thin slices of mango and the partridge meat. Reduce the pickle sauce and use as a dressing.

Preparation time

25 minutes

Recommended wine

An appropriate marriage here could be a rosé made from Prieto Picudo grapes. Try a Pardevalles from VC (Vinos de Calidad) Tierras de León, a light, sparkling wine that will complement this vinegary salad.

Hare preserves with Judías de El Barco de Ávila beans

(Liebre en conserva con Judías de El Barco de Ávila)

This is the typical Castilian dish beans with hare, but in this case it is based on a can of cooked hare.

Serves 6

1 can of hare confit; 300 g / 10 1/2 oz trimmings of fresh hare; 250 g / 9 oz / 1 1/8 cups Judías de El Barco de Ávila beans; 500 ml / 2 1/6 cups / 17 fl oz Toro red wine; 1 onion; 1 carrot; 1 leek; 150 g / 5 1/2 oz cured pork belly. **For the vinaigrette** 100 ml / 1/2 cup / 4 fl oz vinegar; 50 g / 2 oz / 4 tbsp sugar

Cook the beans with the onion, carrot and leek as explained in the introduction. Set aside.
Prepare a stew with the fresh hare trimmings by first browning the meat in a little oil and then adding the Toro wine. Reduce, then add water and cook for 1 hour. Strain the resulting stock, add to the beans and cook until the sauce thickens.
Caramelize the sugar, add the vinegar and reduce.
Heat the canned hare, then let it crumble. Wrap the meat in very thin strips of pork belly. Freeze, then cut into small pieces and brown on the griddle.

To serve

Serve the beans and then top them with the hare. Drizzle over the reduced caramelized vinegar.

Preparation time

About 2 hours including the time to cook the beans

Recommended wine

To partner this hearty bean dish, which recalls a typical game stew, try a good Ribera del Duero such as the Crianza 03 by Bodegas Arzuaga. Its persistence on the palate will help round off the dish.

Roe deer loin wrapped in tapioca and cooked in red Bierzo wine served with grain mustard, mushroom sauce and pears cooked in saffron

(Lomo de corzo envuelto en tapioca cocida con vino tinto del Bierzo, salsa de mostaza en grano con hongos y peras cocidas con hebras de azafrán)

The idea for this recipe came to me when I was thinking about crisp wines. I found that the taste created by the tapioca coating is like the sensation of a dry, crisp wine, one that brings out the quality of the meat inside.

Serves 6

600 g / 1 lb 5 oz canned roe deer loin; 1 l / 4 1/4 cup / 1 3/4 pt red Bierzo wine; 100 g / 3 1/2 oz tapioca; 75 g / 3 oz / 1/3 cup sugar; 1 egg **For the sauce** 150 ml / 2/3 cups / 5 fl oz Port wine; 20 g / 1 oz / 1 heaping tbsp mustard; 5 g / 1/6 oz mustard grains; 200 ml / 3/4 cups / 7 fl oz meat stock; 200 g / 7 oz young Boletus edulis mushrooms; 1 clove garlic. **For the pears** 1 l / 4 1/4 cup / 1 3/4 pt light syrup; 6 Bierzo pears; 5 g / 1/6 oz saffron threads

Cook the tapioca with the wine and sugar for 20 minutes. Spread out to dry, then crush.
Dip the roe deer loin in egg white, then coat with the crushed, dried tapioca. Fry in hot olive oil.

For the sauce:

Add the mustard and mustard grains to the Port wine and reduce by half. Add the meat stock.
Sauté the thinly-sliced mushrooms in oil and garlic.

For the pears:

Cook the pears for 40 minutes in the syrup with the saffron.

To serve

Place the sliced loin on a bed of mushrooms and add the mustard sauce. Serve the pears to one side.

Preparation time

45 minutes

Recommended wine

This powerful game dish that emphasizes the flavor of wine needs to be served with a round wine with a touch of elegance, such as a Pagos Viejos by Finca San Cobate, a prestigious Ribera del Duero bodega.

In this recipe, instead of cooking the dried pasta the normal way, I use the risotto technique for cooking rice. I find the results very interesting and I especially like the texture.

Serves 6

300 g / 10 1/2 oz / 1 1/4 cup tear-shaped pasta; 2 l / 8 1/2 cup / 3 1/2 pt chicken stock; 400 g / 14 oz Boletus pinophilus; 1 canned turtledove, deboned; 100 g / 3 1/2 oz duck liver; 1 glass sweet wine; 250 ml / 1 1/8 cup / 9 fl oz Muscatel; mushrooms; triangles of smoked Dobro cheese. **For the Boletus stock** 500 g / 1 lb 2 oz Boletus trimmings, washed; 100 g / 3 1/2 oz duck liver; 250 ml / 1 1/8 cup / 9 fl oz Muscatel. **For the gellan** 600 ml / 2 1/2 cups / 21 fl oz Muscatel; 4 g / 1/6 oz kappa; 1 g / 0.03 oz agar-agar

For the Boletus stock:

Sauté about 500 g / 1 lb 2 oz of the washed boletus trimmings. Fry a little garlic in oil, add 100 g / 3 1/2 oz duck liver and 250 ml / 1 1/8 cup Muscatel. Reduce, add salt and place in a 40 cm / 15.7 in bag. Fill with 3 l / 13 cup / 5 pt 5 fl oz water and cook for 3 hours in a bain-marie. Leave to cool, then strain.

For the pasta:

Boil the pasta for 5 minutes in the chicken stock and chill. Sauté 400 g / 14 oz Boletus pinophilus and add

Tear-shaped

pasta cooked as a risotto with Boletus pinophilus, canned turtledove and smoked Dobro cheese

(Pasta lágrima cocida como un Risotto con boletus pinícola, tórtola en conserva y queso ahumado de Dobro)

the turtledove meat plus 100 g / 3 1/2 oz duck liver and a glass of sweet wine. Reduce. Add this mixture to the pasta and cook for about 10 minutes with the Boletus stock. Cook as you would a risotto and finish with a splash of olive oil.

For the garnish:

Cut the bases off the mushrooms and sauté in oil and garlic. Dry triangles of smoked Dobro cheese in the oven until crisp.

For the gellan:

Reduce 600 ml / 2 1/2 cups / 21 fl oz Muscatel to 500 ml / 2 1/6 cups / 17 fl oz and leave to cool. When cold, add 4 g / 1/6 oz kappa and 1 g / 0.3 oz agar-agar and bring to a boil. Pour onto paper on a hot plate in a very thin layer and cut into circles.

To serve

Fill a semi-circular mold with the pasta and cover with the sautéed mushrooms. Turn out onto the plate and cover the pasta with a very thin layer of gellan. Stick the cheese crisp into one side.

Preparation time

3 hours for the Boletus stock and 5 minutes for the pasta

Recommended wine

The pasta fills the mouth with starch and tires the palate so the wine should be a powerful one. There's nothing better than a good Toro such as Pintia 03. This brightens up the palate, adds a touch of sweetness and balances out the smoothness of the pasta.

Quail and orange soup, rhubarb sponge cake, Bierzo chestnut crumbs and duck liver

(Sopa de codorniz a la naranja, bizcocho de ruibarbo, serrín de castañas del Bierzo e hígado de pato)

This flavorsome, nourishing soup is counterpoised by the sweet and sour sponge, and the crisp texture of the chestnut crumbs keeps the taste buds alert.

Serves 6

6 canned quails; 1 onion; 75 ml / 1/3 cup / 3 fl oz orange liqueur; 2 oranges; 200 g / 7 oz duck liver; chicken stock. **For the sponge cake** 4 eggs; 100 ml / 1/2 cup / 4 fl oz cream; 150 g / 5 1/2 oz flour; 15 g / 1/2 oz / 1 tbsp baking power; 150 ml / 2/3 cups / 5 fl oz sunflower oil; 300 g / 10 1/2 oz rhubarb; 6 fresh chestnuts; Aplati rice

For the sponge cake:

Cut the rhubarb into pieces and blanch in a syrup made of 1 l / 4 1/4 cup / 1 3/4 pt water with 500 g / 1 lb 2 oz sugar. Drain.

Beat the eggs until they triple in size. Blend the cream with the oil and mix with the eggs. Add the flour with the baking powder and about 80 g / 3 oz of the rhubarb confit. Pour into molds and bake at 180°C / 356°F for about 9 minutes.

Cut the quails into quarters, separating the legs and breasts.

Fry the onion until soft, add a splash of orange liqueur and brown. Add the orange juice, 1 orange zest and cover with the chicken stock.

Reduce by half, strain and clarify.

Roll the meat from the quail legs into small balls, freeze, then coat with egg white and Aplati rice. Fry.

Grate the fresh chestnuts and dry, then fry. Brown a slice of duck liver in a hot skillet, set aside and use the fat left behind to brown the quail breasts.

To serve

Place the fried meatballs and the sponge cake in a soup bowl and top with the sliced breasts, liver and fried, grated chestnuts. Serve the soup at the table.

Preparation time

2 hours

Recommended wine

This hot dish, reminiscent of the south with its sweet, sour and savory flavors, goes very well with La Gitana Manzanilla from Bodegas Hidalgo-La Gitana.

Game
pâté terrine with duck liver and mango cheese
(Terrina de paté de caza con hígado de pato y membrillo de mango)

This is a different way of serving a game pâté, combining it with a mango preserve.

Serves 6

2 cans of game meat (hare, partridge and boar); 500 g / 1 lb 2 oz cooked duck liver; 100 ml / 1/2 cup / 4 fl oz Muscatel; 600 g / 1 lb 5 oz fresh mango; 3.5 g / 0.12 oz agar-agar; 70 g / 2.5 oz sugar; 1 loaf gingerbread; 100 ml / 1/2 cup / 4 fl oz cream; 10 ml / 2 tsp / 1/3 oz lemon juice; 500 ml / 2 1/6 cups / 17 fl oz water; 300 g / 10 1/2 oz / 1 1/4 cup, sugar; 2 bay leaves; 1 cinnamon stick; 6 cloves; 1.5 g / 0.05 oz Sechouan pepper; 2 g / 0.07 oz star anise

For the game meat and duck liver terrine:

Blend the game meat and duck liver with the Muscatel and cook in a vacuum pack at 70°C / 150°F for 20 minutes. Leave to cool, remove the fat and transfer to shallow molds.

For the mango cheese:

Mix 600 g / 1 lb 5 oz puréed fresh mango with 3.5 g / 0.12 oz agar-agar and 70 g / 2.5 oz sugar. Boil then add to the shallow molds.
Add further layers of pâté and mango, about 6 of each altogether. Set some of the mango and pâté mixture aside.

For the caramelized bread:

Cut the gingerbread into wafer-thin slices, make a hole at one end and dry in the oven.

For the roll with sour cream:

Spread the saved portion of the pâté/mango mixture in a circle onto a sheet of acetate paper. Roll up and seal one end. Mix the cream with 10 g / 1/6 oz / 1 tsp lemon juice and use to fill the rolls.

For the spicy syrup:

Boil the water with the sugar and infuse with the spices. Strain.

To serve

On a rectangular plate, place the bread slices to one side with the terrine cut into rectangles on the other. Add a stripe with the spicy syrup and top with the roll.

Preparation time

1 hour

Cooking time

20 minutes for the game and duck liver terrine

Recommended wine

The fatty, sweet and even rough flavors of this dish can be rounded out by a good Muscatel from Bodegas López Hermanos (DO Málaga-Sierras de Málaga).

On the move

Montenevado enters the US market

It's getting easier by the day to eat Serrano ham in the US. In April of 2007 Jamones Segovia will be launching its Montevenado brand ham through Industrias Cárnicas El Rasillo. "This market is a must for us. Like Europe, the US is attractive because of its economic stability and high purchasing power", says Fernando Maíllo, Jamones Segovia's export manager.

The certificate enabling the company to sell its products in the US was obtained in March 2006. The lengthy gap between obtaining the certificate and actually reaching the market is due to the long curing period required by Serrano ham. This certification will also allow Jamones Segovia to enter Puerto Rico, "an interesting market because of its high-spending Hispanic population", says Maíllo. The Montenevado brand is already present in a number of Latin American countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Costa Rica as well as almost all the members of the European Union.

The Spanish company believes there is plenty of room for growth in the US. "Iberian pork products are already present in many American markets", adds Maíllo. "It's a country with plenty of potential and we hope to reach our customers through a variety of channels, not only delicatessens". The company's plans include operating through supermarkets and restaurants.

Date of foundation: 1898
Activity: Production of Serrano and Ibérico ham
Workforce: 112
Turnover 2005: 24 million euros
Export quota: 25%
www.montenevado.com

Further growth for Naturhouse in America

The Kiluva Naturhouse group is recording non-stop growth. This chain of health food stores founded by Felix Revuelta in 1991 plans to spread into the extremely varied markets of the United States, Honduras and Guatemala. According to Vanessa Revuelta, export manager and vice president of Kiluva Naturhouse, the key to the group's success is that its business is very specialized and it is in an area that is becoming increasingly popular. Guatemala and Honduras are strategically important for the company because they mark the group's entry into Central America. Although income per capita in both countries is lower than in Europe, Revuelta states that after extensive market research, the company has set a goal of opening 31 franchises in Guatemala over the next six years. The group considers these to be "interesting markets for doing business".

In the US, the group has started out in Florida and will continue in California because both states have a high income per capita, large populations and greater awareness of nutritional and dietary considerations. Revuelta states that the plan is to open 164 franchises over six years in Florida under the group's Naturhouse brand, and a similar target has been set for California. They are also considering acquiring an American firm and thereby entering the market directly. Vanessa Revuelta explains that the company follows a dual policy in its

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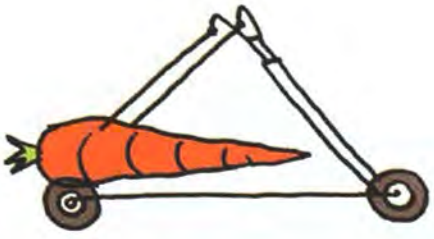


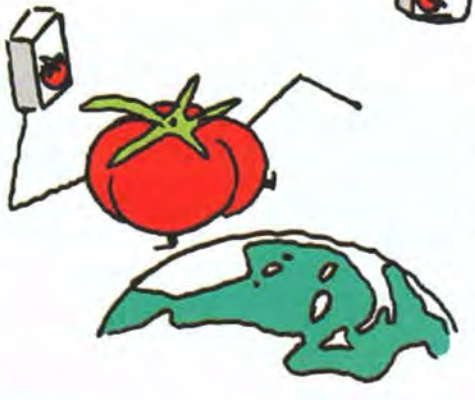
international operations: opening new subsidiaries in markets chosen by Naturhouse, the firm's preferential strategy, and also allowing franchisees to choose the market where the franchise will be located.

Date of foundation: 1986
Activity: Production of health products and services
Workforce: 2,060
Turnover 2005: 123.4 million euros
Export quota: 8.4%
www.naturhouse.com

Dream Fruits finds a juicy market in Europe

Sales of fruit juices in France will soon have a Spanish flavor. The Spanish company Dream Fruits has purchased, for 600,000 euros, Frische's French subsidiary, the leading group on the fresh fruit juice market in Germany, Denmark and England. "Dream Fruits has now strengthened its position in the French market and has strengthened its links even further within the retail sector", states Juan José Silva, general manager of Dream Fruits. He adds, "One of our goals is to step up our sales in France, where we are already exporting 45% of our products, which was about 50 million liters (13 million gallons) in 2006 alone". In 2005, 53.7% of Dream Fruits' sales in the juice and nectar sector were packaged juices. The company has three of its own brands: Gabry, Defruit and Torbiscal, and also produces white brands for the main European retail chains.
Dream Fruits first started exporting in 1983. In addition to Spain, today its products can be found in all European Union countries, and the group has an especially strong presence in France, Italy and Germany, as well as in Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea and Malaysia.

Date of foundation: 1972
Activity: Production of grape juice and wine, production and packaging of fruit juices and nectars, production of fruit desserts
Workforce: 218
Turnover 2005: 72 million euros
Export quota: 80%
www.dreamfruits.com



Campofrío takes root in Romania

The Campofrío group is set to invest 12 million euros in the construction of a new plant in Romania for sausages and other food products. Located in Bucharest, the factory should be ready by the second half of 2008 and is expected to consolidate the Spanish group's growth in this Eastern European country, a priority market in its international strategy. Tabco, Campofrío's subsidiary in Romania, will thus be able to export to

the rest of the European Union countries and will serve as a platform for launching new products.
The Bucharest plant will be built on a 40,000 square meter plot (430,000 square feet) and is expected to produce in excess of 20,000 metric tons of cooked and cured products. Campofrío has been functioning in Romania since April 1998 when it purchased an initial stake of 79.4% of Tabco. Today it owns 98%. Campofrío first began operating internationally in 1990 in Moscow and today has subsidiaries in Portugal, France, Romania and Russia, reaching 250 million consumers in over 40 countries worldwide.

Date of foundation: 1944
Activity: Production and sale of all sorts of sausages and other food products
Workforce: 5,720
Turnover 2005: 911 million euros
Export quota: 29%
www.campofrio.es

Bodegas Valdesil disembarks in the US

The prestigious American magazine *Wine & Spirits* has classified the Montenovo 2005, from Bodegas Valdesil of Valdeorras, as a wine of "exceptional value". Made exclusively from the native Godello grape, it received 91 points and the highest score in a blind tasting session in which 587 wines from all over the world participated.

Almost simultaneously with receiving this award, Bodegas Valdesil reached an agreement with American importer Eric Solomon, owner of European Cellars, to sell 2,500 cases of Montenovo in the United States. "In order to introduce our brand there", explains María Añíbarro, sales manager for Bodegas Valdesil, "we have planned a series of promotions amongst sommeliers and opinion leaders, as well as public relations activities both in our winery and in US specialist store chains. We expect Florida and California to bring us our highest sales levels".
The Godello variety grows in its element in the DO Valdeorras, in the northwest region of the Galician province of Orense, where the climate and slaty soil are ideal for white grapes. According to Añíbarro, "American opinion leaders are trying to select the most outstanding Spanish white wine and it may very well turn out to be a Galician variety that they choose". Bodegas Valdesil produces 200,000 liters (52,800 gallons) of wine a year, half of which go to the United States.

Date of foundation: 1990
Activity: Production and sale of wines
Workforce: 10
Turnover 2005: 2 million euros
Export quota: 50%
www.valdesil.com

Hotusa, from Europe to Latin America

Hotusa Group, the Spanish organization comprised of various companies related to different aspects of the tourism industry, is now expanding its activities into Latin America with the purchase of two 4-star hotels in Mexico DF and one in Buenos Aires. It has meanwhile strengthened its position in Europe by opening its first establishment in Prague in the Czech Republic.
Mexico was chosen as the company's first destination outside Europe. The two hotels purchased in the financial hub of the Mexican capital, the Eurostars Zona Rosa Suites and Eurostars Suites Michelango, demonstrate Hotusa's firm commitment to business tourism and confirm its interest in the land of the Aztecs.
The company's latest move in Latin America has been the purchase of the Claridge Hotel, an emblematic establishment built at the end of World War II in the heart of Buenos Aires. This 5-star hotel, in which Hotusa now holds a 75% stake, joins the Eurostars hotel chain; however, it will maintain its former name to preserve the family spirit that has made it famous during its 60-year history.
In Prague, the Eurostars Thalia, close to the National Theatre and located in a 19th-century mansion of great architectural interest, now forms part of the Spanish hotel group as a rented property.
The Hotusa Group is comprised of the independent Hotusa hotel chain, the Keytel hotel agency, the Restel tour operator, the Hotelius.com hotel reservations website and the Eurostars hotel chain.
This year the prestigious North American *Hotels Magazine* raised the Spanish group from 6th to 4th position in its annual ranking. This is the result of the 32.75% increase in the number of rooms it represents, which rose from 118,861 in 2004 to 157,789 in 2005.

Date of foundation: 1977
Activity: Tourism services
Workforce: 1,400
Turnover 2005: 456 million euros
www.hotusahotels.com

More news
www.spaingourmetour.com

Text
Leslie Sbrocco

Photos
Miguel Torres S.A

WORLD-CLASS AND WORLDWIDE

Miguel Torres

Known throughout Spain for its high quality and innovative spirit, Torres is also a global force in wine. From its home in northeastern Spain's Penedès region, the family-owned company has expanded into markets as diverse as California, Chile and China. Recently named European Winery of the Year 2006 by *Wine Enthusiast Magazine* for its "global reach in introducing people to the pleasures of Spanish wine", Torres' accomplishments stretch far and wide. Other Spanish vineyards have also successfully branched out abroad, and they too will be the protagonists of this new series. As for the Torres family, whether focusing on producing world-class wines or importing and exporting the most famous brands in the business, the company's mission is to retain its strong traditions while embracing change. Devotion to spreading the word about the joys of wine coupled with a strong commitment to the environment puts them in a select group of organizations. The legacy left by Miguel Torres Carbó and his wife Doña Margarita is now in the hands of their heirs, Miguel A. Torres, the current president of the company, his sister Marimar, his brother Juan María Miguel and their children.

On a sunny California day, Marimar Torres greets me at the winery bearing her name. Located in the Russian River/Green Valley appellation of western Sonoma County, the Spanish-influenced winery perched on a hillside is surrounded by 60 acres (24 hectares) of prime vineyard dedicated to growing Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. As I sit with Marimar and her daughter Cristina on the patio of their home overlooking the bucolic property, we sample Marimar Estate's world-class wines while indulging in Catalan specialties prepared from her two cookbooks: *The Catalan Country Kitchen* and *Spanish Cuisine*.

When Marimar arrived in California in 1975, she knew that she wanted to eventually expand the family's interests in America. "If I had stayed in Spain, I would have been my father's daughter and my brothers' sister. This country gave me an opportunity to grow," she says. Though it took time to convince her family, eventually everyone agreed that it was a positive move and wise financial decision. "In the end my mother was proud of my adventurousness," Marimar recalls fondly.

More than two decades ago, Marimar Torres began planting her vineyards and focused on developing a California winery with European sensibility. The estate vineyard in the Russian River Valley is named for her father, Don Miguel Torres, while a newer vineyard located on the nearby Sonoma Coast bears her mother's name, Doña Margarita. Even Marimar's daughter has a wine named in her honor.

All of the Marimar Estate bottles carry these vineyard-designated names as well as the moniker, Torres Family Vineyards, a further testament to the fact that the business is truly a family affair. As Marimar says, "Our family connection is very strong. It's my father's influence and maybe even more so my mother's!"

Currently, the winery produces 15,000 cases of outstanding Chardonnay and Pinot Noir with more than 30 percent going to export markets such as Sweden, Spain, Ireland and Mexico.

Vintner, author and mother are just a few of Marimar Torres' many accomplishments. This erudite, elegant Spaniard is also fluent in six languages and was educated in Burgundy, France. Though her fascinating life warrants its own attention, Marimar is part of the famous Torres family, which is synonymous with wine in Spain. As evidenced by the success of the Marimar Estate, just one of the family's foreign endeavors, the Torres' business has gone global without losing its Spanish touch.

A prestigious past

Ask any resident of Catalonia, the picturesque coastal region in northeastern Spain anchored by Barcelona, and the Torres name is a familiar one. As the largest family-owned, quality wine company in Spain, Torres produces 36 million bottles of wine and 8 million bottles of brandy annually.

Though the family surname is part of Catalan history dating back to the 17th century, it wasn't until the 1870s that Jaime and Miguel Torres Vendrell founded Torres & Company in Vilafranca del Penedès.

Savvy marketing runs in the family it seems, and from the beginning Jaime Torres knew the value of promotion. Not only did he engage in public relations efforts such as inviting royalty to the winery's first opening and winning wine prizes in Vienna, Philadelphia and Paris, he made his mark with forward-thinking efforts by exporting wine to far-flung Latin countries such as Cuba, Argentina and Puerto Rico.

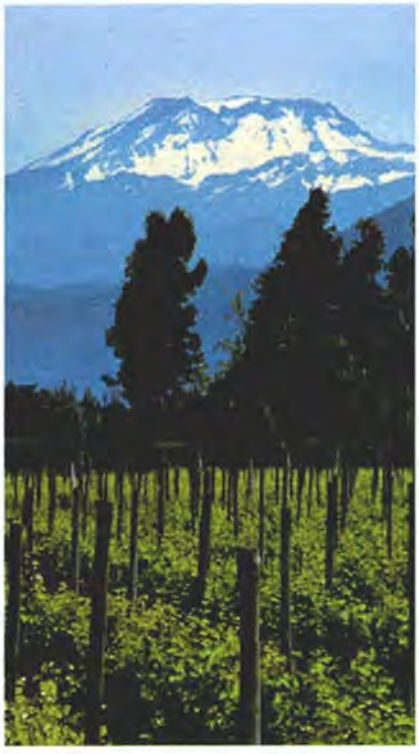
In the early 1930s it was Miguel Torres Vendrell's grandson, Miguel Torres Carbó, who made expansion a lasting reality. Overcoming the harrowing Spanish Civil War, including the bombing of a winery in 1939, Don Miguel, his wife Doña Margarita and their children Marimar, Miguel and Juan María would build the Torres brand into a worldwide empire.

Juan María is currently retired though he is still a vice president of the company like his sister, while Miguel stepped into Don Miguel's shoes as president of Torres in 1991. Marimar says, when talking about her brother, that "Miguel has an amazing mind and is very charismatic just like my father." That

strong personality, intelligence, and energy harkens back to his ancestors who recognized the value of global expansion.

Chile and China

California's Marimar Estate is one prong of the family business, but their first international foray was into Chile. There the family purchased an old, nearly bankrupt winery in 1979 where Torres now produces a brand called Miguel Torres Chile. The winery bottles 350,000 cases each year made from fruit grown on their own 247 acres (100 hectares) of vineyard. A large portion of that wine is exported to major markets such as Sweden and England, followed by Spain, Japan and the United States. Their Chilean wines include Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, Chardonnay, Merlot and Carmenère. As Miguel Torres notes, "Since we began back in 1878 we have expanded sales around the world. We believe it is important to have a presence in different wine-making countries because the same varieties elaborated in the same way in different parts of the world result in wines of very distinctive character." Chile is one of the only places in the world where the vine disease phylloxera has not devastated vineyards which, coupled with its unique climate, attracted the Torres family. As Marimar remembers, "The decision to go to Chile was really because of Miguel's love for the country. He had a close friend there from his days as a student in Burgundy who talked him into



visiting. Miguel came back saying, 'Chile is a paradise for viticulture' and convinced my father to invest there. We were the first foreign wine company to invest in Chile under Pinochet. As you can imagine, I was pushing for California instead of Chile, but two years later my father agreed to invest in California. That was our second project overseas."
The Torres expansion continued when, in 1997, a strategic decision was made to open a third international venture in China called the Shanghai Torres Wine Trading Co. Ltd. with offices in Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou. The company distributes famous family-owned wines (including Torres) from ten different countries as well as wines from Grace Vineyard, China's most prestigious local cellar. In 2004, Torres planted experimental vineyards with Spanish grape varieties in the Shanxi area where Grace Vineyard is located. The results are sure to prove exciting for the emerging and important Chinese market.
Not only is the family committed to expansion that makes financial sense, they have a true sense of the world around them. From the organically-grown vineyards at Marimar Estate to the Torres Foundation, created in 1986 to promote conservation, the company mantra is that good wine respects Mother Nature.

A bright future

"We must not forget we are living in a global world, so we must open our frontiers and be able to compete with other international wineries. The future for Torres is to consolidate our companies, and thus our wines around the world. Besides, we hope to keep growing both abroad and in Spain where we have recently bought vineyards in several wine regions of the country including Jumilla, Toro and Ribera del Duero," says Miguel Torres.
At the end of my lovely day spent with Marimar Torres and her daughter Cristina enjoying wines from both the Don Miguel and Doña Margarita vineyards, we speak about Marimar's next adventure—seeing her daughter off to college to study the business end of the wine sector. As Cristina proudly tells me while staring out across the expanse of pristine vineyards in front of us, "I never thought I'd do anything but this."
Rest assured, with current and future generations at the helm, the Torres family will remain strong players in the global wine game.

***Leslie Sbrocco** is the author of the award-winning book,* Wine for Women, *and the new* Simple & Savvy Wine Guide *(William Morrow). She is also the host of* Check Please! *on PBS television and a nationally-recognized speaker and wine educator.*

A passion for FLAMENCO

Choreographer Brigitta Luisa Merki

This is a new series about people who love Spain and Spanish culture, a series dedicated to foreigners who understand, identify with and spread our way of doing things back in their own countries of origin. In this first issue we feature the Swiss choreographer Brigitta Luisa Merki, head of a dance company that takes flamenco all over Central Europe.

Spanish at Heart

TEXT
CARLOS TEJERO

TRANSLATION
HAWYS PRITCHARD

PHOTOS
PABLO NEUSTADT/ICEX

Switzerland's first railway was inaugurated in 1847. The 30-km (18.5 miles) long Zurich-Baden line, built as the first stretch of the route to Basle, also served the useful purpose of providing well-off families in Zurich with transportation to the spas in Baden. Though officially named Limmat, after the river that traverses the city and runs into Lake Zurich, people called the line the *Spanisch-Brötli-Bahn* (Spanish bun train), in honor of the popular puff-pastries made and sold by a Spanish baker who had settled in Baden.

As time went by, the pastries began to disappear: "You don't see them in patisseries any more, though I think some bakers make them specially for parties". Cakes were not, however, the reason behind the love affair that developed between our hostess, Brigitta, and Spain and its culture. "My sisters had friends in Spain, and when I was a child in the 1960s I used to imagine it as a tremendously exotic place". After she opted to study Spanish as her foreign language at school, Brigitta's interest grew.

Her Spanish teacher was Fritz Angst (1944-1976) who, under his *nom de plume* Fritz Zorn, entered Swiss literary history through his one book, *Mars* (translated into English and published under the same title). The author, who liked his friends to call him Federico, died of cancer at the early age of 32. His posthumously published book was a tirade against his upbringing, to which he attributed his illness. "Angst, his family surname, means 'fear', and Zorn, his pseudonym, means 'anger' ", explains Brigitta. These two states of being marked his brief and neurotic life, "but he was a really outstanding teacher, a one-off personality", she says.

Brigitta was attracted to theater and dance from a very early age, but her father wanted her to study something that would lead to a proper job, she says, so she became a schoolteacher and taught at a state school for four years. Meanwhile, she was taking acting and dancing lessons, and that was how she met Susana, another important figure in her life.

Susanne Audeoud, born in Berne and still living there at the age of 90, is probably the first ever foreign flamenco artiste. "She turned up at the frontier between Spain and France at the height of the Spanish Civil War, determined to learn flamenco dancing. At first they wouldn't let her, but she stood her ground for a week and finally succeeded". Susanne learned more than flamenco dancing during those tough, distressing years. She immersed herself so thoroughly in Spain and Spanish life that, looking at the photographs of her that Brigitta shows us, one would have taken her for a gypsy, born and bred in Granada's Sacromonte caves.

Upon her return to Switzerland, Susanne devoted herself to spreading the art of flamenco. In 1948, at the opera in Zurich, she met José de Udaeta, a choreographer, dancer and virtuoso castanet player, born in Barcelona but by then settled in Germany. They formed an act known as Susana y José, and for 22 years they took flamenco to some of the major theaters around the world. Enrique Morente, one of today's leading flamenco singers, made his first European tour with them in 1965.

Susana was also busy teaching in such prestigious institutions as the Ballet Opernhaus in Zurich, the Mudra Béjart School in Brussels and the National Ballet of Canada in Toronto. It was in Canada that Cynthia Scott, the Canadian film director, took advantage of the opportunity presented by one of Susana's visits to make her documentary *Flamenco at 5:15*, which won an Oscar for Best Documentary in 1984.

So it was Susana that first instilled in Brigitta a passion for flamenco who, on Susana's advice, headed to Madrid to take lessons at the age of twenty-four. At that time, the flamenco and Spanish dancing school *par excellence* was situated on Amor de Dios street. It has since moved to another, even more picturesque location on the top floor of the Antón Martín market in Lavapiés, one of Madrid's most traditional *barrios*, but it still retains the name Amor de Dios, the street where it originated. Spain's

top dancing and flamenco stars have all passed through this school, either as teachers or pupils: Mercedes and Albano, María Magdalena, Ciro, Tomás de Madrid and La Tati to name a few, all iconic names for anyone who knows anything about this Spanish art form. These were all Brigitta's teachers. Now a prestigious choreographer in her own right, she still returns to the school, and other places, on the lookout for new talent for her shows.

Flamencos en Route

Brigitta used to spend short, one to two-month spells in Spain learning and perfecting her flamenco dancing and then return to Switzerland. "I had to work and save up to be able to go back again," she says. Over the years, she became a great *bailaora* (flamenco dancer), but her artistic and creative urges spurred her onwards and upwards towards the more creative side of the trade: choreography. She longed to create dances of her own, set them in unconventional contexts onstage and collaborate with painters and sculptors on their *mise en scènes*. In 1984, the idea of establishing the Flamencos en Route company (www.flamencos-enroute.com) surfaced which, for its first ten years of existence, had Susana and Antonio Robledo as its artistic directors.

A pianist and composer, Antonio Robledo, whose real name is Armin Janssen, was born in Hannover (Germany) and moved to Zurich in the 1960s. There he met and fell in love with Susana. Antonio composed the music for Susana and José's shows as well as for many of the works performed by Flamencos en Route.

Brigitta single-handedly assumed the artistic direction of the company in 1994. In the 22 years since it was founded, Flamencos en Route has taken flamenco all over Central Europe, performing at major festivals in, for example, Hamburg and Lucerne and at Seville's Bienal de Arte Flamenco. The works they perform are always original and sometimes ground-breaking, as in the case of *Soleá and the Winds*, a show created by Brigitta in collaboration with the choreographer Colin Connor. This particular show combines the dancing of four flamenco bailaoras representing the earth, in quintessential flamenco mode, with that of four ballet dancers representing the ethereal, with the freedom of expression typical of modern dance.
Recognition for Brigitta's work came in 2004 in the form of a Hans-Reinhart-Ring, Switzerland's most prestigious theatrical award, granted only twice before to representatives of the dance world—Heinz Spoerli and Anna Huber.
Flamencos en Route's current program presents works entitled *Afán*, *Caprichos Flamencos* and *El Círculo Mágico*. The music for the first of these uses instruments such as the bandoneon and cello which are not conventional to the genre, though they are becoming more frequently used in contemporary flamenco. "Flamenco in all its facets—singing, music and dancing—is evolving because it is a living art form and is enriched by absorbing new sounds and ideas". For Brigitta to assert this is much like opening Pandora's box: there is an ongoing polemic in Spain about whether or not to preserve the "purity" of flamenco. Fortunately, the evolutionist school of thought seems to be winning. "I don't know how to define a purist", declared flamenco singer José Mercé during an interview, "Someone who only listens to records made 40 or 50 years ago?"
Brigitta created *Caprichos Flamencos* in conjunction with choreographer Joaquín Ruiz, who has worked with bailaores such as Javier Barón and Sara Baras. *El Círculo Mágico* is an ambitious piece which features five musicians and four dancers on stage, as well as the voice of Carmen Linares, one of today's leading cantaoras.

Depth of Feeling

Brigitta tells us her story as she shows us around Baden and its outskirts on a classic Swiss, early autumn day, with locals cycling by, undeterred by the rain. Her house, in a village not far out of town, is simple, informal and welcoming. We approach the garden which, on a dark day like today, is illuminated by a quince tree and its almost phosphorescent fruit. The first floor living area is accessible through a big kitchen-cum-dining-room where I spot a bottle of La Ina Sherry on top of a cupboard. "There's always a bottle of Fino in this house", she says.
Fino is to flamenco what whisky is to the blues, and there are other points of comparison: both genres of music emanate from deep within. Each expresses both the suffering and the joys of humble, hard-working people with a depth and intensity that set them apart from other types of popular music. It's not

for nothing that flamenco singing is also known in Spain as *cante hondo* (pronounced *jondo*, with a guttural "j" in Andalusia) for its deep singing that comes from the depths of one's being. Certain types of vernacular music, such as the Argentine tango or the Portuguese fado, move us because of their sentimental content. "Flamenco is moving but it isn't sentimental. It's an extreme art form. Black and white. Very joyous or very sad. And when it is *jondo*, it moves one very deeply indeed".
Hondura (best described as "deep intensity"), *duende* (a capacity to enchant) and *rajo* (a quality of voice and expressiveness) are flamenco terms which are difficult to define, even by flamenco artistes themselves. *Silencio* is another important concept. The phrase *"tiene mucho silencio"* ("he has a lot of silence"), is a common description applied to a cantaor, guitarist or bailaor. For Brigitta, these words are "a true and genuine expression of something that flamenco artists are able to communicate at moments of inspiration". These unrepeatable, unique moments happen only rarely, and when they do, "everyone—even those unfamiliar with flamenco—is aware of having witnessed something truly special".

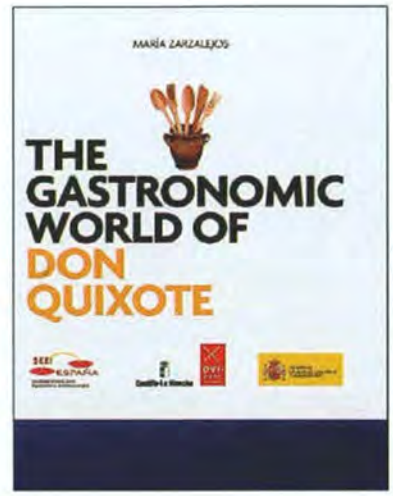
Flamenco soul

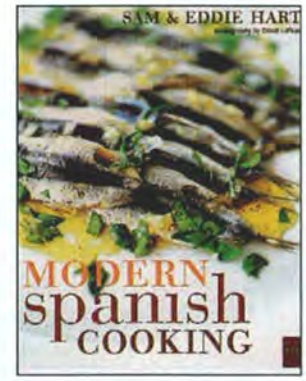
We move on to the Flamencos en Route studio, situated in a small-scale, formerly industrial area of Baden, where the occasional metal-workshop still survives. There is a certain run-down charm about its brick chimney and the water-wheel capitalizing on the river's brisk current. The premises are owned by the local authority, who let it to the company at a concessionary rent ("There's no way that we could afford somewhere like this in Zurich"). The studio occupies the upper storey of an industrial building. A little anteroom contains a few sofas and low tables, a microwave, a fridge and a coffeemaker and is where the members of the company eat and rest during their breaks.
A room beside it serves as the costume-making and wardrobe area, with tailor's dummies, ironing boards and a sewing machine. Brigitta stores all the company's wardrobe and some of Susana's costumes here. "Look at this one—hand-embroidered. They don't make things like that any more".
The bright main space has large windows along both sides. "Here, we don't bother anybody and nobody bothers us". By definition, this company makes a lot of noise. On the floor is a 10 x 10 m (32.8 x 32.8 ft) wooden stage, or *tablao*, identical to one that they carry with them on tour ("The tablao is an instrument in its own right. We take it with us"). There is a grand piano and video and sound equipment. The back wall is covered with mirrors and a few left-over bits of scenery. Beyond it is another little room which the musicians use for rehearsing.
On our way out, I spot a Spanish-written sign pinned to the back of the door: *"No olvidar el cubo de agua"* ("Don't forget the bucket"). "We had a leak", explains Brigitta, "and we used to have to leave a bucket on our way out".
Our tour is rounded off by a visit to the house where the company has its head office and where its members live for the two months that rehearsals before a show usually last. The house is enormous, with three floors and an attic providing enough rooms for each team member to have his or her own. There are also two kitchens. In the upstairs one they sometimes hold spur of the moment parties (terrific parties that are often referred to in Spanish as *"juergas flamencas"*), leaving neighbors in no doubt as to the presence of flamenco artists, though not necessarily Spanish ones. "We've had Italian and North American bailaoras in the company and Swedish and Canadian musicians". They have even had a Japanese cantaora. Even so, they all qualify as flamencos: flamenco is a way of being, a way of life and a culture in its own right.
And how does one become a flamenco? "My specialty in the field is the dance aspect, and flamenco, like every other art form, has a relatively complicated technique which one learns by training. First there's the *zapateado*, the stamping footwork that makes a flamenco dancer into a sort of percussionist, a musician. This element makes it quite different from other forms of dancing. Then you learn to move your arms and hands, which is really difficult. But the hardest thing of all is to understand the singing. That's an essential element because it's what inspires you as you dance". So a foreigner can be a flamenco, but can you be a flamenco if you don't speak Spanish? "No! No doubt about it. You can't understand a culture unless you can really speak its language", declares Brigitta.

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

LASTINGIMPRESSIONS

Text
Samara Kamenecka





The Gastronomic World of Don Quixote by María Zarzalejos. English. As Cervantes' work *Don Quixote* celebrated its 400-year anniversary in 2005, it's appropriate that a book paying homage to the literary treasure be published; however, this book has a twist, as it's a surreal tourist and culinary guide to the region of Castile-La Mancha where the book's adventure unfolds.

As food is a key underlying motif in Cervantes' work, Zarzalejos' book focuses on cooking in the second half of the 16th and early 17th centuries, looking at Manchego cuisine and the entire region—from food and wine to landscapes and traditions—as food is intrinsically linked to geography, culture, politics and the economy.

The first half of the book highlights, with spectacular photographs, the places Don Quixote "visits": Toledo, Villahermosa, Carrión de Calatrava, Torremocha, etc. and gives an informative overview of the history of each city or village, how it figures into Cervantes' work through excerpts, the typical food and places of interest.

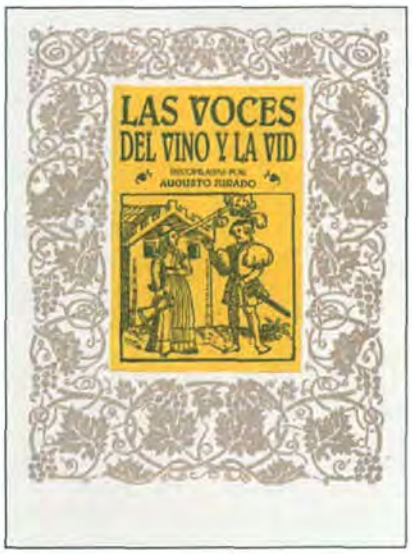
In the second half of the book, top Spanish chefs were asked to imagine that Don Quixote walked into their restaurant and they had to prepare a meal for him using only ingredients from Spain's Golden Age. Ferran Adrià, Juan Mari Arzak and Martin Berasategui are just some of the chefs who present their creative menus and recipes. This book thus takes a look at the history of dishes rooted in La Mancha tradition. It maintains that, while the seasonings, preparations and forms of presentation have changed, the same dishes are still poplar today, even after four centuries.

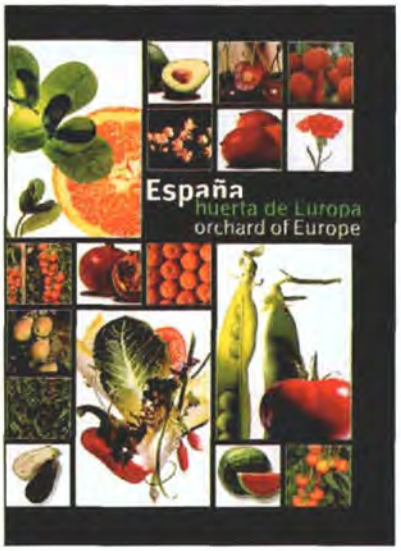
(Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Sociedad Estatal para Exposiciones Internacionales (SEEI); Don Quijote de la Mancha 2005, S.A.; centropublicaciones@mapa.es)

Modern Spanish Cooking by Sam & Eddie Hart. English. These two brothers, who run the popular London-based restaurant Fino, have put together a cookbook based on tapas-style food and traditional Spanish dishes; however, the recipes have been given a modern-day twist without straying from their cultural roots.

The authors maintain that the strength and clarity of flavor is key in their cooking, and their simple philosophy—sourcing the best ingredients and applying Spanish cooking techniques—results in nothing less than superb-tasting dishes. Armed with only the freshest, quality ingredients, this British duo offers 100 recipes ranging from rice, beans and eggs to shellfish, game and meat, as well as desserts.

Each recipe is accompanied by tips and background information and photos beautifully capture the finished

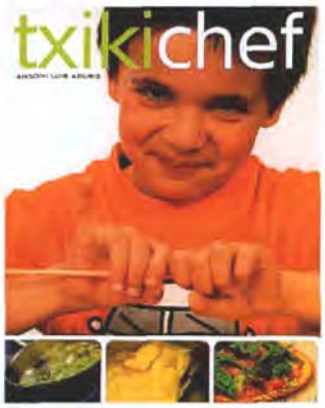


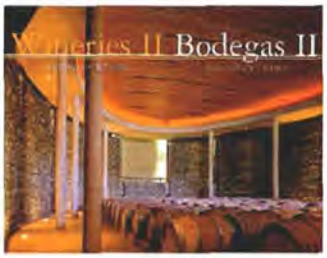


product, which serve as a template to help readers present the dish authentically at home. Mixed in with the recipes are short features on Spanish culture, unique cooking methods and advice on selecting ingredients, which cover topics such as olive oil and the tapas culture. Figs poached in red wine, Santiago tart, pan-fried asparagus with almonds, white beans with clams and seafood paella are just some of Sam and Eddie's suggestions.
This innovative cookbook succeeds not only in offering new ideas to test drive, it reflects the diversity of modern Spanish cuisine and serves as fresh inspiration for those familiar with it and new inspiration for those are aren't. So if you were wondering how to bring that delicious Spanish food into your house, let Sam and Eddie show you how.
(Quadrille Publishing Limited, www.quadrille.co.uk)

Las Voces del Vino y la Vid (The Voices of Wine and the Vine) by Augusto Jurado. Spanish. This is not your average dictionary. On the contrary, Jurado has taken it upon himself to carefully select more than 7,000 words and expressions, creating an exceptionally thorough lexicon dedicated to wine and all things related. From grape growing to the bottling process and up until the toast, every aspect of viniculture requires a very precise, specific term, thus creating an extensive vocabulary which often overlaps and varies according to different regions and time periods.
This dictionary includes words dating back centuries and expressions used today, as well as an interesting selection of terms common only among experts and vocabulary whose origins are based on Castilian Spanish.
According to the book, wine was a primary force uniting cultures in the Mediterranean, and through this wide range of terminology the author demonstrates wine's evolution and its impact on Spanish culture. The clear abundance of words and variety of variations, or "voices", demonstrate wine's undeniable importance throughout history.
From highly technical terms to funny phrases, this dictionary covers cultivation, elaboration, sale and consumption. Entries include not just a definition but often offer an explanation, an example and a regional indicator, and they are accompanied by exquisite photographs, engravings and vignettes, as well as an ample bibliography.
This dictionary thus delves into viniculture and offers a better understanding of the wonderful world of wine, quite literally from A to Z, confirming that one of the world's oldest beverages has an extremely rich vocabulary to complement its equally rich history.
(C&G Comunicación Gráfica, cgedicion@arrakis.es)

España, Huerta de Europa (Spain, Orchard of Europe). English and Spanish. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Spain is one of the world's leading producers of fruits and vegetables, and in this book, experts in the field provide detailed descriptions of crops and their respective regions, histories and gastronomic potential. Furthermore they look at how fruits and vegetables constitute a vital part of each landscape, are key to Mediterranean culture and are a symbol of Spanish cuisine's international prestige. The final chapter offers a unique assortment of fruit and vegetable-based recipes.
Through research, photos and graphs, this text demonstrates how the sector has truly begun to bear fruit, and provides an overall perspective of the industry and its effort to further Spain's image abroad.
(Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Sociedad Estatal para Exposiciones Internacionales (SEEI); centropublicaciones@mapa.es)



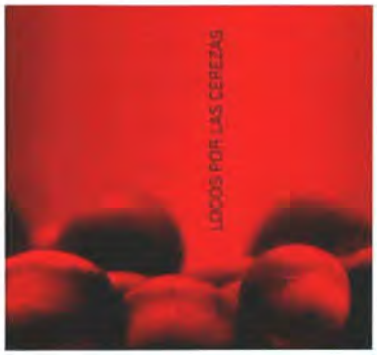


Sabores del Mediterráneo: Aportaciones para Promover un Patrimonio Alimentario Común (Tastes of the Mediterranean: Working Together to Promote a Common Gastronomic Heritage) by Jesús Contreras, Antoni Riera and F.X. Medina (dir.). Spanish. This insightful book takes a look at the Mediterranean as a gastronomical meeting point which simultaneously provides a common foundation while giving rise to diversity. Contributing authors, scholars and intellectuals offer theories about the region's shared food heritage from historical, present and hypothetical future points of view.
From the Romans to the Greeks, medieval to modern times and the west to the east, this book studies the origins of European cuisine, culinary identity, how agriculture evolves and how changing lifestyles affect diets. Today, Mediterranean cooking is deemed modern yet traditional, imaginative, adaptable and healthy, and on these premises it must be further promoted. While it's clear that the region's cuisine varies from place to place, this book encourages readers not only to recognize its distinct unity, but also to celebrate it.
(Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània (IEMed), www.iemed.org)

Txikichef (Little chef) by Andoni Luis Aduriz. Spanish. Basque chef Andoni Aduriz has put together a fun and informative cookbook for children. Written specifically for kids, he urges his budding chefs to put on their aprons and get cooking. The process is presented as an adventure, a cultural project and a lesson in chemistry and magic.
The book's underlying aims are to educate children on eating a healthy, well-balanced diet and develop a gastronomic-cultural background. More than 75 recipes offer a thorough cooking lesson, an activity that's not only recreational but educational as well. Recipes are easy to follow and are accompanied by illustrative photos, picture symbols and fun facts about ingredients and dishes. There are also dozens of riddles, tongue twisters and references to children's stories.
With recipes for everything from homemade pizza, meatballs and flan to pumpkin soup, salads and Spanish tortilla, give your child a spatula and stand back—you might have the next Ferran Adrià on your hands.
(Gourmandia; www.mugaritz.com; Hariadna Editorial, www.hariadna.com)

Wineries II, Architecture & Design/Bodegas II, Arquitectura y Diseño by H. Kliczkowski. English, Spanish. As a follow-up to *Wineries*, *Wineries II* presents another collection of interesting architectural projects devoted to wine production.
From big-name producers to small family businesses, this book provides an overview of how design influences the world of wine. Winery architecture has always had a functional aspect, as the production process often defines space and volume. This book highlights architectural possibilities in terms of structure and emphasizes how landscape, technology and art are vital parts of the process.
Wineries and their architects from all over the world are featured, from the Roshambo in California to the Penfolds Magill Estate in Australia to the Finca Antigua in Spain. Each entry, flanked by an image of the bottle, includes a description of the winery, its architectural plan and a series of photographs and floor diagrams.
From barrel buildings to fermentation halls, *Wineries II* allows readers to drink in an impressive behind-the-scenes look at production.
(Loft Publications, www.loftpublications.com)

Total Cooking 1: Construccionismo Culinario (Culinary Constructivism) by Miguel Sánchez Romero. Spanish. The chef behind the restaurant L'Esguard in Barcelona (named Restaurant of the Year by the Academia Catalana de la Gastronomía) also has a trilogy of books, the first of which, *Total Cooking 1*, approaches the kitchen experience as an artistic, scientific and spiritual activity.
He offers an overview of a different way of cooking: relying on taste, texture, color, and most importantly, smell. This book maintains that cooking should be a highly creative process where the chef searches for harmony in his dishes and where the five senses, along with emotions, pleasure, intuition, sensuality and imagination play key roles in the process.
The last chapter includes elaborate recipes and sensational photos show the artistic quality and symmetry of each dish. Suggestions include sea urchin bisque with saffron yogurt and potato noodles as well as warm dark and white chocolate soup, tandoori sorbet and orange confit with a crispy microfilm shell.
A delicious, spiritual and analytical way to cook.
(Ediciones Akal, www.akal.com)



Locos por las Cerezas (Crazy about Cherries) by Gèrard Solís and Laura Gosalbo. Spanish. At the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards, Solis' and Gosalbo's monograph on cherries was named Best Single Subject Food Book in Catalan 2005 and Best Chef Book in Catalan 2005.

The text, which pays homage to cherries, offers a fascinating and exhaustive look at its origins, different types, cultivation, unknown facts, nutritional content, relationship with wine and tips on buying and conservation.

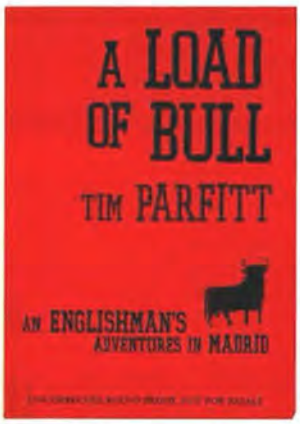
While there are more than 1,000 varieties, there are endless forms of preparation and the 40 recipes here are a testament to the fruit's versatility. From calamari stuffed with crab meat in a cherry sauce to cookie millefeuille filled with cherry mousse, traditional and vanguard suggestions include ideas for meat, poultry, liqueurs, vinegars, marmalade and more.

This book shows a world where cherries are the protagonists, proving that a small fruit can indeed have a big taste.

(Ediciones Elemasgè SCP, elemasgescp@yahoo.es)

Gazpacho by Alberto Herráiz. Spanish. This creative cookbook takes one of the most traditional and world-renowned Spanish dishes and shakes it up. Every region in Spain offers its own variations of this nutritious drink, from the Andalusian *salmorejo* (cold tomato soup with bread and olive oil) to white gazpacho (made with grapes, almonds and garlic). The author describes its history and origins and presents gazpacho in a context beyond that of a cold tomato soup, urging experimentation and the use of unconventional ingredients and unexpected combinations. These recipes suggest ideas for gazpacho as an appetizer, a cocktail, breakfast, a snack, a sauce, as dessert and much more. Additional, collaborative recipes with top chefs such as Ferran Adrià, Alain Dutourmier and Juan Mari Arzak are a chapter in itself. Herráiz dives headfirst into this vegetable wonderland and presents just a few of the infinite and colorful possibilities of which this popular soup is capable.

(Ediciones Akal, www.akal.com)



A Load of Bull by Tim Parfitt. English. This witty book tells the story of a British ex-pat who finds himself, in the late 1980s, in one of the world's most extraordinary and eccentric cities: Madrid. What starts off as a temp job launching Spanish *Vogue* turns into a permanent adventure as Parfitt reflects on the wonders of the Spanish capital and its hedonistic response to years of dictatorship under Franco.

His escapades prove hysterical as he battles everything from pronunciation problems (taxis consistently take him to the wrong addresses) to eating issues (he tries *criadilla*, or bull's testicles, his first day).

This authentic look at life abroad shows a culture clash out of which Parfitt comes not only unscathed but enamored as he ponders, and falls in love with, the beautiful women, delicious food and sleep-deprived lifestyle.

(Pan Macmillan Ltd., www.panmacmillan.com)

Alta Cocina de Andar por Casa (Haute Cuisine at Home) by Asier Abal. Spanish. One of the Basque country's most highly praised chefs, Asier Abal, has put together a fantastic cookbook.

Haute cuisine at home is a novel concept, and while it may be a cooking style marked by careful preparation and intense attention to detail, Abal proves you don't have to be an award-winning chef to prepare an award-worthy meal.

He offers more than 100 delicious dish ideas including hot and cold appetizers, fish and seafood, beef and poultry and desserts. A wine guide and a section on how to set the table follow. Thought you'd never make chicken salad with an apple and fried banana vinaigrette? Think again! Cod confit with roasted almonds and mushrooms seem out of your league? Not at all!

It's clear that Abal poured his passion and enthusiasm into this book—sentiments which are sure to leap right off the page and accompany you in the kitchen.

(Ttarttalo, www.ttarttalo.com)

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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.

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javiersanchez@ibermed.es

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la@legumbresdecalidad.com
www.legumbresdecalidad.com

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www.eltallergastronomico.com

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www.abricome.com

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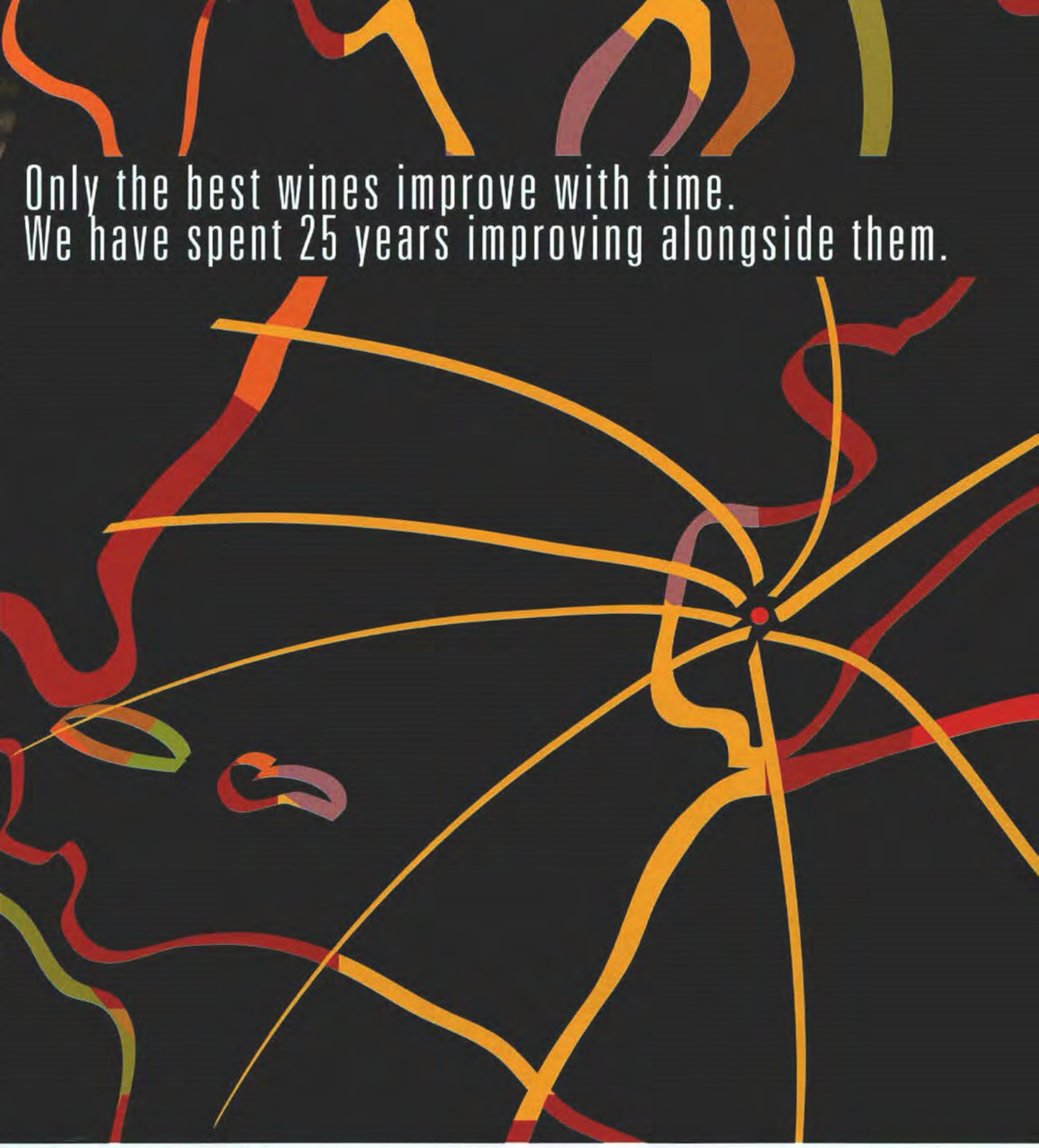

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