

S P A I N GOURMETOUR

FOOD, WINE & TRAVEL QUARTERLY MAGAZINE



No. 23-2nd quarter 1991 - US \$ 2

SUMMERTIME LIGHT

HEALTHY EATING, SPANISH STYLE

ROSES, ROSADOS... THE VERY PINK OF COURTESY...
NAVARRE. PROUDLY ALONE



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WARM TO THE EXPERIENCE.

S P A I N GOURMETOUR

No one remotely interested in food today can be unaware of the fact that modern nutritionists have declared the centuries-old Mediterranean diet one of the healthiest in the world. Spanish eating habits exemplify it beautifully: olive oil, fish, vegetables, fruit and pulses are all key features in its traditional and still staple dishes.

And they're not just good for you: they also taste good, look good and, being seasonal, are often cheap. What could be better? In this issue, we take a look at some of Spain's summer favourites.

Our wine section features a year-round favourite, though it comes particularly into its own in summer: rosé. Young, vivid rosés are produced in DOs all over Spain, with differences of grape variety and soil making for a wide choice. Navarre, though, is the leader in the field. Interestingly, this wine-growing area is turning its attention to reds with a view to bringing them up to the traditionally high standards of its rosés. Experiments carried out over the last few years are beginning to show promising results.

Navarre is a fascinating part of the country with a lot more to it than wine. This northern province embraces landscape which ranges from the lush green to the frankly arid, boasts gems of Romanesque architecture inherited from the heyday of the pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela on whose route it lies, food which is famous throughout Spain, and people whose hospitality is legendary.

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COVER

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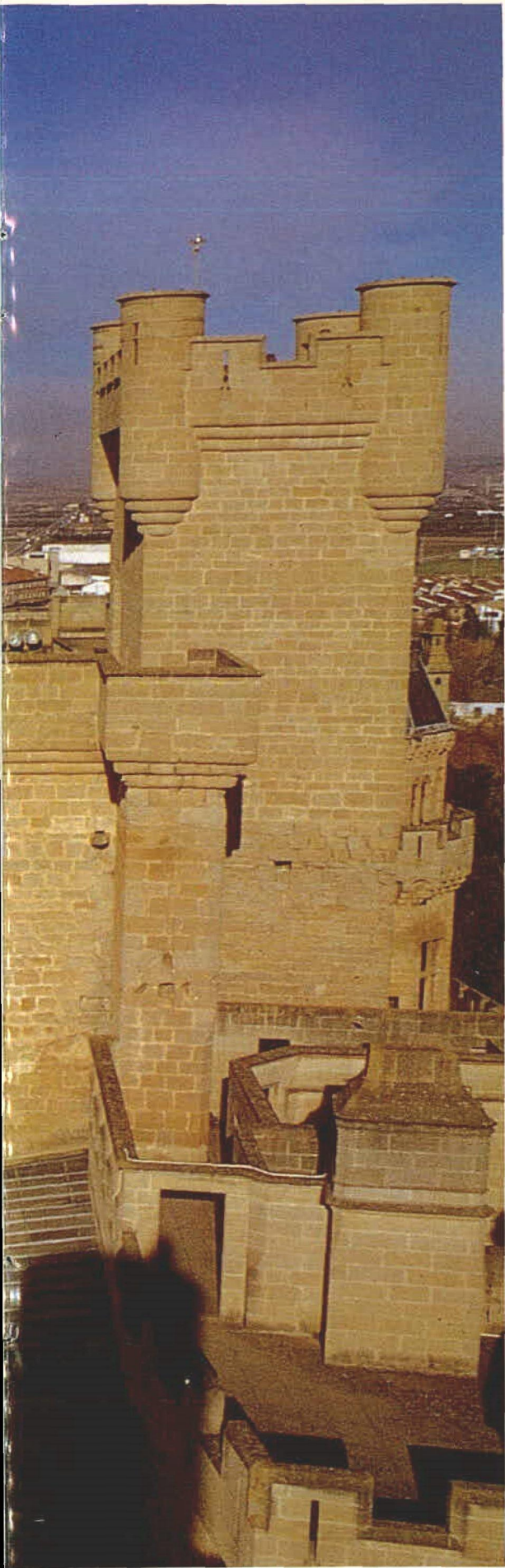
NAVARRRE

PROUDLY ALONE

Text: **William Chislett**

Photos: **P. Sancho-Mata**

Navarre has a lot more to offer than the San Fermin bullrunning fiestas in July. It is the most independent of the four Basque provinces and its landscape one of the most varied in Spain.



In Navarre log cutting, carrying weighted sacks and tugs of war are sports. Champions are regional heroes, admired for their brute strength. Only a people who have constantly fought for their independence could turn such activities into entertainment. Navarre was an independent kingdom in the early 10th century. The Basque heartland in the crook of the Bay of Biscay remained untouched after the Moors found a «people like beasts» and decided not to invade. The mountainous part of this region developed into the kingdom of Navarre.

These early kingdoms (Leon was another and the autonomous Moorish states in Zaragoza) were governed as family properties in which marital alliances played a key role. Toda, the Queen Mother of Navarre, for example, was the mother-in-law of Count Fernán González, ruler of independent Castile, great aunt of Abd-er-Rahman III of Al-Andalus (Andalusía) and grandmother of King Sancho the Fat.

Navarre remained independent until 1512 when Fernando, the King of Aragon and Regent of Castile, who was waging a war against the French, demanded that the Navarrese allow his troops free passage through their realm. They refused and he invaded, annexing the kingdom and so completing the unification of the lands that today comprise Spain. Although integrated into the Spanish state, Navarre



(along with the other Basque provinces of Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa and Alava in varying degrees) regained a good measure of power from the central government. It was the only province outside the Americas to be ruled by a viceroy and it retained its own legislature, executive and judiciary. In the nineteenth century the Navarrese were striking coins depicting King Fernando VII of Spain as King Fernando III of Navarre. These rights were embodied in codes of traditional law known as *fueros*.

Navarre still enjoys the *fueros* which give it a fair degree of autonomy. Even under the obsessively centralist General Franco Navarre was an island of autonomy within a sea of uniformity boasting its own legislature and government. (In 1937 Franco abolished the home rule and economic rights of Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa because they took the Republican side.) Navarre unlike the other three Basque provinces

Outside the Roman church of Ujue there are some beautiful scenes of the grape harvest carved on stone.

it is not administratively part of the Basque country. Navarre is a loner.

The Navarrese had their own dialect which originated from the area once inhabited by the Vascones, one of the four tribes which inhabited what is now the Basque country. They are bigger and stronger than the average Spaniard, with a reputation for gluttony.

MARKET GARDEN

Because of its history as an independent kingdom, which has incorporated cultures from Europe and Africa, Navarre is rich in churches, monasteries, castles and hermitages. Church art lovers will love Navarre. Its 10,421 square kilometres (4,023 square miles) offers some of the most varied landscape in all Spain. In a straight north-south line of 90 kms (56 miles) you can contemplate the snow covered peaks of the Pyrenees and the strange and captivating shapes that the wind has created in the desert landscape of the Bardenas Reales.

We approached Navarre from Madrid, driving through the snow-covered provinces of Guadalupe and Soria in early February. Soria is noted for the coldest climate in Spain and is also the least densely populated. It took us five hours and we were relieved to reach our destination. My companion assured me that we had reached Navarre because she noted that the quality of the roads had improved. They seemed the same to me.

Our first stop was in Tudela, the second city of Navarre and the centre of the Ribera area, known as Spain's «market garden» because of its fertile irrigated land and wonderfully fresh vegetables. It was well past lunch time and what better introduction to a region than through its food. In the old part of the city near to the Colegiata, an early Gothic church, we found Meson Julián where I had my first taste of the area's renowned vegetables. The hearts of lettuce (*cogollos de lechuga*) were sparklingly green and crisp; all previous lettuces seemed insipid by comparison. The artichokes, runner beans, peas and broad beans in the *menestra de verduras* all tasted as if they had just been picked. Only the asparagus wasn't fresh, for which Julián, the



owner of the restaurant, apologised. It was not the season.

The \$64,000 question which everyone asks themselves after visiting Navarre is why do the vegetables have a slightly sweeter and fresher taste. Julian's theory seemed as good as anyone's. The Ribera enjoyed a microclimate, he said, as it was a kind of corridor between mountains and the plateau of Castile. There was something special in the water of the Ebro river and its tributaries. He told us that he was «very passionate» about vegetables from the Ribera and that put to the test he might be able to select them from others grown elsewhere. We followed the vegetables with lamb from the back of the knee in a pepper sauce, done with garlic and pieces of ham.

Perched on a summit is Ufue, surrounded by a perfect stillness and the Pyrenees in the background.

Navarre is renowned in Spain, and increasingly outside, for its wonderfully fresh vegetables.





After lunch we walked around the centre of Tudela, stopping to admire the 116 intricately sculptured groups depicting the Last Judgement on the west door of the church. Tudela was made a dependency of the Caliphate of Cordoba in the ninth century, which explains the size of its Moorish quarter, the *Morería* and the predominance of old brick houses in the Mudejar style.

Leaving Tudela by the Pamplona road we reached Olite, whose castle belonging to the kings of Navarre was visible from several kilometres. Olite is an obligatory stop for anyone visiting Navarre. Not only is there a *Parador* (see box) in a converted fortress, but Olite is a well preserved Gothic town. Its history stretches back much further as Olite was the Roman *Ologicus* and preserves remains of Roman walls.

Next morning we set off to explore the area between Tafalla and Puente la Reina. Leaving the



main Olite-Pamplona road (N-121) at Tafalla we headed towards Artajona whose massive fortified enclave known as the *Cerco de Artajona* was shrouded in mist. The walls are flanked by square towers. At the top is the church of San Saturnino whose tympanum in the west door is

carved in the French style to illustrate the life of the saint. The church was locked and on enquiring we were told that the key was kept in a house just below. We went there, but had no luck. A woman told us she could not open the church because her mother was sick. My companion thought she did not like the look of us. We did not miss a great deal, however, as the 14th century murals which once covered the apse are now in the Navarre Museum in Pamplona. Leaving the village for Puente de la Reina we passed asparagus fields and could smell rosemary.

We were greeted at the entrance to Puente la Reina by a prominent sign reading «Non-nuclear and non-military zone». With the Gulf war still raging then it made us feel strangely secure. The town takes its name from the old hump-backed bridge which spans the Arga river and has been well trodden over the ages by pilgrims en route to Santiago de Compostela. It is here that the two main French pilgrim roads, after crossing the Pyrenees by the Roncesvalles and Somport Passes respectively, met to continue together along the final stage. Visitors are reminded of the town's importance in the Santiago pilgrimage route by a bronze pilgrim at the entrance to Puente la Reina from Pamplona. A few kilometres outside Puente la Reina is the hermitage of Eunat, a Romanesque chapel of harmonious proportions which is believed to have been a funerary chapel on the pilgrim road. Back to more earthly matters, *Señorío de Sarriá* wine comes from the Puente la Reina and can be bought directly from the producers. A good buy, the

No one visiting Navarre for the first time can fail to be amazed by the diversity of its landscape.



Pimientos del Piquillo de Lodosa

Known as «red gold», the *pimientos del piquillo de Lodosa* are the new kings of the Ribera vegetable growing area. Since 1987 they have enjoyed denomination of origin status.

Small (no longer than 10 cm or 4 inches), triangular and with a pointed apex, they are grown in five townships in the southwest of Navarre (Lodosa, Mendavia, Sartaguda, Andosilla and Carcar) in a region of the Ebro Valley called the Ribera Alta. They have a sweet taste which is attributed to the area's micro-climate and the sandy quality of the soil.

In September and October, a delicious smell perfumes the air of the little towns as the women roast peppers in front of their houses over wood fires. When they are cold, they are cored to remove the seeds. These are skilled processes and the pepper must never be washed in water or any chemical solution, otherwise it loses its distinct flavour. Other types of fine red peppers grown in Spain are *choriceros* and *del cuerno*, found mostly in the Basque Country, and *morrones* in Aragon and Murcia; but reputedly the finest are from Lodosa.



C.R.D.O. PIMIENTOS DEL PIQUILLO DE LODOSA

Lodosa red pepper and sbellfish piperade (*Cuajado de pimientos del piquillo de Lodosa y marisco*)

Serves 4:
8 canned Lodosa red peppers
8 eggs
50 g butter
12 prawn, Dublin Bay prawn or crayfish tails
2 shallots
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Beat the eggs until foaming. Melt the butter in a pan and cook the finely-chopped shallots in it until soft. Place the pan in a bain-marie and add the eggs, 4 of the red peppers cut into strips and the sea-food tails, raw and peeled. Stir with a wooden spoon until the eggs begin to set, then season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve just as the eggs are setting, with the rest of the red peppers.

Lodosa red peppers with garlic (*Cazuela de pimientos del piquillo de Lodosa con ajos*)

Serves 4:
3 tins Lodosa red peppers
1 head garlic
2 dl olive oil
salt to taste

Heat the oil in an earthenware dish. Meanwhile, peel the garlic cloves and cut each in two. Add to the oil and just when they start turning golden, add the red peppers and their liquid. Season to taste. Turn the dish round and round so that the liquids blend into a sauce. Serve hot.

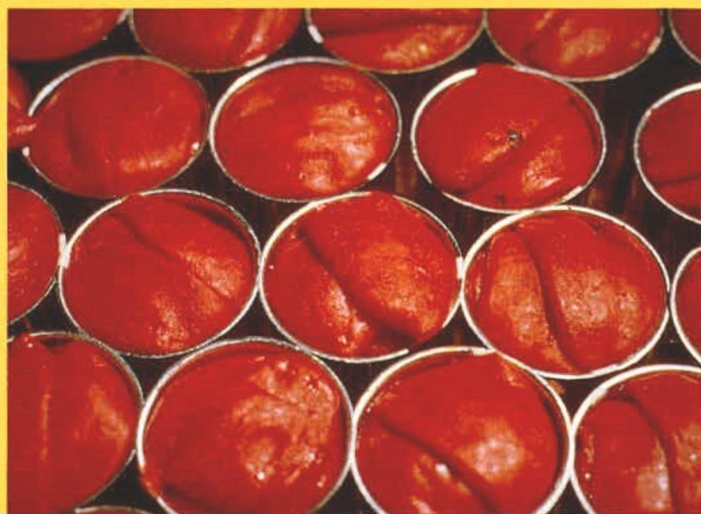
Lodosa red pepper salad with tuna

(*Ensalada de pimientos del piquillo de Lodosa con ventresca de bonito*)

Serves 4
12 canned red peppers
4 spring onions
4 slices poached centre-cut tuna (canned in olive oil will do)
olive oil for dressing
2 cloves garlic
2 tbsps wine vinegar
salt to taste

Cut the peppers into thick strips and spread them on the bottom of a deep dish. In a frying pan, heat the oil and gently fry the thinly-sliced garlic. When it is on the point of turning golden, add the vinegar to the pan and stir in. Season the peppers with salt, then pour the mixture from the frying pan on top. Mix well with a wooden spoon, then turn the mixture out onto a serving dish. Place the fish pieces on top, and sprinkle with chopped spring onions and chopped hard boiled egg.

C.R.D.O. PIMIENTOS DEL PIQUILLO DE LODOSA



Small, triangular and with a pointed apex, the pimientos del piquillo de Lodosa are the new kings of the Ribera.

FOOD OF KINGS

The Lodosa peppers have joined the other distinguished products of Navarre —Roncal cheese, *pacharán* (made from sloe berries and anise) and asparagus. In the Ebro valley, where they are grown, the Lodosa peppers are known as *manjar de reyes* (food of kings) because they were favoured by the kings of Navarre.

They can be served in many different ways, filled with fish, sea food or meat. Growers say the best way is the simplest: on their own with a twinge of salt, a few drops of olive oil and served in an earthen casserole. They are right.

BOOM

The pepper has been a traditional product of Lodosa for centuries. In the 1970s the *piquillo* (so-called because of its pointed shape) began to be known outside the Ribera region, particularly in restaurants in the Basque country. In the 1980s the pepper enjoyed a boom, with the surge in new cuisine, and appeared stuffed with vegetables or fish on the menus of fashionable restaurants. Faced with a massive leap in demand, «industrial» peppers began to appear —brought from other areas and canned at the same plants. They are consumed almost entirely in Spain, though some Lodosa peppers are finding their way to restaurants in southwest France. Recently, a brotherhood was formed between Lodosa and Espelette in the French Basque Country which produces hot peppers.

The granting of the denomination of origin was a great blessing for Lodosa, giving it prestige on international markets. Only the genuine article can be sold in bottles or cans bearing the words «*pimientos del piquillo de Lodosa*». Other types bear the words «*pimientos del piquillo*». Be sure to check that you have the right one.

While the real ones have to be baked over coal or charcoal, the «industrial» *piquillo* can be cooked in any way and washed, so losing its flavour. These are canned with liquid to 32-38 per cent of the net contents of the container, so diluting the taste, while the can containing the real thing has a maximum of 3 per cent. Those from Lodosa are hand peeled, while the others are sprayed in order to remove the skin. Naturally, the Lodosa peppers are more expensive.

white is crystal pale, with a slight nutty-floral flavour and dry. It is a good choice for seafood, light fowl, shellfish or cold cuts.

VIEW OF THE PYRENEES

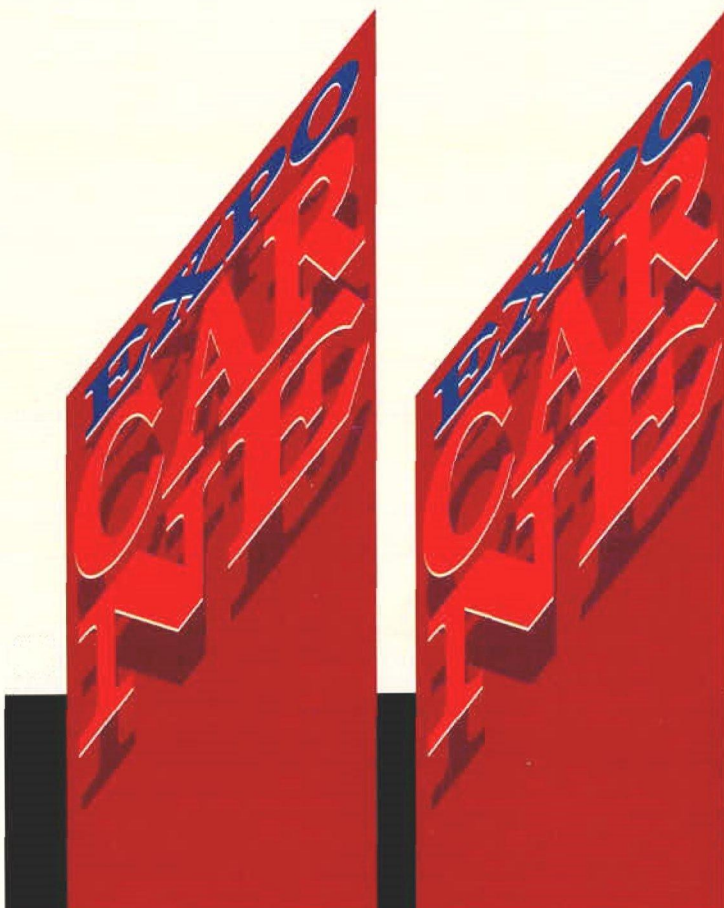
We then returned to Tafalla and took the road to Ujue. After an hour's drive we reached a stone cross in the road and across the valley, perched on a summit, was Ujue. Mist was quickly descending. There was a perfect stillness. All we could hear were the sounds of dogs barking in the distance. On a clear day you can see the Pyrenees, but we were not in luck. We made our way to the church, the focal point of all villages, as we had been told that the Virgin of Ujue was particularly powerful. A *romería* procession dating back to the 14th century sets out every year on the Sunday after St. Mark's Day (April 25), when penitents dressed in black capes and bearing a Cross gather from far and wide to implore the mercy of the Virgin of Ujue.



Two different views of Navarre. Peppers drying in the sun and a refreshing fountain in one of Spain's finest parks, the Señorío of Bertiz.



Inside the church, a woman stood behind the iron gate protecting the altar praying to the venerated Santa Maria la Blanca, a wooden Romanesque statue, plated in silver. My Catholic companion said we should light some candles in the Virgin's honour and maybe the weather would change. Although a Protestant cynic, I agreed. We put coins in a slot and electric candles lit up. (Alas, modern civilisation had caught up with Ujue and done away with ordinary candles.) We went outside and soon afterwards the woman followed, offering to sell us almonds as soon as she saw us. It turned out that she ran the small souvenir shop facing the church. We followed her in and bought almonds. Stacked in disorderly fashion along one side of the shop were several shelves of old books. Sensing our curiosity, she told us that they were late 16th century Gregorian chants which had been removed from the church because visitors were stealing pages. She took a large tome off the shelf and opened it



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Gastronomy

The Navarrese have a reputation of being tireless eaters and drinkers. Even people condemned to death in the Middle Ages received «good food, game, mutton, fish and jams» as well as cakes, sweets and wine between meals, according to local orders, until they stepped onto the scaffold.

Pilgrims on the road to Santiago de Compostela were recommended to sample trout when passing through Navarre. This same trout, bred in cold clear mountain streams that Aymerich Picaut praised in the Middle Ages, was a favourite of Ernest Hemingway in the 20th century. *Trucha a la navarra* is wrapped in ham and fried.

Many dishes are linked to calendar dates and fiestas. At Christmas a popular desert is *sopa cana*, made with milk, bread, cinnamon and turkey fat. Other favourites are *ajoiarriero*—dried cod cut up into little pieces and fried together with tomatoes, peppers and garlic—and *relleno* (shaped like a black pudding it is made from lambs' intestines, rice, fat, eggs, parsley and saffron).

Navarre is renowned in Spain, and increasingly outside, for its vegetables, which mainly come from La Ribera in the south. A famous dish is *caldereta ribereña*, a country-style stew named after the cauldron in which it is made: deep, with three legs so a fire can be built underneath. The Arab and Mediterranean influence is still visible in Tudela, centre of the Ribera area, where *morcillas* (blood sausages) are stuffed with pine nuts and raisins, flavouring them with cinnamon. The northern mountain areas, in the Pyrenees, are a paradise for mushrooms and game, such as dove and quail. Quail are combined with some very special beans, the *pochas*, in the wonderful dish *codornices con pochas*, only available at the beginning of the hunting season in the autumn. Pamplona is known for its *chorizos* and other sausages, notably the narrow *chistorra*, and the Roncal valley for its cheese.

FASHIONABLE LIQUEUR

Navarre is also the home of *pacharán* (made from sloe berries and anise), which since 1987 has become a fashionable liqueur in all of Spain and is being exported as far afield as Canada and Japan.

Pacharán is to Navarre what *fino* sherry is to Andalusia, *cava* to Catalonia, *cider* to Asturias or *orujo* to Galicia. *Pacharán's* success is part of a general move to drinks that are made from natural products and are lighter in alcohol. *Pacharán* has between 25 and 30 degrees. It is also very easy to make, as there are only two ingredients. Between 200 and 250 grams (around 8 ounces) of

on the counter. «Touch it if you want», she invited. We ran our hands over the thick parchment pages.

By now it was mid afternoon and the sun was out. The candles had worked. Several families were waiting in the square to eat at the Meson de las Torres, a well established restaurant, so we decided to try our luck at the Me-



Menestra de verduras.

sloe berries per litre of anise are steeped in the spirit for three to six months in a period of maceration which reduces alcohol content, interrupted only by a weekly «agitation» when the mixture gets a gentle stir.

The most expensive restaurants do not necessarily serve the best food. The culinary tradition is so powerful in Navarre that it often pays to eat in a *mesón* (tavern), or an *asador* (which literally means spit roaster). Well and lesser known restaurants are listed below.

PAMPLONA

Josetxo (Príncipe de Viana, 1. Tel.: 22 20 97). This restaurant is recommended by Marimar Torres in her book *The Spanish Table*. She recommends *bacalao al ajoarriero* (codfish in a tomato and red pepper sauce), *cordero chilindrón* (lamb in a mild dried pepper sauce) and *sorbete de moras* (blackberry sherbet).

Hartz (Juan de Labrit, 19. Tel.: 22 45 68). This restaurant is run by two sisters.

Rodero (Arrieta, 3. Tel.: 22 80 35).

Las Pocholas (Sarasate, 6. Tel.: 22 22 14).

ELIZONDO

Santxotena (Pedro Azular, no number. Tel.: 58 02 97).

LEIZA

Basa Kabi (Alto de Leiza. Tel.: 51 01 25).

NAVASCUES

Casa Braco (As you approach the town. Tel.: 47 00 07).

TAFALLA

Tubal (Plaza Navarra, 2. Tel.: 70 08 52).

TUDELA

Mesón Julián (Merced, 9. Tel.: 82 20 28).

The following recipes all come from Janet Mendel's bestselling «*Cooking in Spain*» (Lookout, 1987).

Lamb Saute, Navarre Style (Cochifrito a la Navarra)

Serves 4:

1 kilo boned lamb
3 tablespoons lard or oil
1 onion, chopped
1/4 teaspoon pepper
300 ml of water
1/2 teaspoon salt *
2 cloves of garlic, chopped
2 teaspoons paprika
1 lemon
parsley

Cut the lamb into small cubes. Heat the lard in a heavy frying pan and on a high heat saute the meat. When it is partially browned, add the chopped onion and garlic. Keep stirring the lamb while it browns. Then add the paprika and pepper and immediately add the water. Continue cooking on a hot fire until the liquid is evaporated and the meat begins to fry again, then add the juice of the lemon and the parsley. Cover the pan and cook slowly another 15 minutes.

Trout, Navarre Style (Trucha a la Navarra)

Slit fairly large trout (350 grams) along the belly, removing the backbone, but leaving head and tail intact. Wash and pat dry. Put a thin slice of serrano ham inside the cavity. Salt the fish and let it sit for 15 minutes. Then dredge it in flour and saute it gently in oil until nicely browned on both sides. Serve with lemon.

Lamb Chops, Pamplona Style (Chuletetas de cordero a la Pamplona)

Serves 4:

12-16 baby lamb chops
2 tablespoons oil
2 tablespoons lard
100 g diced ham
1 onion, chopped
3 tomatoes, peeled and chopped
1 teaspoon sugar
salt and pepper
1/4 kilo chorizo sausage

Heat the oil and lard in a frying pan and dry the lamb chops. As they are browned, transfer them to an oven casserole. In the same fat dry the diced ham and chopped onion. Then add the tomatoes, sugar, salt and pepper. Let cook for several minutes, then pour the sauce over the lamb chops. Put in a medium oven until the meat is tender, about 20 minutes. Cover the casserole with a layer of sliced chorizo and return to the oven to cook for several minutes. Serve in the same casserole.

son Las Migas, opened last year. We had the whole restaurant to ourselves and shared a bowl of *migas* (crumbs from the previous day's bread, ham, mushrooms, garlic and paprika), followed by lamb chops cooked in front of us over a wood fire and a bottle of local *clarete*.

We returned to San Martin de Unx and headed north east to

the monastery at Leyre. By the time we arrived it was dusk and we were not able to fully appreciate the magnificent setting. The abbey of San Salvador of Leyre had established itself as the spiritual centre of Navarre by the early 11th century. But then it went into decline because of neglect and rivalry and was abandoned in the 19th century. In 1954 a




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Benedictine community returned to restore the buildings. We were in time for mass—and more candle lighting, or «buying saints» as my companion called it. The hostelry at the monastery is closed from January to Easter week, so we had to make do with the El Jabalí (wild boar) hostel below the monastery at Yesa. There was a large open fire to welcome us. Individual rooms were not much more than \$ 10 a night.

Next morning we went back to the monastery, and saw our first eagle as we drove up the steeply winding approach road. The view over the manmade Lake Yesa is alone worth the visit. On all sides are marl hills, their limestone forming majestic ramparts while in the Leyre Sierra itself, great walls of mixed ochre coloured stone and local rock hang suspended, halfway up the ridge face. At the souvenir shop there is honey, almonds and a liqueur made from 35 herbs, all picked by the monastery's herbalist. We learned from the monk at the shop that had we stayed after mass the previous evening we could have attended evening with Gregorian chants. Our fault for not asking.

THE SONG OF ROLAND

From Leyre we drove towards Pamplona and then took the turn-



Landscape near Roncesvalles, where arrived the pilgrims who had undergone the rigours of crossing the Pyrenees.

ing on our right to Navascues and the Pyrenees. The Irati and Salazar rivers flow through deep, narrow canyons. The valley is dotted with villages. The higher we climbed the colder it became and at Iso we caught our first glimpse of the snow-capped Pyrenees. At Ustes we saw another eagle. We stopped at Ochagavia for a *carajillo* (coffee with burned brandy and sugar) which produced a pleasant inner glow. The church at Ochagavia bears a plaque recalling the baptism in 1730 of Juan Esandi, a Jesuit who was killed in 1768 in the Philippines. (Javier not very far away from Leyre is the birthplace of Francis Xavier who with his Basque compatriot Ignatius Loyola founded the Society of Jesus.)

The bucolic Baztan Valley is the land of pastures and sheep. There you can find the traditional bowls in wood for milk and cheese.



Olite is half way between Pamplona, the capital of Navarre, and Tudela, the centre of the vegetable-growing area. Carlos III El Noble, King of Navarre, gave the orders in 1406 for the castle to be built. The parador lies below three of the 15 original towers and was originally the summer residence of the Noble King who retired and died there in 1425. The Court was held several times at the fortress which is called Príncipe de Viana in memory of the Infante (grandson of Carlos III), who spent his childhood there.

Being French—a Count of Evreux and native of Mantes—Carlos III used architects from north of the Pyrenees to help design the fortress. What emerged was a cross between the massive stone constructions of the 13th century and the royal residences of the late 15th century. Behind the towers marking the perimeter were hanging gardens; within were halls and chambers, brilliantly decorated by Moorish craftsmen with *azulejos*, painted plasterwork and coloured marquetry ceilings.

MEDIEVAL CITY

The whole complex which has the appearance and size of a medieval city has undergone several alterations. It was first damaged during the intrigues and fights between the «beamonteses»—followers of the Prince—and the «agramonteses»—followers of Juan II, a pretender to the throne of Navarre. Later, during Spain's War of Independence (1808-13), Espoz y Mina, a guerrilla fighter, ordered the building to be set on fire in 1813 to prevent the French from establishing a stronghold there. The castle began to be repaired and restored in 1937 and some work still continues.

The parador was opened in 1966 with eight double rooms and one single. A modern wing was added in 1975, increasing the number of rooms to 30, and today there are 43. The parador enjoys one of the highest occupancy rates in Spain: last year it was 72 per cent, according to Daniel Montero, the manager. Some 40 per cent of visitors are foreigners, exploring Navarre or stopping in Olite en route to France or heading south.

Given the choice, you should ask for room 108 which is on two levels and is reached by a long and narrow staircase in one of the towers. Be careful how you descend the stairs if you have spent the evening savouring the local wines. From the room's turret window there is a splendid view of Olite.

This room is directly above the Capilla de San Jorge which was the chapel for the kings of Navarre. Today it is a small private room for lunches or dinners, with a large round table and high backed chairs, such as one imagines were used by the original inhabitants of the castle.

Another intriguing room is 107 which has a vast fireplace (no longer used) and a four poster bed. Each room is individually styled. My only complaint is that the bedside lights are too dim which makes nighttime reading a strain on the eyes.

LOVINGLY RESTORED

The building has been lovingly restored and original features retained where possible.

Olite's Parador

Navarre's parador is in Olite, the «Gothic town» as it is known, which was the preferred residence of the Kings of Navarre in the 15th century. It lies near the magnificent palace-cum-castle which is a national monument.



Swords on the walls and suits of armour recall its glorious past. Apart from the Capilla de San Jorge there is La Torre de la Prision, which was a prison and now serves as a cosy little room.

The parador's restaurant seats 100. Many of the typical Navarran dishes are served, such as leg of lamb garnished with tomatoes and peppers (*pierna de cordero al chilindrón*), mixed vegetables (*menestra de verduras de la buerta navarra*) and codfish prepared with snails (*bacalao al ajoarriero con caracoles*). As I always eat lightly in the evening, I ordered fresh grilled hake and Señorío de Sarria white wine. As I waited I sampled the aperitifs of a glass of sherry, cheese, ham and, of course, the famous *pimiento del piquillo de Lodosa* (red pepper).

The castle is a lance's throw away and is next to the Santa Maria la Real chapel whose façade is a beautiful example of Navarre Gothic sculpture. It is austere inside because there is little furniture, and the view of Olite from the battlements inspires one to push on and explore.

Parador de Olite
30190 Olite
Tel.: (48) 74 00 00
Fax: (48) 74 02 01

Leg of Lamb *Chilindrón* (*Pierna de cordero al chilindrón*)

Serves 6:
2.5 kg of leg of lamb
4 small red peppers
150 g peeled tomatoes
100 g green peppers
200 g onions
2 dl of white wine
Salt and ground white pepper
100 g flour

Debone legs of lamb and use bones to make



a broth, which should simmer for one and a half hours. Cut the meat into small pieces, removing excess fat. Season with salt and pepper and coat in flour. Heat oil in frying pan and brown meat; as the pieces brown transfer them to a second pan to cook slowly in the white wine. In the same oil, fry the minced onion and green pepper, add the peeled and sliced tomato and sautee briefly. Then add remaining flour and stir. Strain the bone broth, add to mixture, and when it has come to a boil add the meat. Stir and add the chopped red peppers. Season with salt and white pepper to taste. Cook over low heat until meat is tender (approximately 35-40 minutes). garnish with sprigs of parsley.

Fresh Navarre Vegetables (*Menestra de verduras de la buerta navarra*)

Serves 6:
500 g green beans
1 dozen artichokes
300 g peas
300 g carrots
500 g mushrooms

12 asparagus tips
1 dl olive oil
2 cloves garlic
100 g serrano ham
salt and pepper
1/2 cup dry sherry

Clean the vegetables and cook separately in lightly salted water, except the artichokes, which should be steamed. In a deep frying pan, heat the oil and fry the sliced garlic cloves. Brown the cubed serrano ham lightly and add the vegetables except for the asparagus; sautee and add sherry. Season with salt and ground pepper to taste. Arrange on plate, top with asparagus



Olite's parador lies near the magnificent palace-cum-castle which is a national monument.

and heat in oven 10 minutes. Garnish with parsley sprigs.

Cod with Garlic and Snails (*Bacalao al ajoarriero con caracoles*)

Serves 6:
1.5 kg cod fillets
400 g snails
200 g tomatoes, peeled and seeded
4 small red peppers
4 cloves garlic
100 g onion
50 g green peppers
1/4 litre olive oil
Ground white pepper

Soak cod in water for 24 hours to remove salty taste. Water should be changed several times. Remove skin and bones and cut into cubes of about 2 cm (0.75 inches). In a heavy saucepan, heat oil and the minced garlic cloves; when the garlic is soft add the minced onion and green pepper and sautee gently over a low fire. Add the tomato, drained well and minced, and simmer. Wash snails thoroughly and add to tomato mixture. Cook briefly, stirring, and add fish and chopped red peppers. Cook over low heat for 15 minutes. Garnish with sprigs of parsley.

Navarre

Land of contrasts

No one visiting Navarre for the first time can fail to be amazed by the diversity of its landscape. The contrast between its highlands and flat lowlands is dramatic, and its inhabitants (the mountain people reserved and self-contained, the people of the plain open and extrovert) seem to reflect their geographical environment. Navarre is perhaps the area of the country which most vividly exemplifies Spain's reputation as a country of contrasts.

Navarre extends over an area of 10,421 square kilometres (4,023 square miles), and is divided into three clearly differentiated zones known as *la Montaña* (the Highlands), *la Zona Media* (the Middle Area), and *la Ribera* (the River Plain). These broadly correspond to the north, centre and south of the province.

Its sparsely populated north-eastern flank is famed for its areas of breathtaking natural beauty. Among them are the Roncal and Salazar Valley from where, until not so long ago, raft-like masses of tree-trunks were despatched by river down to Zaragoza. Further west lies the vast forested area of Irati, one of the biggest beechwoods in Europe. Impressive at the best of times, the forest takes on a particular beauty in autumn when the huge spread of foliage gradually changes colour. Further west again is Roncesvalles (where, historically, pilgrims who had undergone the rigours of crossing the Pyrenees were accommodated at its great hospice), and the bucolic Baztan Valley. Baztan men were among those who took up the challenge of the New World: the house of one of them, Pedro de Ursúa, can still be seen in Arizcun. Curiously, the term *valle* (valley) in Navarre refers to an administrative and political unit rather than a geographical feature. Each of the *valles* of Baztán, Roncal and Salazar is a *comunidad* or *universidad* to which all the villages of each belong. Each *universidad* has one overall mayor, its own by-laws, and its land is the common property of all its constituent villages.

Adjacent to Baztán is La Regata de Bidasoa, an area of immaculately kept villages in some of which, such as Echalar, a curious local custom of hunting pigeon with nets is still kept up each autumn.

In the whole of this northern area — and especially in the north west — Basque culture is much in evidence: in the local architecture

Rather than continue on to the French border at Puerto de Larrau, our fancy was taken by a side road to the Irati mountain. But we had to come back after 10 kms (half way) because of snow blocking the road. En route we helped one driver stuck in some ice. Before he drove off at a ridiculous speed (no wonder he was bogged down) we asked him to return the favour and help us park in a safe spot so that we could get out and enjoy the magnificent view of the Pyrenees.

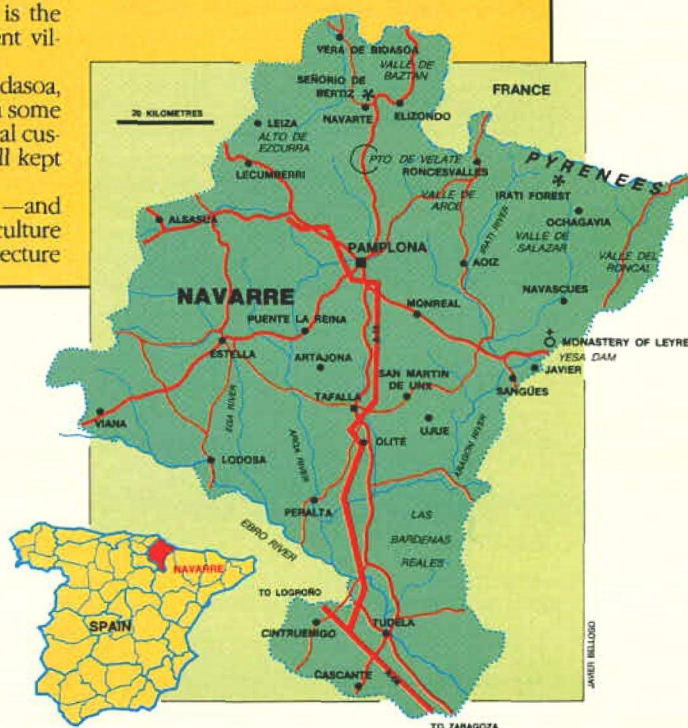
(solid homesteads dotted among the meadows), folk culture, the character and physical appearance of the people and, of course, the language since most of the population hereabouts speaks Basque, or *Euskera*.

As one moves south, pasture gives way to fields of cereal crops and hills to gentler landscape. This is the transition to the *Zona Media*, which contains the famous city and region of Pamplona. Near Pamplona is Puente la Reina, meeting point for the two main streams of pilgrims who had entered Spain via Roncesvalles and Somport (this latter in Pyrenean Aragon) en route for Santiago de Compostela in Galicia. Leyre, Sangüesa, Eunate, and Estella are among the places which still preserve superb examples of medieval art, particularly the Romanesque.

La Ribera, though a mere 70 kilometres (43 miles) from la Montaña as the crow flies, could not be more different. Here, both landscape and people have more in common with the neighbouring region of Aragon. The River Ebro and its tributaries are responsible for the character of this area of extensive fertile plains where cereal, vines, fruit and vegetables thrive. There are more concentrated centres of population than in the north, Tudela being the local «capital». Just a few kilometres away from vineyards and orchards, and providing the most dramatic contrast in the whole of Navarre, lie Las Bardenas Reales — 430 square kilometres (166 square miles) of arid, almost entirely uncultivated land. The wind-eroded landscape of the Bardenas is extraordinary, its gorges and mounds of earth shrouded in complete and somewhat sinister silence.

Small wonder, then, given this amazing scenery that it is customary, if not very original, to describe Navarre as a continent in miniature.

Sonia Ortega



Doubling back on our tracks to Ochagavia we descended to Escaroz and then headed northwest to Roncesvalles, the hamlet where the rearguard of Charlemagne's army, retreating from Pamplona and led by Roland, was cut off and overwhelmed with rocks hurled by the Arabs from the crags above in 778. The pass has not changed much since it was described in the famous French epic poem, *The Song of Roland*:

«High are the hills, valley dark
[and deep,
grisly the rocks, and wondrous
[grim the steeps.»

It was snowing when we arrived and we had lunch at La Posada — Lodosa red peppers (see box) and succulent lamb.

The Augustinian Abbey at Roncesvalles was founded by Sancho the Strong (1154-1234), King of Navarre, so-called because he was 2.25 metres (7 feet) tall. The beautiful chapterhouse, off the cloister, contains Sancho's tomb — with a life-size statue — and that of his queen, Clemencia. A stained glass window depicts him in battle and chains he used adorn the wall. The Treasury preserves several fine pieces including a Mudejar casket, a Romanesque gospel, a 14th century enamelled reliquary known as Charlemagne's chessboard and an emerald said to have been worn in his turban on the day of the battle of the Navas de Tolosa in 1212 by the Sultan Miramolin el Verde.

From Roncesvalles we took the road to Pamplona via Aoiz along the Arce valley, following the Urobi river and crossing innumerable bridges. Since very early times Pamplona has been the most important city of the Spanish Pyrenees. We arrived on a Sunday evening. The old quarter was packed with families, out for a stroll or drinking in the bars. Stalls in the square near the cathedral sold *roscón*, a ring-shaped cake, to commemorate the feast of San Blas. After the austerity of our hostel at Yesa, it was a pleasure to stay in the best hotel in the city, the Tres Reyes, and enjoy a hot bath.

TROUT FISHING

The next morning we drove due north through the Velate Pass to the Baztan valley. At Ca-

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The abbey of San Salvador of Leyre had established itself as the spiritual centre of Navarre by the early 11th C.

mineros we stopped to watch the mist settling like cotton wool on the forest of beach trees. Twenty kilometres later we were in Navarre where Edward VIII of England liked to fish for trout in the river Bidasoa. Nearby is the Señorío de Bertiz, 2,400 hectares (5 acres) of forests and gardens which the government of Navarre turned into a park in 1984. Entrance is free to one of Spain's

finest parks. The first written records of the Señorío are of 1637 when there were two palaces on the site. There are bamboos, cypresses, oak trees, English elms, chestnuts, Japanese cedars, Spanish firs, lemon trees, not to mention exotic plants such as fuchsia and numerous animals in their natural habitat.

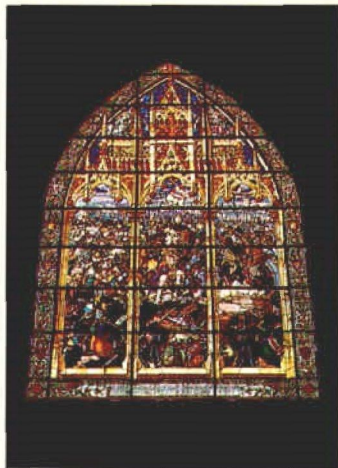
A few kilometres away is Elizondo, the capital of the Baztan. Many of the houses which belonged to Basques who went to Latin America to make their fortunes and then returned home sport a coat of arms. The friendliness of the Navarrese was exemplified by Panchito, the 84-year-old former notary public and magistrate of Elizondo, who came over to us as we were wandering the streets and offered to give us a guided tour. He recognised and greeted everyone who passed us and soon we were also in conversation with a builder and a tailor, keen to show off their town. After leaving us at the town hall, we went to the ironmonger's for some shopping. When we entered Elizondo I had seen some cow bells hanging outside the shop. «I'd like to buy a bell for my children», I told the man behind the counter. «Do your children have four feet?», he replied straight faced. I explained that I wanted one so that my wife could summon them to meals, rather than have to shout.

Near Elizondo is the village of Errazu where Domingo Echandi, a well known wood craftsman, makes the traditional bowls for

milk and cheese which Basques have used for more than 1,000 years. His house is set back from the road on the right as you enter the village. Now retired Echandi makes very few *kaikus* (for milk), *abatzas* (for cheese) and *oporras* (cups). Until recently he supplied Artespaña, the national chain of shops which sells furniture and handicrafts, with his beautifully carved work. Almost the last of a line of craftsmen which is disappearing, Echandi is training someone in Elizondo to carry on the tradition.

On the final leg of our trip we returned to Pamplona via Leiza. The road winds up to the Alto de Ezcurra, passing lush meadows and fields of maize. We stopped for lunch in Leiza at the Asador Mendizábal, eating chick peas and chicken. Our presence was the subject of some curiosity. As we went through the bar and entered the restaurant there was a sudden lull in the conversation, as if we had come from Mars. Displayed above the fireplace were some 20 trophies which had been won by the bar's owner, José María Mendizábal, for cutting logs. On one occasion he cut six logs of 2.8 metres (110 inches) each and 52 of 1.4 metres (54 inches) each in four hours 12 minutes and 19 seconds. It seemed appropriate to end our trip amidst such strength.

The Abbey at Roncesvalles was founded by the King Sancho the Strong. A stained glass window depicts him in battle.



Navarre

Area

10,421 square kilometres
(4,023 square miles)

Population (1990)

527,318

Capital, Pamplona (pop)

182,365

Average annual rainfall (Pamplona)

999.3 mm per square metre

Use of land

27 % meadows and grazing
20 % forests
35 % crops

Economic activity (% of GDP)

6 % agriculture
7 % construction
36 % industry
51 % services

Gross Domestic Product

\$ 7.1 bn

Per capita income (1989)

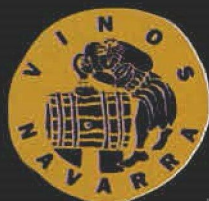
\$ 13,793

Source: Gobierno de Navarra (Consejería de Economía y Hacienda).

WINES FROM NAVARRA



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RED WINES OF NAVARRE

MOVING ON

Text: **Ramón Roldán/Sobremesa**

Photos: **María Luisa Assens/Sobremesa**

Over the last few years, a Navarre label on a bottle of rosé has come to mean prestige. Today, with the market for rosés exploited almost to the full, this northern Spanish wine region is starting to concentrate on crianza and reserva reds, daring at last to emerge from the shadow of its big-time neighbour, La Rioja.



Navarre's story is a classic in the history of Spanish wine as a whole. Roman amphorae, accounts left by medieval pilgrims passing through en route for the holy shrine of Santiago de Compostela, Gothic carvings depicting the wine harvest ... all bear witness to the fact that this has been a wine producing area for many, many centuries. Yet despite its long tradition, this Denomination of Origin seems to show a certain insecurity, a need to assert itself which becomes perfectly comprehensible when you realise that its fertile lands border onto those of the aristocrat of the Spanish wine world: La Rioja.

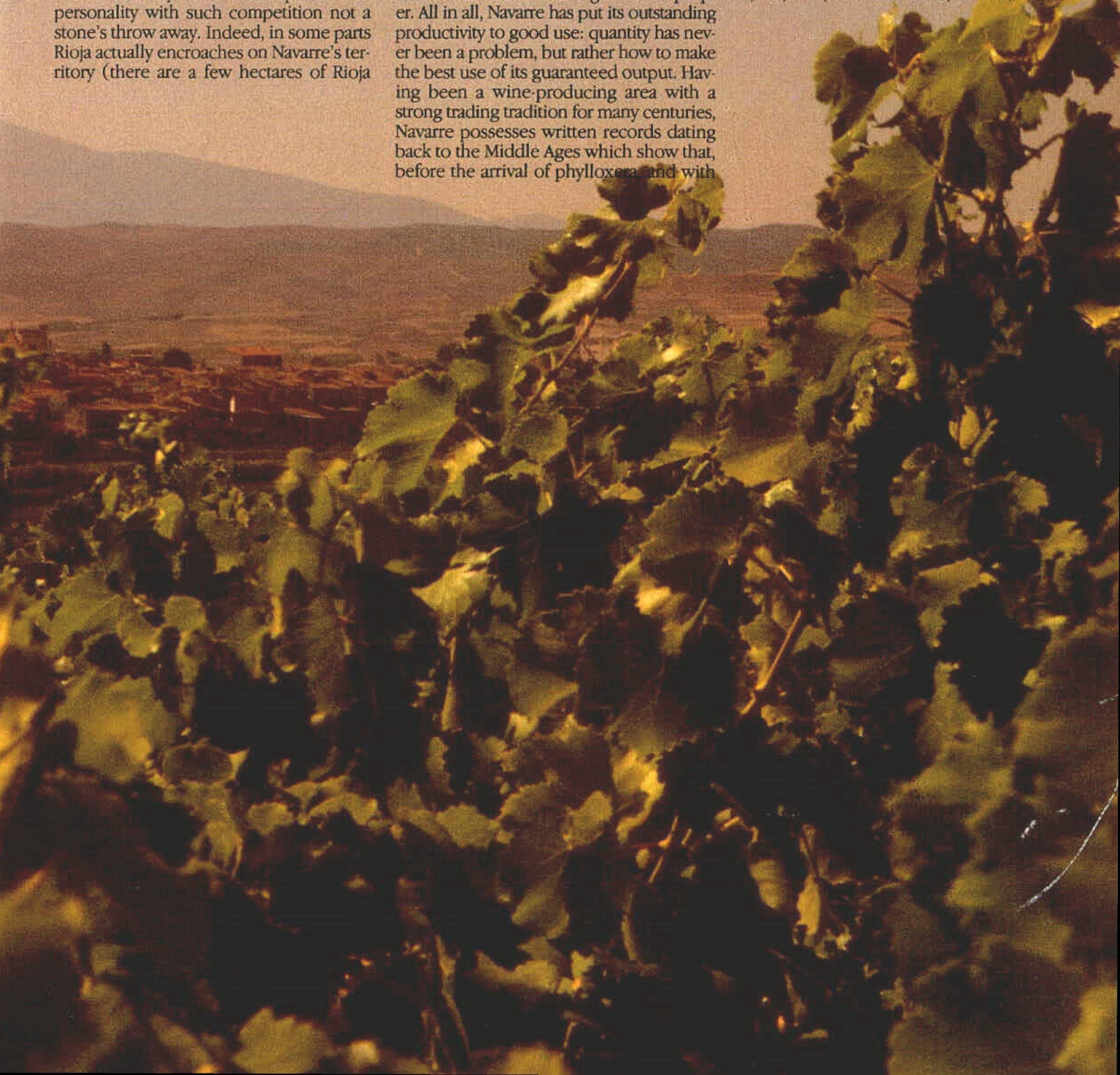
It is no easy matter to impose one's personality with such competition not a stone's throw away. Indeed, in some parts Rioja actually encroaches on Navarre's territory (there are a few hectares of Rioja

D.O. vineyards in Andosilla, San Adrian, Azagra, Viana and Mendavia.

Navarre has got used to struggling for its share of the limelight and to defending itself from constant upstaging by La Rioja. It has managed this by creating on its own an easily recognisable speciality: rosés. It has succeeded to such a degree that the words «Navarre» and «rosé» are now all but synonymous. It was a clever choice: light rosé wines sell well in summer, and are «easy drinking» — a great success with tourists and restaurateurs alike. Large restaurant parties generally order at least two bottles, the first as a thirst quencher and the second to drink during the meal proper. All in all, Navarre has put its outstanding productivity to good use: quantity has never been a problem, but rather how to make the best use of its guaranteed output. Having been a wine-producing area with a strong trading tradition for many centuries, Navarre possesses written records dating back to the Middle Ages which show that, before the arrival of phylloxera, and with

steady demand from the Basque Country, some 50,000 hectares (123,000 acres) of Navarre were under vine.

When the Bordeaux region of France became infected with phylloxera (originally from America), Navarre's wines were in greater demand than ever, now filling the gap left by the French winegrowers. This situation lasted from 1868-1878, as French vineyards succumbed further and further: of 2,500,000 hectares (6,200,000 acres), only 1,600,000 (3,950,000 acres) survived. Spain, meanwhile saw a converse increase from 1,200,000 hectares (2,965,000 acres) of vineyards in 1860 to 1,700,000 (4,100,000 acres) in 1889. This



heavy period was shortlived, however: in 1892, the first symptoms of the blight appeared in Navarre and by 1896 the disease had taken hold. In the space of two years, Navarre lost 48,500 hectares (120,000 acres) of the 49,213 (121,600 acres) it had once had. Recovery was rapid, though, and by 1906 there were already 11,350 hectares (28,000 acres) under vine, increasing to 26,330 (65,000 acres) by 1920.

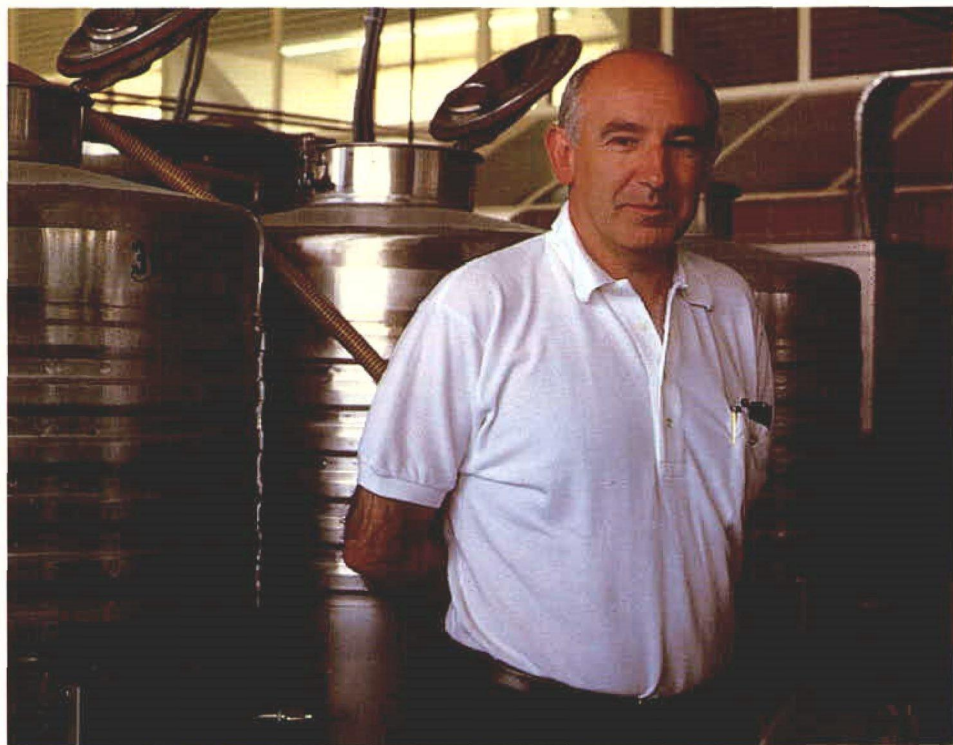
WINE & ENCYCLICALS

At about this same time, the co-operative phenomenon that was to characterise Navarre's winegrowing in this century emerged. Catholic co-operatives of small-scale growers were formed as a practical application of the notions expressed in the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891. This was intended to promote social justice as seen

By today, this has been clearly achieved: Navarran rosé has emerged with its own personality, its own niche in the market, and its own appreciative following. The signs are, however, that this particular potential has been exploited to the full. The demand for rosé cannot increase indefinitely and, given the fact that by definition it is drunk young, the price also has to remain within certain limits.

Whites could not be said to be Navarre's strong point—they account for a bare 6% of overall production, and are not particularly individual. In a country where certain DOs produce outstandingly good whites, it would not seem a particularly sound bet for Navarre to opt for this sector as the alternative or supplement to its hugely successful rosés.

All in all, Navarre has no choice but to pit itself against tough competition from Rioja in the area of red wine production. The most dynamic sectors of the



by the Roman Catholic Church, and found an enthusiastic exponent in Navarre—a priest named Victoriano Flamarique. By 1911, the first co-operative bodega had been founded in Olite, then known as the *bodega de los pobres*—«the poor people's bodega». Eighty years later, there are still around fifty co-operatives operating in the area, some with a very promising future and working in close collaboration with depository and maturation bodegas.

Clearly then, Navarre has never had a problem in establishing itself as a winegrowing area, except during its brief phylloxera-induced decline. It has been a question of establishing its own speciality.

Javier Ochoa, head of Oenology at EVENA—the ultra-modern viticultural station of Navarre, recognised as one of the best in the whole of Europe—and the EVENA team have opted for pointing the Navarre DO in the challenging direction of red wine production.

DO seem to have come to this conclusion, including winegrowers, co-operatives, and EVENA, the ultra-modern viticultural station in Olite. EVENA is one of the most forward-looking, clear-thinking stations in the country, and is hugely influential within its DO.



EVENA's researchers began experimental plantings in 1982 and, in its experimental bodega (generally recognised as one of the best in the whole of Europe), concentrated initially on rosés. By today, its official opinion is that Navarre has done what it can with rosé and the EVENA team



has opted for pointing the DO in the challenging direction of red wine production. They know the difficulties and limitations of Navarran reds and are currently working on overcoming the former and extending the latter. Research results have convinced them that the best varieties for the job are Garnacha and Tempranillo, possibly backed up with another variety. Growing standards are to be improved, alcoholic strength reduced, aroma and flavour refined and colour improved.

The «identikit» wine envisaged by EVENA «would have a recognisably Navarran personality discernible in its very bouquet, intense in colour with purplish tones when young, though ideally it should be not be drunk young but should improve with ageing in the cask—a medium aged wine. It should not be a wine to be drunk as soon as the two years' minimum maturation period is up but nor should its maturation be too slow. We don't believe that we should aim for an elitist wine which needs eight to ten years to reach its peak. We're thinking more in terms of three to four years for it to reach its aromatic potential and establish a strong personality. Re-

member that flavour is very much influenced by elaboration technique but even more so by varieties—the grapes themselves. This is why we are experimenting with varietal wines and blends which will give us that particular character we are looking for. A character that will immediately say "Navarre" to the consumer».

FAITH IN THE FUTURE

This urge for change has spread throughout the DO, and the fact that cooperative members and the co-operatives themselves are spending more shows how much faith they have in this new departure. They are uprooting old vines and ousting Garnacha from its position as the traditionally dominant local variety in this DO. Instead, they are planting Tempranillo and Cabernet Sauvignon. The oenologists are considering the area's potential as a producer of the matured and reserva wines with a view to sustaining the prosperity achieved with rosé. They know only too well that competition is such in the wine world today that your product has to verge on being a work of art if you are to succeed.

In preparation for the new product, Navarre's bodegas and co-operatives are equipping themselves for the elaboration and laying down of reds. The DO's Regulatory Council exerts rigorous control over the elaboration process: in 1985, it disqualified 7% of Navarre's production for being over sulphurous or volatile. In the process, it conveyed the message of the importance of quality. It was a serious lesson for the sector. Subsequent vintages have shown the results of a real effort towards quality: in 1988, disqualifications amounted to below one per cent of production. Interestingly, in 1989 they rose to 2 per cent. This was because the Consejo is constantly raising standards: it no longer penalises only wines with obvious defects. New categories have now been included in the tasting criteria applied by the committee of growers, bodega-owners and technical experts, so that comments are now required on positive qualities as well as negative. This means that though a wine might not have a serious defect, it could still not actually reach the quality level now required.

EVENA has been accused of a «foreign» approach on the grounds of its inclination towards Cabernet Sauvignon. The experts' defence is that what they are looking for from Cabernet Sauvignon is not a Bordelais style wine (namely full bodied and long-lived) but rather a variety which will round out local varieties. Research is concentrated on finding the perfect clone or clones since it is not expected that many hectares of this DO will be given over to Cabernet Sauvignon. It is intended to serve as a complementary variety. Having said that, however, individual bodega-owners may well opt for using it for a varietal wine: Magaña, for example, already does, and Bodegas Guelbenzu seem to be preparing to do so.

Javier Ochoa, head of Oenology at EVENA, comments on the finer points of the Navarre red scheme. He thinks that «with carbonic maceration, Garnacha can give a lovely aromatic Beaujolais», and he can see a future for young reds. «A wine made from Garnacha is ready for bottling in January. Garnacha which has undergone carbonic maceration gives a lively floral aroma. In reserva wines, on the other hand, it has the problem of oxidising easily. For a maturable wine, you have to include Tempranillo and cask-age it.» Ochoa's idea of the perfect wine is «one made with 50% Tempranillo, 20% Cabernet and 30% Garnacha. That would be a long-lived wine».



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THE WINES OF NAVARRE

VARIETIES

Attempts to give Navarre DO status began before the Spanish Civil War, but it was not granted until 1967.

Today, the DO embraces 23,500 hectares (58,000 acres) of vineyards and is composed of five subdivisions:

TIERRA ESTELLA

This area accounts for some 4,000 hectares (9,900 acres, 17 per cent of the DO total) and takes in 26 municipalities. It is an area dominated by co-operatives.

The northern part is chalky, while in the south there is a change towards the type of soil typical of the Ribera Alta.

Varieties grown are predominantly Garnacha and Tempranillo with, to a lesser degree, Graciano, Mazuelo and Viura.

VALDIZARBE

Situated in central Navarre, this area takes in 24 municipalities and 2,400 hectares (5,900 acres) of vineyards (10 per cent of the DO total).

It has nine wine-producing bodegas of which two are crianza and exporting bodegas. The other seven are co-operatives.

This area's predominant variety is Garnacha, followed by Tempranillo and, lagging far behind, a little Mazuelo and Graciano.

BAJA MONTAÑA

This north-eastern area of the DO takes in 14 municipalities and has 4,000 hectares (9,900 acres) under vine (17 per cent of the DO total). It has 11 bodegas, all co-operatives. The predominant grape varieties grown are Garnacha and Tempranillo.

RIBERA ALTA

Situated in the centre of the DO, this area takes in 24 municipalities and has 5,300 hectares (13,000 acres) under vine (22.5 per cent of the DO total). It has 23 wine-producing bodegas of which 9 are privately owned and the rest co-operatives. The predominant grape varieties here are Garnacha, Viura, Tempranillo and Malvasía.

RIBERA BAJA

This southern section of the DO takes in 13 municipalities and accounts for 33 per cent of the DO's vineyards. It has 29 bodegas, 22 of them privately owned and the other 7 co-operatives. The climate here is the driest and hottest of the entire DO, and the varieties grown predominantly Garnacha, Viura, Malvasía and small-fruit Moscatel.

Garnacha reigns supreme in all five subdivisions of this DO, accounting for 82 per cent of overall production. It is followed by Tempranillo (7.5%) and Viura (5%). Garnacha is used for making rosés and for young reds for same-year drinking. It is not a suitable variety for ageing since it tends to oxidise easily. The Regulatory Council is considering giving official preference to Mazuelo, Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Graciano and Garnacha Tinta for red varieties and Viura and small-fruit Moscatel for whites.

GRACIANO

Very much a minority variety in Navarre, Graciano gives high quality must which is brightly coloured, aromatic, and acidic. It exerts a refining influence in blended wines.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

This classic variety from the French Médoc is prized for its ageing qualities, its pronounced varietal flavour, tannic content and aromatic qualities.

MERLOT

This authorised variety is typical of the French Médoc. It is often blended with Cabernet Sauvignon and certain other varieties to accelerate maturation.

CHARDONNAY

This Burgundy variety with its very individual aroma is used for crianza whites since it is resistant to oxidation.

WHITE VARIETIES

MALVASIA DE RIOJA

This originally Greek variety is grown all over the Peninsula and in the Canary Islands. It produces a lot of bitter-sweet must and gives aroma and density to white wines.

VIURA

Probably introduced into Navarre from Aragon in the mid nineteenth century, this variety is known as Macabeo in Catalonia. It crops early, and has a characteristic flavour and good acid content. It gives medium alcoholic white wines which are smooth, balanced, fresh and aromatic.

GARNACHA BLANCA

A resistant, pleasant variety with low acidity.

SMALL-FRUIT MOSCATEL

This Burgundy variety with its very individual aroma is used for crianza whites since it is resistant to oxidation.

OFFICIAL VINTAGE CHART

Navarre DO's Regulatory Council issues annual official vintage charts after thorough assessments of each of its subdivisions. Qualifications are not decided simply on the basis of the current state of the wines in question but also on how they are likely to evolve.

Excellent: 1964, 1970, 1973, 1981, 1982.
Very good: 1966, 1968, 1978, 1983, 1984, 1988.

Good: 1967, 1969, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1985, 1986, 1987.

Reasonable: 1977, 1979, 1980.

Poor: 1965, 1971, 1972.



RED VARIETIES

GARNACHA TINTA

This variety is believed to originate from Alicante (it is sometimes known by that name) and to have reached Navarre and La Rioja via Aragon. It is also grown, known by different names, in France and Italy. It gives an alcoholic must low in acidity and high in sugars, and is susceptible to oxidation. It is used for rosés and young reds.

TEMPRANILLO

This variety, whose origins are unknown, is much used in La Rioja. With a medium alcoholic content and intense colour, the must provides a good basis for blending. Quite an acidic variety.

MAZUELO

This variety, also known as Cariñena, gives must which is richly coloured and very tannic and robust. It is used in blends to contribute acidity.

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

At Vinícola de Navarra, recent heavy investment was still aimed at improving rosés. Nevertheless, here too they accept the fact that rosé has given of its best and budgeting for the future is aimed at wines for maturation. At Vinícola de Navarra, the opinion is that «It's not that we have an inferiority complex about Rioja in Navarre. Rioja is a reality, and a very powerful one, too». They are convinced that «in 10 to 15 years' time we must opt definitely for crianza and reserva reds, and that means opting for appropriate varieties now. And this isn't just talk. We're already laying the foundations. If you look around Navarre, you'll see that there are masses of new vines —this means that growers are planting Tempranillo and new varieties. People are experimenting. Many of these new vines are coming into production now or will be soon. We know that by the year 2000, Navarre will have the raw materials for its new line in wine».

Everyone realises that moving into crianza and reserva reds means entering a new market sector where prices are higher and competition keener. «So what?» is the general attitude. «If you offer quality, you can compete in the quality price sector.» There also seems to be general agreement that varieties such as Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon should only be used as com-



The Navarre Wine DO embraces today 23,500 hectares of vineyards with different grape varieties.

plements to local varieties, over which they exert a refining influence. It is recognised, too, that they add an undeniable touch of distinction which will appeal to a more sophisticated market.

If the new line is to succeed, the key factors would seem to be adaptability and the attitude of the co-operatives. Remember that they account for nearly 90 % of Navarre's grape production. They control the varieties grown and decide the prices at which their wine sells on the market. The vast majority seem quite convinced of the need for change and that new direction, is the right one to take. Apparently, 90 % of

new plantations are of Tempranillo, 5 or 6 % of Viura, and the remainder Cabernet, Merlot and other complementary varieties. Everyone seems to agree that Garnacha can no longer be allowed to predominate.

There are few DOs where dynamism is so obviously in the air as in Navarre at present. The quest for its new niche in the market (hopefully they won't limit themselves too severely) has galvanised the whole region. After all, its future depends on it. At present, Navarre's limitations are still in evidence. While researching for this report, Spain's respected food and wine magazine *Sobremesa* organised a blind tasting of twelve Navarre reds. Except for one 82 reserva which was disqualified for lack of cleanliness, the rest earned favourable comments from the tasting team, albeit with one reiterated complaint: «Too much alcohol.» Only one wine was exempt from this criticism —all the rest were repeatedly accused of too much alcohol and too little acidity. The exception turned out to be an experimental wine from the *Estación de Viticultura y Enología*, none other than EVENA. It was a 50 % Tempranillo/50 % Cabernet Sauvignon matured 1988 red. After the tasting, one member of the panel commented: «I think that Navarre has made great strides in elaboration but it still has to learn about maturation.» It's already working at it.

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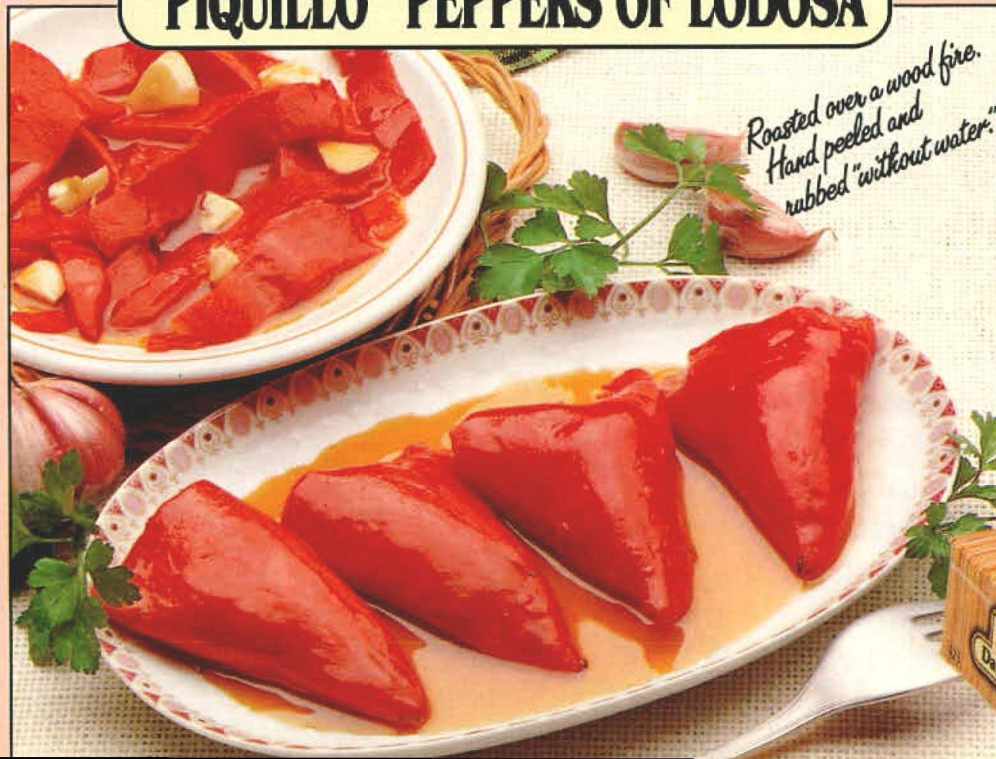
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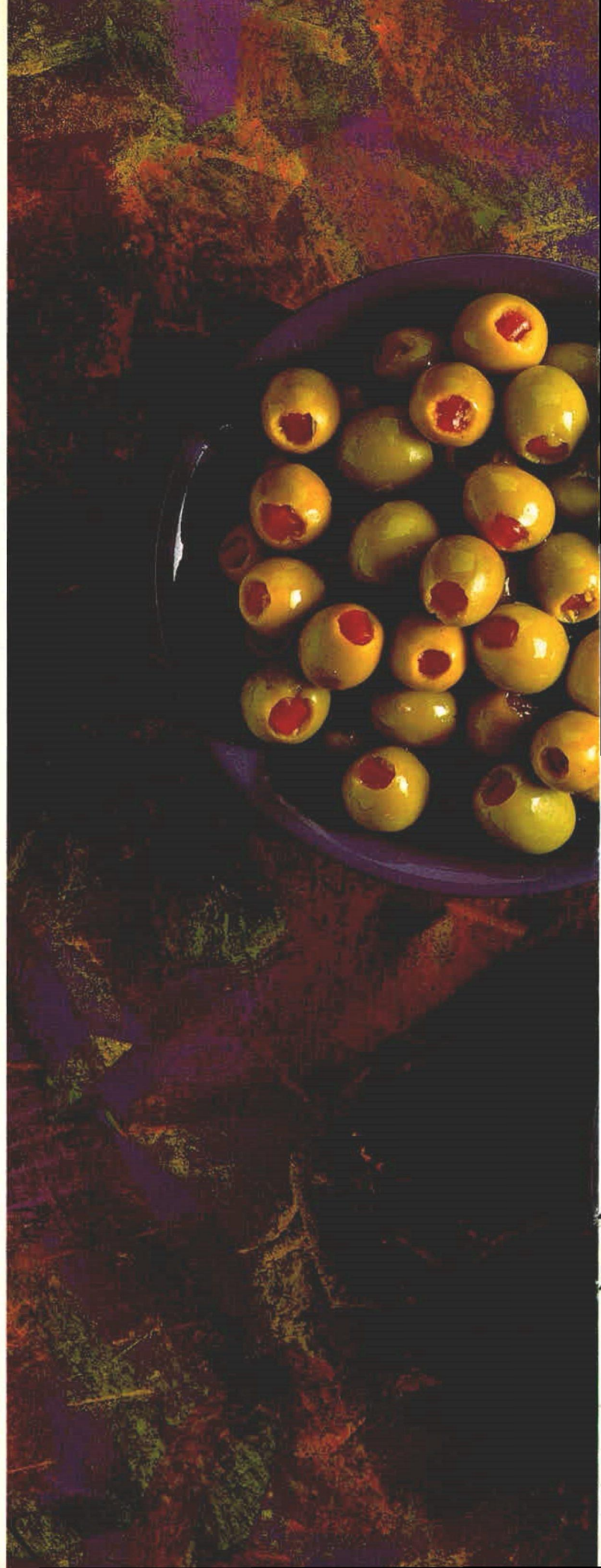
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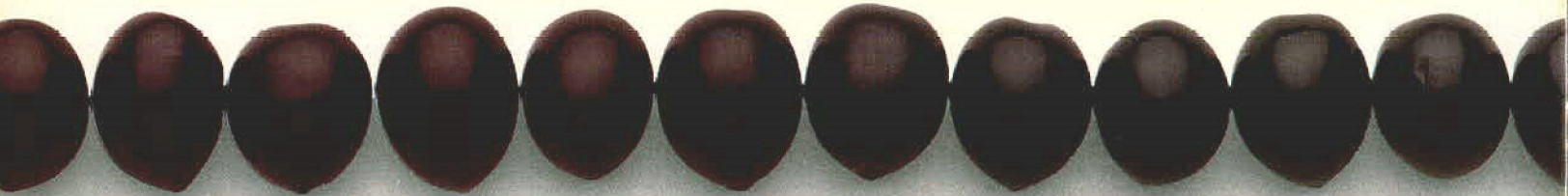
THE TASTE OF OLIVES

Text: Janet Mendel
Photo: A. de Benito
Still Life: Menchu Artime

Provide a Spaniard with a sunny morning, a open-air terrace, a glass of sherry and a dish of olives and you have a relaxed and happy man, disposed to believe that the world's not such a bad place after all. Olives are a vital ingredient in the scene. But even though their classic place is beside a glass of something, olives also have their culinary uses, and not just in salads. This article shows just some of the more imaginative ways in which they can be used.







Though they say the taste for olives, like caviar, is an acquired one, I personally believe one is born with it, for I remember loving the tangy, salty fruit the very first time I tasted it as a small child. In my home, no festive holiday meal was complete without bowls of olives — fat green ones, sometimes stuffed with pimiento, and glossy black ones. Olives made a dinner special. Listening to grownups talk, I also confused the sound of the words «Seville olives» for «civil» olives, and ever after associated the serving of olives with very «civilized», even sophisticated company.

Having grown up in midwest America, I had never seen the tree whence the olive derived. My first encounter with the olive («in the raw»), as it were, was some twenty

*The finest table olives
—widely known as Seville
olives— are the
Manzanillas finas, fat,
sweet and meaty with a
fine texture.*

years ago when I came to live in southern Spain. It was winter and I was lunching with friends on the sunny terrace of their villa on a hillside overlooking the Mediterranean. A wonderful old olive tree, its evergreen leaves dappling the terrace with shade, hung heavy with fruit. To my eyes,

those blue-black olives looked every bit as delicious as the ones I remembered from countless holiday dinners. So, I plucked one and popped it in my mouth.

I was totally unprepared for the taste, a taste so bitter, so powerfully astringent, that I spat out pulp and pit and rushed to rinse away the taste. I had learned a lesson not known to those who do not grow up on these shores: unlike ripe cherries dangling from the branches, olives are not exactly edible straight from the tree. They take some fixing to make them into the delectable titbits I remembered as a child.

Years later I built my house in the midst of a small olive grove. Most of the crop from my trees goes to the mill to be pressed for olive oil, which I use in my

Recipes

Marinated Olives *(Aceitunas aliñadas)*

Rinse bottled or tinned unstuffed green olives and place in a glass jar. Add thyme, fennel, slivers of garlic, thin wedges of lemon. Sprinkle with salt and add water to cover. Top with olive oil and let the olives marinate for a week before serving. Serve, drained, as an appetitif with wine, fino sherry or, the ultimate in taste, with a dry martini cocktail.

Stuffed Eggs *(Huevos rellenos)*

Serves 4:

8 eggs
150 g cooked prawns
12 green olives, chopped
1 tinned pimiento
1 tsp lemon juice
salt and pepper
100 ml mayonnaise

Hard cook the eggs for 5 minutes. Rinse them in cold water, then peel them. Cut the eggs in half lengthwise. Re-

move the yolks and reserve the whites. Chop the prawns and mix them in a small bowl with the chopped olives, half of the pimiento, finely chopped, the salt and pepper and lemon juice. Fill the egg whites with this mixture. Arrange them on lettuce leaves. Top each egg with mayonnaise and a strip of pimiento. Sieve the egg yolks and sprinkle over the eggs.

Country Potato Salad *(Ensalada campera)*

Serves 4:

1 kg potatoes
1 small onion
1 large tomato, peeled and chopped
1 lemon
50 ml olive oil
2 tbsp chopped parsley
100 ml mayonnaise
2 hard-cooked eggs, sliced
1 small tin pimientos
2 dozen pitted green olives
1 small tin tuna

Cook potatoes in their skins in water until tender. Drain

well, peel and slice them into a bowl. Add the chopped onion and tomato to the potatoes. Add the juice of a large lemon, the olive oil, chopped parsley, mayonnaise, sliced eggs, chopped pimientos and pitted olives. Toss lightly. Garnish with chunks of tuna.

Orange and Cod Salad *(Remojón)*

Serves 4:

200 g dry salt cod (or 1 tin tuna)
1 onion, thinly sliced
3-4 oranges
1 clove garlic, crushed
3 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp sherry vinegar
chili pepper (optional)
50 g pitted olives

Toast the salt cod over a flame or under the grill, until it is lightly browned and softened. Put in a bowl of water for a few hours, changing the water once. In a bowl, combine the thinly sliced onion with

the oranges, peeled, seeded and thinly slices or chopped. Whisk the crushed garlic with the olive oil, vinegar and finely minced chili. Drain the cod and remove all skin and bones. Shred it and add to the salad (or substitute tinned tuna). Toss with the dressing and place in a serving bowl. Let marinate, chilled, for several hours. Garnish with olives, preferably the slightly bitter, home-cured green olives, available in Spain, or black olives.

Grilled Chicken Breast with Olive Sauce *(Pechuga de pollo a la plancha con salsa de aceitunas)*

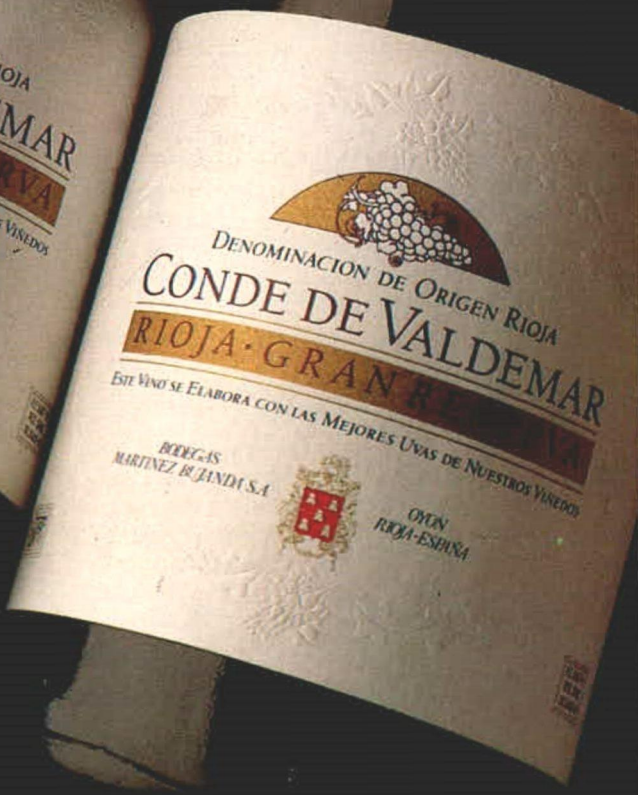
Serves 4:

4 chicken breasts, boned
olive oil
75 g green olives, pitted
1 tbsp finely chopped onion
1 clove garlic, minced
2 tbsp parsley, chopped
1/2 tsp paprika
3 tbsp sherry vinegar
salt and pepper



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Split the chicken breasts and flatten the halves slightly. Brush them with olive oil and cook on a hot griddle until done, about 3 minutes on each side. Remove them to a serving platter. Chop the olives and mix in a bowl with the chopped onion, garlic, parsley, paprika, oil, vinegar, salt and pepper. Spoon the sauce over the grilled chicken. Serve hot or cold.

Fish Pâté (*Fiambre de bonito*)

Serves 6:

1 bonito weighing about 1½ kg
50 g breadcrumbs
50 ml dry sherry
2 tbsp chopped parsley
1/2 tsp thyme
1½ tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper
dash of cayenne
2 eggs, beaten
200 g ham, diced
75 g pimiento-stuffed olives, sliced
1 onion, quartered
1 carrot
bay, thyme, parsley, celery

1 clove garlic
200 ml white wine

Clean the fish and cut the flesh from the skin and bones. Chop the fish in a processor or meat grinder. Place in a bowl and add the breadcrumbs, sherry, chopped parsley, thyme and half the salt, pepper, cayenne. Let the mixture sit for 30 minutes. Then mix in the beaten eggs, diced ham and sliced olives. Spread the fish mixture on a dampened cloth and wrap it tightly, forming a rectangle (or place in an oiled loaf pan). Into a large pot put about 2 litres of water, the onion, carrot, herbs, garlic, white wine and remaining salt. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to a simmer. Add the pâté on a board with a weight on top and let it cool completely. Unroll from the cloth and cut in slices to serve cold, garnished with lettuce, sliced tomatoes and additional olives. Minced chicken breasts can be prepared in the same manner.

Stuffed Tomatoes (*Tomates rellenos*)

Serves 6:

6 tomatoes
450 g cooked rice
3 scallions, minced
4 anchovies, drained and minced
75 g pitted black olives, chopped
2 tbsp chopped parsley
salt and freshly ground pepper
4 tbsp lemon juice
8 tbsp olive oil
salad greens

Cut the tops off the tomatoes. With a spoon scoop out seeds and pulp, placing them in a strainer to catch the juices. Sprinkle the hollowed tomatoes with salt, invert them and let them drain for 30 minutes. Place the cooked and cooled rice in a bowl and fluff it with a fork. Add the minced scallions, minced anchovies, chopped olives, parsley, salt and pepper, lemon juice, olive oil and reserved juice from the tomatoes. Toss the rice. Stuff the tomatoes and serve them on salad greens. The same stuff-

ing can be used for baked tomatoes. Top them with cheese before putting in a preheated oven for 15 minutes.

Olive Salad (*Ensaladilla de aceitunas*)

Serves 6:

200 g drained anchovy stuffed olives
100 g drained and pitted black olives
2 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
1 small onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1 red bell pepper, chopped
3 tbsp chopped parsley
1 tbsp chopped mint of fennel
3 tbsp lemon juice
6 tbsp olive oil
salt and freshly-ground pepper

Slice or chop the olives and combine them in a bowl with the chopped eggs, onion, garlic, red pepper, parsley, mint, vinegar and oil. Season with salt and pepper and toss lightly. Chill until serving time. Serve on salad greens.

kitchen. Several varieties, however, are specifically eating olives — Manzanillas, Gordales, and Verdiales. These I pack in the fall, after the first heavy rains have plumped the fruit, to prepare for the table. Village housewives showed me how to cure the olives, using salt to leach out the bitterness, and herbs which grow wild on the hillsides to flavour them. I enjoy serving the olives to guests in my home and telling them, «these olives came from the tree you're sitting under».

Of course, not everyone can enjoy olives so close to the source. Yet happily, grocers' shelves in lands far from where the olive grows are stocked with Spanish olives in wonderful variety. The finest table olives — widely known as Seville olives, though not all come from the province of Seville—

are Manzanillas finas, fat, sweet and meaty with a fine texture. They are the olives most used for stuffing with pimiento, almonds, onions, anchovies. The Gordal sevillana «Queen» olive often achieves impressive size — olives as big as plums! They

Commercially prepared olives are processed first in a soda-lye solution, then washed and placed in salt brine to ferment for one to two months.

are usually enjoyed whole, have a slightly more sour taste.

Commercially prepared olives are processed first in a soda-lye solution, then washed and placed in salt brine to ferment for one to two months. They are then graded and stored in barrels covered in brine, ready for bottling. They contain an acidulant, usually citric acid, to maintain their crispness and may contain preservatives and anti-oxidants as well. Ripe olives are processed similarly, with the addition of ferrous gluconate to fix their black colour, which otherwise would turn purple. Ripe olives are marketed whole, as they are too soft for destoning. A newer procedure, called the California system, allows green olives to be «blackened» by oxidation.

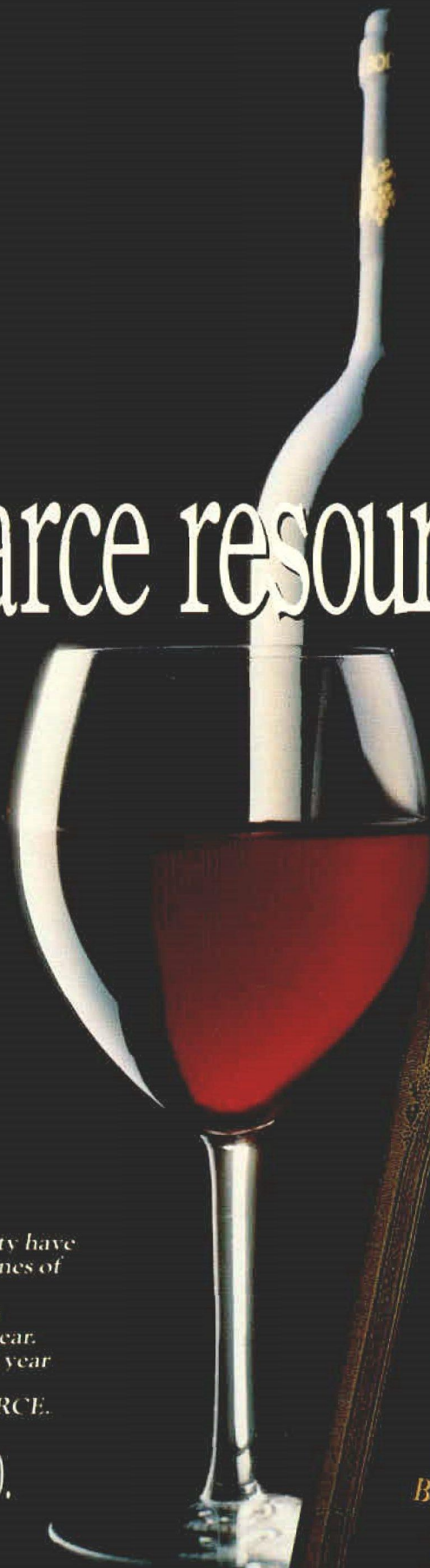


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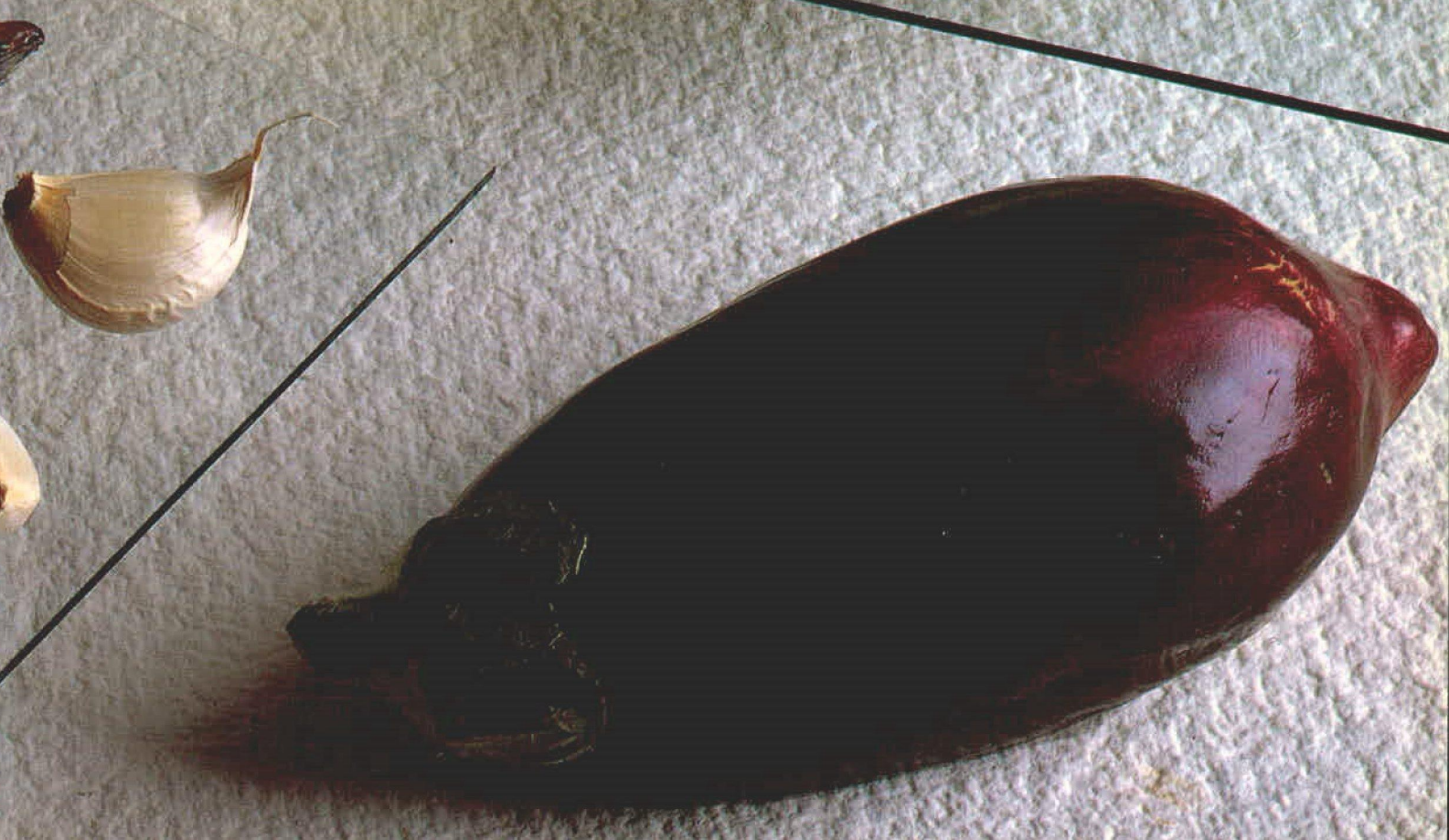
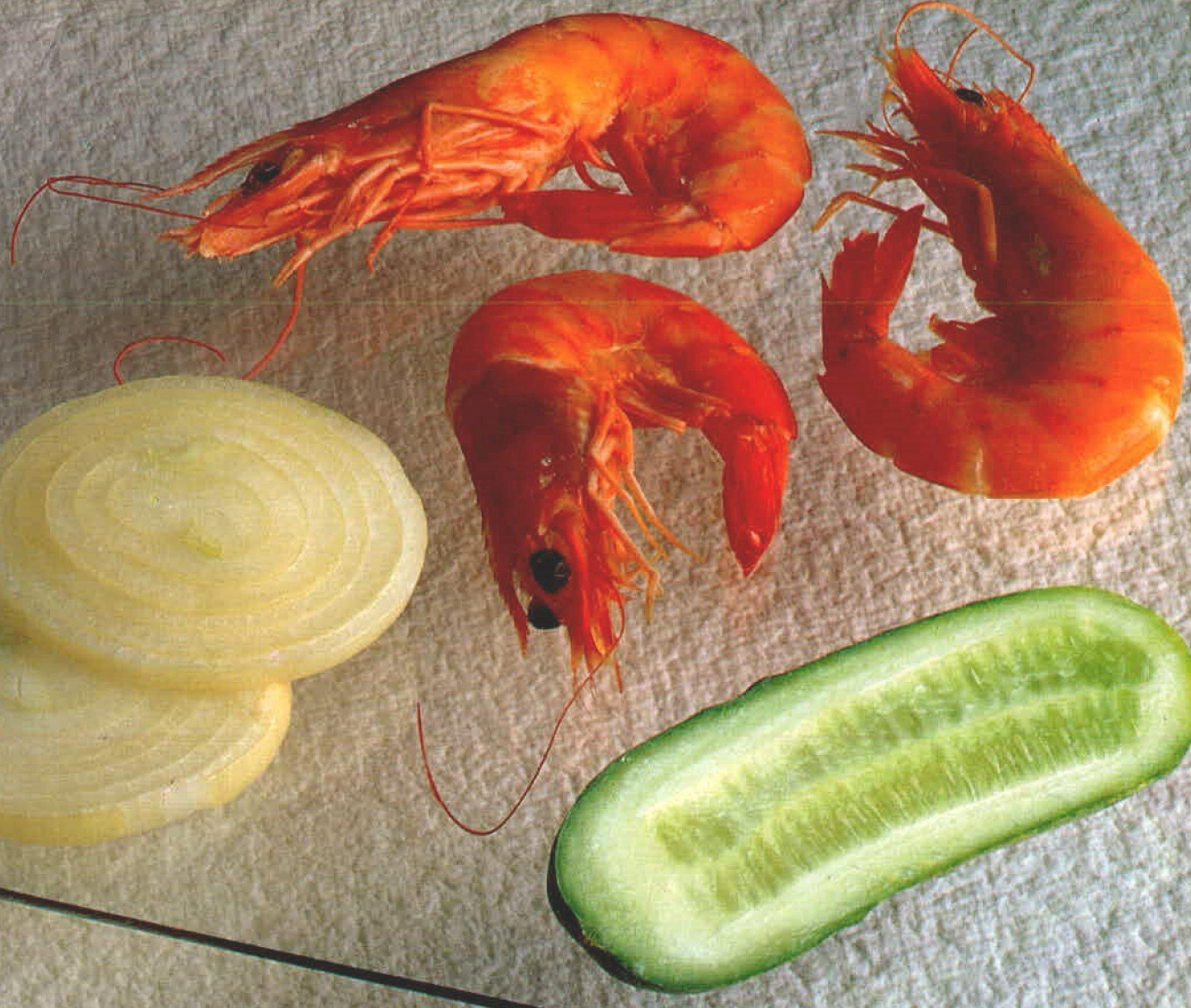
SUMMERTIME LIGHT

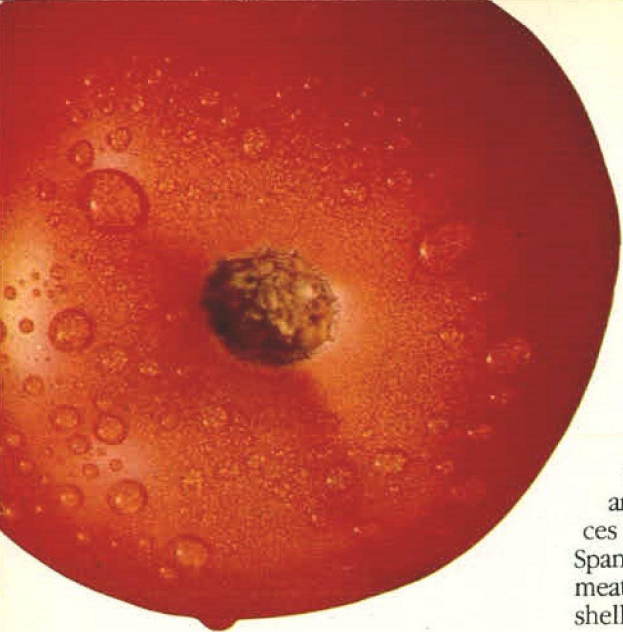
HEALTHY EATING, SPANISH STYLE

Text: Janet Mendel
Photo: A. de Benito
Still Life: Menchu Arttime

Baskets of sun-ripened tomatoes fragrant from the vine, crisp green peppers, dusky aubergines, sweet-scented melons, grapes and figs-these are the inspiration for Spanish summertime eating.







The traditional Spanish diet has always been very rich in vegetables such as tomatoes.

PROTEIN COUNTDOWN

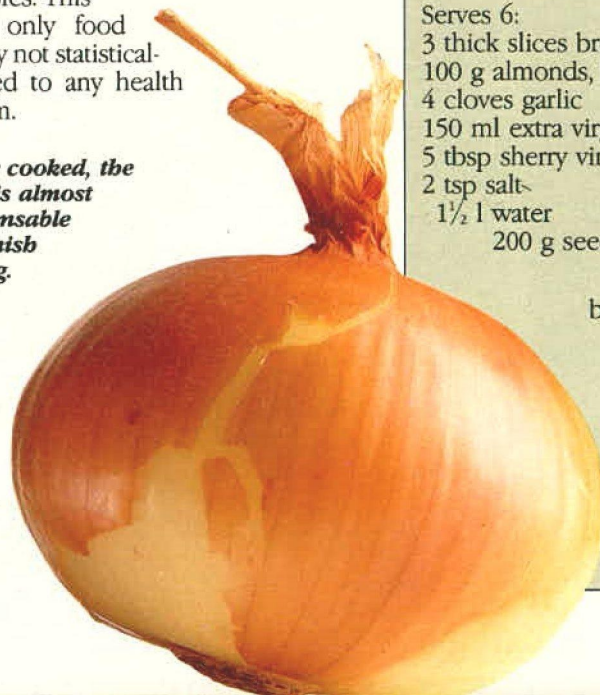
We all need protein every day to provide the building blocks of cells and tissue. However, we often mistakenly believe we need lots of it or that we have to get it from meat. In fact, excellent protein is derived from fish, shellfish, poultry and eggs as well as from vegetable sources such as grains, pulses and nuts. The Spanish diet has never been heavy on meat, especially not in summer. Fish and shellfish in their wonderful variety are favoured sources of protein, a heart-smart choice. Red meat, unfortunately, contains much more than just protein. A juicy steak, for instance, might be only 20 percent protein. The other 80 per cent is fat. Cheese is about 25 per cent protein, 75 per cent fat. By contrast, lean fish such as *lenguado*, *merluza*, *besugo* (sole, hake, bream) is about 90 per cent protein, 10 per cent fat. Even so-called fatty fish such as sardines, mackerel and tuna are leaner than most meat.

One of the simplest and most delightful of Mediterranean meals is pristine fresh fish, perhaps angler, swordfish or red mullet, simply grilled and served with an uncooked sauce of chopped parsley, garlic, lemon juice and olive oil. No complications, just natural flavour.

CARBOHYDRATES: ENERGY FOOD

The traditional Spanish diet has always been rich in complex carbohydrates—starches such as potatoes, bread, rice and pulses, plus fruits and vegetables are the staples. This is the only food category not statistically linked to any health problem.

Raw or cooked, the onion is almost indispensable in Spanish cooking.



Light, fresh, packed with flavour and nutrients, perfectly suited to the climate. This is the traditional Spanish diet, predominantly rural, based on seasonal produce from fields and orchards. The flavours are simple, yet subtle.

For example, *gazpacho*, Andalusia's salad-soup, a tourist attraction in its own right, was originally peasant food, concocted of bread and oil and whatever vegetables were ripe in the *buerta*, the irrigated garden plot—tomatoes, green peppers, cucumbers, onions. Garlic and salt gave flavour. Lemon juice or vinegar added tang and was, importantly, a thirst-quencher. Spring water cooled in an unglazed earthenware *botijo*, a double spouted jug, diluted the mixture and prevented dehydration from long hours of labour in the fierce sun.

What's amazing about *gazpacho*, invented long before vitamins were discovered, is that it is incredibly nutritious. *Gazpacho* is the essence of the «light» Mediterranean diet, so often touted by nutritionists today as «heart healthy».

This is a diet rich in complex carbohydrates, such as bread, fruits and vegetables, which are the body's fuel, providing energy for work; low in meat and saturated animal fats which are associated with high blood cholesterol and heart disease, and absolutely brimming with vitamins and minerals. It's just this sort of diet that today doctors are recommending to athletes, heart patients, the overweight and just about everybody.

And, just the right light-hearted diet for summer. Crisp, green, cool, fresh foods spark flagging appetites when temperatures edge upwards. In hot weather, we need about 10 per cent fewer calories. The easiest way to cut them is by eliminating rich and fatty foods and by consuming smaller portions of foods. Thus, *tapas*, Spain's popular bar foods, make perfect summer eating.

Here's how nutrition shapes up for summer.

Andalusian Summertime Soup (*Gazpacho andaluz*)

Serves 6:

- 1 thick slice bread (70 g)
- 1 kg ripe tomatoes (4 large)
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp ground cumin
- 70 ml olive oil
- 5 tbsp sherry vinegar
- 1/2 l water, approx.
- 1 green pepper
- 1 cucumber
- 1 onion
- 1 small tomato
- 2 slices bread, cubed, toasted
- 1 hard-cooked egg

Remove crusts from bread and soak it in water to cover for 15 minutes. Squeeze out excess water and put the bread in the blender with the tomatoes, garlic, salt and cumin. Process until pureed (process in two or more batches if necessary). With the motor running, add the oil in a slow stream, then add the vinegar. The mixture will thicken and change colour as the oil emulsifies. Add a little of the water and sieve the mixture (otherwise, peel and seed tomatoes before processing). Transfer to a tureen and stir in the water. Chill until serving time. Chop the green pepper, cucumber, onion and tomato. Either add them to the chilled *gazpacho* or serve along with the bread crumbs and chopped egg in small bowls to accompany it.

White Garlic Soup With Grapes (*Ajo blanco con uvas*)

Serves 6:

- 3 thick slices bread (200 g)
- 100 g almonds, blanched and skinned
- 4 cloves garlic
- 150 ml extra virgin olive oil
- 5 tbsp sherry vinegar
- 2 tsp salt
- 1/2 l water
- 200 g seeded Moscatel grapes

Remove crusts from bread and soak it in water until softened. Squeeze it out and put it in blender or processor with the almonds and peeled garlic. (To skin almonds, put them in boiling water for 1 min-

Recipes



Avocado and Shellfish Cocktail.

ute, drain and slip skins off.) Blend to a smooth sauce, adding a little water if necessary. With the motor running, add the oil in a slow stream. Then add the vinegar and salt. Beat in some of the water, then pour the contents of the blender into a tureen and add the remaining water. Taste for seasoning, adding more salt or vinegar if necessary. The soup should be quite tangy. Chill the soup. It will separate on standing, so stir it thoroughly before serving garnished with the seeded grapes, a marvellous contrast to the garlic and almonds.

Avocado and Shellfish Cocktail (Aguacate con salpicón de mariscos)

Serves 6-8:

- 2 ripe avocados
- 2 large tomatoes
- 1/2 medium onion
- 1 green or red bell pepper
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 hard-cooked eggs
- 6 tbsp sherry vinegar
- 6 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley
- 400 g cooked fish and/or prawns, lobster, mussels, scallops

Peel and pit the avocados. Slice them lengthwise and arrange the slices in a fan

on 6-8 salad plates. Sprinkle with lemon juice. Chop the tomatoes, onions, green and red peppers and mix them in a bowl. Chop the egg whites and add to the salad. Mix the garlic, salt and egg yolks in a bowl. Stir in the oil until the dressing is emulsified. Add the chopped parsley and stir into the chopped tomato mixture. Add the cooked shellfish. Spoon the salad over the sliced avocados.

Grilled Fish with Parsley-Garlic Sauce.
Any whole fish, fillet or steak can be prepared in this manner.



Sardines, Spanish Style (Sardinas a la española)

Serves 6:

- 1 kg fresh sardines
- 1 medium onion
- 1 green pepper
- 2 large tomatoes
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1 chili pepper (optional)
- 1/4 tsp saffron
- 1/4 tsp cumin
- 1/4 paprika
- 1 tbsp white wine
- salt and pepper
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- toast or fried bread

Clean the sardines, remove scales, heads and spines. Wash and pat dry. Chop (use processor if available) together the onions, peppers, tomatoes, garlic, parsley and chili. Crush the saffron and mix it with the ground cumin, paprika, salt and pepper in the wine. In an oven dish spread half the chopped vegetables and lay the filleted sardines on top. Cover with another layer of the chopped vegetables. Drizzle with the oil. Cover and bake in a hot oven until the sardines are cooked, about 25 minutes. Serve hot or cold as an hors d'oeuvre with toast points or fried bread. Garnish with a few olives and lemon slices.

Variation: with tinned Spanish sardines. Make a sauce by frying the tomatoes and other vegetables in a little oil with the seasonings until thickened, about 15 minutes. Drain tinned sardines of oil and add

them to the sauce. Simmer for 3 minutes and remove from heat. Leave them in the tomato sauce several hours before serving with a squeeze of lemon.

Grilled Fish with Parsley-Garlic Sauce
(*Pescado a la plancha con aliño*)

Any whole fish, fillet or steak can be prepared in this manner. Salt the fish and set aside for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare the sauce. Chop 1/2 cup of parsley and place in a bowl. Add 3 finely chopped cloves of garlic, the juice of 1 or more lemons, 100 ml of olive oil and 1 teaspoon salt. The sauce can be thinned with a little water. Cook the fish on a hot griddle, which has been brushed with oil and sprinkled with salt, turning it once, until cooked through (whole fish should be slashed through the thickest part so flesh cooks evenly). Serve slathered with the prepared sauce.

Summertime Vegetable Medley
(*Pisto*)

Serve this hot or cold. Add chicken, lamb or tuna to the vegetables to create a main dish or top them with a fried egg for a tasty lunch or supper.

- Serves 6:
50 ml olive oil
1 large onion, chopped coarsely
2 green peppers, cut in squares
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 large aubergine
1 tsp salt
pepper
1 tsp oregano
6 tomatoes, peeled and chopped
1-2 courgettes, sliced or diced

The vegetables may be sliced or cut into large chunks or into fairly small dice:



Pisto, a hot or cold summertime vegetable medley.

they may be cooked until quite mushy or left very crisp. Heat the oil in a pan or heatproof casserole. In it sauté the onions, green peppers and garlic. Add the aubergine, peeled and cut up, and continue frying until much of the oil has been absorbed. Then season with salt, pepper and oregano and add the prepared tomatoes and courgettes. Cook, covered, on a medium heat until vegetables are tender, about 15 minutes. Remove cover and cook to evaporate liquid. If to be served cold, add a little extra virgin olive oil and a squeeze of lemon to the vegetables immediately before serving.

Catalan Roasted Vegetables
(*Escalivada*)

- Serves 4:
450 g aubergines

- 2 red bell peppers
1/2 large onion
1 tomato
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2 tbsp lemon juice
salt

Cut the aubergines and bell peppers in half. Arrange them, skin side up, on a grill pan with the half onion and tomato. Place under a hot grill until skin is charred and vegetables are tender, about 8 minutes. (Vegetables can also be cooked over hot charcoal—leave them whole and turn to char each side of aubergines and peppers.) Set vegetables aside until cool enough to handle. Peel them and cut flesh into strips. Place all the vegetables in a bowl. Add olive oil, lemon juice and salt to taste. Toss gently. Serve warm, room temperature or cold.

Fig Fritters
(*Buñuelos de bigos*)

- 2 dozen ripe figs
2 eggs, separated
150 ml milk
1 tbsp olive oil
pinch of salt
grated lemon peel
140 g flour
1 tbsp sugar
olive oil for frying
sugar

Wash and dry the figs. Cut them in halves or quarters. In a bowl beat the egg yolks with the milk, oil, salt and lemon rind. Stir in the flour and sugar and combine well. Refrigerate the batter for 2 hours. Beat the egg whites until stiff and fold them into the batter. Dip the figs into the batter and fry them in deep, hot oil until golden. Drain briefly and sprinkle with sugar. Apricots, halved and pits removed, can be prepared in the same way.

Contrary to what you might believe, carbohydrates will not make you fat. A sampler: a potato weighing about 140 grams contains 110 calories. The same weight of cooked rice is 154 calories; of pasta, 210 calories, and, of bread, 390 calories. By comparison, the same weight of steak, 140 grams, is 500 calories. Pure carbohydrate and pure protein contain the same number of calories, four per gram. The steak, however, contains fat, which accounts for its extra calories.

Combine rice, pasta or potatoes with vegetables, seafood and a dressing for light and easy summer salads.

The Spanish diet has never been heavy on meat, especially not in summer. Fish and shellfish in their wonderful variety are favoured sources of protein, a heart-smart choice.

Dessert in Spain is *fruta del tiempo*, seasonal fresh fruit. And what a marvellous selection, from the early February strawberries, to summer's peaches, plums, apricots and vari-coloured melons, through to the late summer lusciousness of figs and grapes, all loaded with easily-digested fruit sugars, vitamins and minerals. Three small apricots, for instance, pack a whopping 60 per cent of daily Vitamin A requirements, for only 55 calories.

A lovely summer starter, so simple to prepare, is fresh melon or figs with *jamón serrano*, mountain-cured ham sliced paper-thin. The sweet fruit beautifully complements the slightly salty ham.

**OILS AND FATS:
OLIVE IS WHERE THE FLAVOUR IS**

The flavour of Spanish cooking is intimately linked with the landscape, where the olive has thrived on unirrigated hill-sides since the Romans introduced the tree to Spain. Butter was virtually unknown, except in the north, and lard a poor substitute. For centuries, olive oil has been the preferred fat, for frying, for sauteing, for sauces, for mayonnaise, even for sweets. Everything from glowing complexions to good digestive systems to strong hearts has been attributed to its beneficial qualities. Nutritional science today can verify much of the folklore, for studies show that Mediterranean peoples who consume olive oil, a mono-unsaturated fat, instead of high-cholesterol, saturated animal fats, have a markedly lower incidence of death from coronary disease.

Olive oil is summertime «light». Though all fats have the same number of calories, nine per gram, tests have shown that olive



Many nutritionists recommend that up to half our daily calories be consumed as raw foods — fresh fruits and vegetables — which provide minerals, vitamins and fibre.

oil produces «lighter» fried foods. For example, potatoes fried in olive oil absorb 12 per cent less oil than those fried in sunflower oil and 47 per cent less than potatoes fried in soy oil.

Pescadito frito, mixed fish fry of fresh anchovies, squid rings, prawns, mullet and slices of hake, typical of southern Spain, is a summer favourite which gains depth of flavour from the oil in which it's fried. It is delicious piping hot, perhaps at a beach-side restaurant called a *chiringuito*, with chilled fino sherry or white wine, and, of course, a salad or gazpacho.

Olive oil, known to be the most easily digested and assimilated of cooking fats, is being used experimentally in the diet of ulcer patients. Other tests show it might be useful as a protection against radiation, because it is a rich source of Vitamin E, the vitamin some health food freaks gobble believing it promotes clear skin, youthfulness and sexual potency! No scientific proof, mind you.

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VITAMINS AND FIBRE FOR THE ACTIVE LIFE

Many nutritionists recommend that up to half our daily calories be consumed as raw foods—fresh fruits and vegetables—which provide vitamins, minerals, enzymes, and especially, fibre, which is an effective antidote to constipation and, according to some researchers, a possible preventive to cancer of the colon.

In Spain «raw foods» means much more than an occasional lettuce salad, an apple or an orange. Here there are dozens of different salads with exotic names like *pipirrana*, *salpicón*, *salmorejo*, *mojete*, *remojón*. Serve up a salad supper for summer.

When cooking vegetables, Spanish cooks don't pour valuable vitamins and

The flavour of Spanish cooking is intimately linked with the landscape, where the olive has thrived on unirrigated hillsides since the Romans introduced the tree into Spain.

minerals down the drain with the cooking water! Typically, vegetables are sautéed lightly in oil, then covered with just enough water to prevent their scorching and simmered until tender and served in earthenware casseroles with all the delicious juices, full of vitamins, and plenty of good bread to soak them up. Sometimes egg, breadcrumbs or ground almonds thicken the sauce and transform a simple vegetable dish into a more substantial one. *Pisto*, a melange of summer vegetables, is a good example of vegetable wizardry.

Tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, strawberries and melon are top sources of vitamin C; leafy greens and yellow vegetables provide vitamin A; the B complex is found in green veggies, dried beans and nuts.

ALVALLE

Ready-to-eat gazpacho

If *gazpacho*, Spain's famous chilled soup, ever needed a publicity campaign, it got one free in Pedro Almodovar's «Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown». In an unforgettable scene, the heroine, driven to despair by her recalcitrant lover, spikes a large jug of gazpacho with sleeping pills. Assorted uninvited guests arrive, nearly all of whom, unable to resist the sight of fresh gazpacho, succumb to the effects, leaving the intended victim unscathed.

And indeed, a good gazpacho (surely one of the healthiest and most nutritious dishes ever invented) is hugely tempting to Spaniards and foreigners alike.

Never a particularly difficult dish to prepare, especially since the popularisation of the blender, it is now easier still. Alvalle,

food division of the engineering company Chaconsa, has created a totally natural ready-to-eat gazpacho which is completely additive-free yet keeps for up to seven days in the fridge after the container has been opened.

The container is where the secret lies. Tested and put on the market as a container for fresh orange juice, it consists of flexible bags made of layers of thermoplastic material welded along all four sides and with a rigid aperture used for filling which is then hermetically sealed. The bags are previously sterilised by means of gamma rays and have an aluminium-coated in-between layer to provide protection against oxygen and light.

Once filled, the bags are inserted into boxes which both protect them and make them a more tractable shape. These are fitted with a special opening device which provides a permanent barrier against product contact with the air. The whole unit, both before and after opening, has to be stored at a temperature of below 4 degrees C (39 F).

The ready-to-eat gazpacho is made with the traditional ingredients: tomato, cucumber, green pepper, onion, garlic, olive oil, water, lemon juice and salt. The mixture contains no stabilisers, preservatives, colourants, flavourings or any other type of additive. It is, in fact, a fresh product.

The result is excellent, and can either be eaten just as it comes or adapted to personal taste by adjusting the seasoning or adding more water, vinegar, and so on. It can be made to seem even more homemade by serving it with the traditional little dishes of garnish (chopped green pepper, bread, tomato and onion).

As it is a fresh product, the taste of Alvalle gazpacho can vary slightly from batch to batch, though the aim is to keep it as homogeneous as possible. Until now, it has only been available in 5 and 10 litre packs, intended for catering and (large) family consumption, but Alvalle is about to launch new 1 and 2 litre packs and individual portions.

This ready-to-eat gazpacho is made only with the traditional ingredients.



MINERAL WEALTH

Fresh produce is a rich source of minerals as well as vitamins. Spanish cuisine is little dependent on dairy foods, source of dietary calcium though cheese is enjoyed as a snack. So this important mineral comes from other sources. One boon is that famous Spanish sunshine, with which the body manufactures vitamin D, which, in turn, promotes absorption of dietary calcium.

Almonds, which grow widely in Spain and are used extensively in cooking, are an excellent source of calcium as well as magnesium, copper and potassium. Figs, grapes and raisins, lentils, parsley, olives and *grelas*, turnip greens, a Galician speciality, are other rich calcium sources.

Another cold soup, *ajo blanco con uvas*, made of ground almonds, bread and garlic, garnished with Malaga grapes, makes an unusual and wonderfully refreshing summer starter, while it contributes important minerals to the diet.

Spanish sardines, grilled over a driftwood fire on the beach or as an *bors d'oeuvre*, are an excellent source of calcium. Furthermore, the sardine, along with other fatty fish such as tuna and mackerel, has been shown to contain «omega-3» fatty acids, which appear to lower the likelihood of heart disease.

Garlic, without which it just wouldn't be Spanish food, is an excellent source of selenium, a trace mineral. Scientists aren't sure just what it does, though they point to a statistical correlation between regions where selenium is low with higher cancer rates and more deaths from high blood pressure. Until the results are in, throw an extra few cloves of garlic into the summer gazpacho!

Following are recipes to help you enjoy a healthy, bountiful summer.

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ROSES, ROSADOS...

THE VERY PINK OF COURTESY...

Text: John Radford

There are some of us who actually enjoy pink wines. Yes, I know, I, too, have been in that situation where one diner orders fish and the other meat, and pink is seen as a compromise. The sad thing is that a wine selected to please everybody ends up pleasing nobody, and that factor probably explains why pink wine has such a low profile, throughout the world. But it doesn't have to be like that, especially when you're presented with the range of pink wines produced throughout Spain.

Spain's range of geography and meteorology, from the lush, green pastures of the foothills of the Pyrenees to the parched lowlands of the south gives its winemakers a wonderful opportunity to make a whole range of *rosado* wines, from the delicately fresh shell-pinks of the Mediterranean coast to the hearty, weighty blood-orange-tinted wines of the Duero valley; from the elegant stylishness of Cava Rosado to the simple unpretentiousness of the everyday wines of La Mancha. If you, too, are a lover of pink wines, then Spain is —if you'll forgive a rather mixed metaphor— your oyster.

It's convenient to divide Spain into four major regions for pink wines, each of which has an individual regional style. In

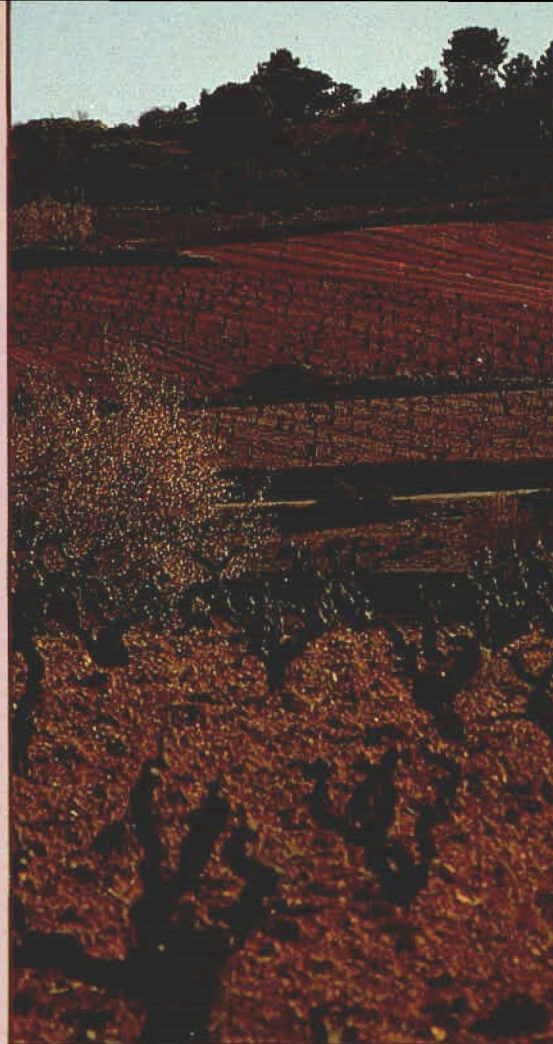


M. LUISA ASEENS

general terms, however, the finer wines come from north of Madrid, starting rich and powerful in the Duero Valley and lightening up towards Barcelona; meanwhile, everyday wines from south of the capital go in the opposite direction, from light and fresh in La Mancha, getting weightier and more powerful as you approach Valencia.

THE SOUTH-EAST

South-eastern Spanish winemaking is centred on the DOs of Valencia and Alicante areas and rosados from hereabouts tend to be strong, uncomplicated wines which could handle anything from the local stewed rabbit with black peppercorns to the hefty salt-cod dishes popular along the coast. The wines represent honest, solid value with, here and there, a bit of a



ICEX

visionary streak in winemaking terms —Bodegas Vinival, for example, are experimenting with Cabernet-Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah alongside the Cencibel, Garnacha, and Bobal; Bodegas Levantinas make a very pleasant Campo de Rosell in the *joven* (early-harvest) style from Garnacha and Monastrell, which reflects the new trend towards lightness whilst harking back to the heady history of traditional Valencian viniculture. Prices are very reasonable, and the rosados are wellmade and unpretentious.



P. SANCHEZ-MATA

SOUTH-CENTRAL SPAIN

What we're really talking about here is La Mancha, Spain's largest vineyard for white wines. This is co-operative country, and it is the co-operatives which have, in many cases, shown the way in the production of new-style wines from the unjustly-maligned Airén grape, which has shown itself capable of some very interesting wines when cold-fermented and carefully vinified.

The thing about La Mancha is that an area obviously intended by nature to produce red wines (i.e. continental to semi-arid climate) has a flourishing native vine which produces green grapes. Currently, over 90% of the vineyard is planted in Airén, though the Consejo Regulador is actively encouraging replanting with the red Cencibel (the southern variant of the Tempranillo) to increase production of red wines. However, what we already have in La Mancha is the perfect formula for some excellent rosados: the prolific white Airén vinified with the rich, dark-skinned Cencibel. Two of La Mancha's major co-operatives are the Co-operativa Nuestro Padre Jesús del Perdón at Manzanares (whose brand name is Lazarillo) and the Co-operativa Nuestra Señora de Manjavacas in Mota del Cuervo (whose brand name is Zagarrón), and they both produce

Spain's range of geography and meteorology gives its winemakers a wonderful opportunity to make a whole range of rosado wines.

delicately-coloured pink *vinos del año* taking advantage of the region's grape-growing imbalance between white and red. The result is light, fresh, uncomplicated and unpretentious, and just the thing for a spring or summer Sunday afternoon on the lawn —at low prices.

THE NORTH EAST

The area around Barcelona has gained a reputation for being one of the most innovative in Spain when it comes to wine production, and this applies to rosados as well as all the other styles. The climate here is Mediterranean, the culture is Catalan, and the wines have a lightness of touch and a freshness on the palate which is very different from other regions of Spain. Miguel Torres, one of the architects of modern Catalan wines, makes De Casta Penedés Rosado from Garnacha and Cariñena: a headstrong full, dry wine, the 1989 vintage of which has a powerful fruit and nose belying its pretty salmon-pink colour. Lighter in alcohol and yet still with

that Catalan «backbone», De Muller Rosado from Conca de Barberà is mainly made from Garnacha Trepat, and offers a lighter, though equally fresh and equally dry version. Lightest of all is Ferret i Mateu's Penedés Novell Rosat —a pale-salmon wine in a Spanish variant of the «nouveau» style: released very soon after the vintage for immediate consumption. Like all «new» wines, it gives its best in terms of freshness and fruit immediately upon release: not a wine to keep.

Most Cava comes from the province of Barcelona, and the rosado versions tend to use the traditional Cava grapes (Macabeo, Xarel-lo and Parellada) with a little Monastrell or Garnacha to give them the rosy glow. This has a further advantage in that the extra body it imparts to the wine allows it a drier «dosage»: Freixenet, for example, uses about half a gram per litre less sugar in its rosado than in the equivalent white Cava, giving a wine of great suppleness and character whilst maintaining a properly «brut» style. Equally delicious are the pink Cavas of Codorníu and Conde de Caralt, which combine that same basic freshness which makes Cava such a splendid apéritif with a full-enough palate to accompany a subsequent first-course or fish course as well.

NORTH-CENTRAL SPAIN

Castile-Leon and Aragon, north of Madrid, have some of the longest winemaking traditions of Spain, and make some of the best rosados, often in the same grand, powerful style as their classic reds.

Starting at the lighter end, in Aragon, the Co-operativa San Valero in Cariñena produces excellent rosados jóvenes under the Don Mendo and other labels, as well as a delightful fizzy rosado called Percebal: whilst not, perhaps, a wine to be taken too seriously, it is a pleasant thirst-quencher, well-chilled, on a hot day and certainly could be serious competition for a certain other fizzy pink wine from the Iberian peninsula. Weightier reds —probably Aragon's best, come from the little-known area of Campo de Borja. The major grape —here as in Cariñena— is the Garnacha, sometimes with the help of a little Tempranillo, and the rosados go from light and fresh *jóvenes* like Viña Tito from the Co-operativa San Juan Bautista to relative heavyweights like Bodegas Bordeje's Rosado de Garnacha which needs 2-3 years' bottle-age to develop its full character.

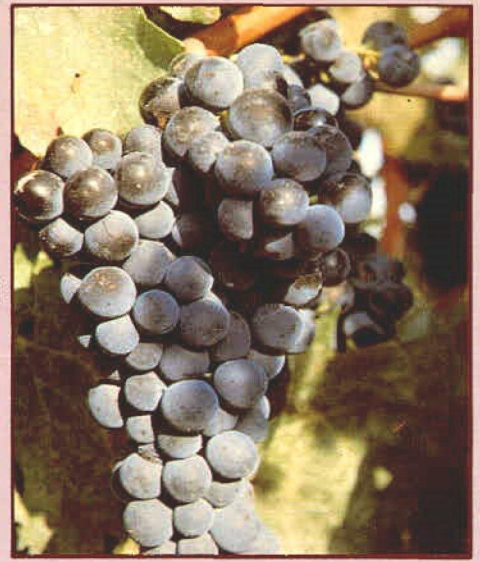
Navarre is often reckoned to produce Spain's very best rosados, and it certainly produces an impressive selection. We're starting to acquire solid worth, here, in the rosado stakes with Garnacha wines which perform fruitily well when young



Bobal.



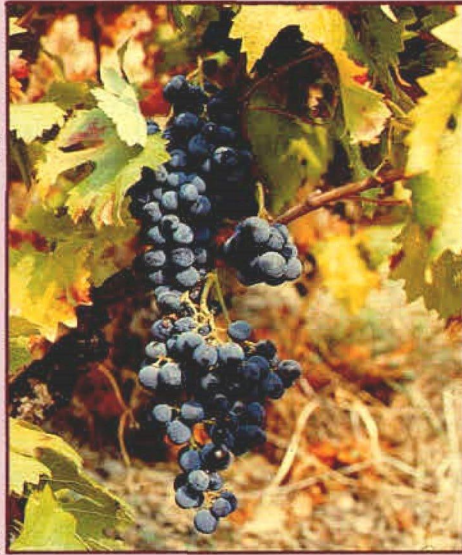
Airén.



Tempranillo.



Cencibel.



Cariñena.



Red Garnacha.

and yet will still repay keeping for a year or two—or even longer—to develop. The stars in the Navarre firmament include Bodegas Julián Chivite with a splendidly «meaty» Gran Feudo rosado, Bodegas Ochoa, whose 1989 vintage has plenty of fruit up-front and a gentle, almost rich aftertaste which implies a long and useful life, and Vinícola Navarra with Rosado Las Campanas—bags of fruit and, again that hint of better things to come if you have the patience—and Castillo de Javier which is their top-of-the-range rosado, made from free-run Garnacha must, macerated for only one hour to extract the colour, and hiding a good deal of weight behind that elegant shell-pink tint.

One of my fondest memories of pink Rioja is some wax-sealed bottles from Bodegas Berberana which, I was told, was discovered in the late 1970s in an old walled-up cellar. No one knew when the wine had been made—though an educated guess hinted at the mid-to-late 1950s—but the Consejo Regulador allowed Berberana to stick 1966 Gran Reserva labels on it and sell it. It was an astonishing wine, full of life and vigour in spite of the fact that its youthful fruit had been absorbed, and a perfect example of how ro-

sado wines can develop, given half a chance. True, winemaking practices have changed considerably since those days, but the underlying strength of the grape and its resilience in the bottle remains. Perhaps it is only the market which prevents this type of wine being made today.

However, a good deal of excellent pink Rioja is made, and indeed, by Bodegas Berberana, whose 1989 Carta de Oro (60% Tempranillo, 35% Garnacha, 5% Viura) is a lionhearted wine in spite of its elegantly understated colour. The Marqués de Riscal—Rioja's oldest bodega—also makes a ripe and powerful rosado in its characteristic wired bottle. Indeed, most of the major bodegas offer a pink wine, perhaps as a counterpoint to the excellence of their reds: Faustino (which produces Faustino V rosado from 100% Tempranillo), Navajas (whose 1988—40% Tempranillo, 30% Garnacha, 30% Viura—needs more time), Marqués de Cáceres (50% Tempranillo and plenty of room in the 1990 for development—though splendid already) and even Riscal's oldest rival the Marqués de Murrieta, though his rosado is seldom seen outside of Spain. The grape-mix is usually predominant in Garnacha, with various mixtures of Tempranillo, and the style is

unmistakably Riojano—power, weight, careful and consistent winemaking and a quite surprising capability for ageing, even in those wines marked for immediate drinking.

Finally, one of Spain's most exciting, up-and-coming areas for red wines—Ribera del Duero—is also starting to produce something equally exciting in the pink world with the 1989 Monte Vega Rosado from Spanish Wines SA in Baños de Valdearados. The wine is 45% Garnacha, 30% Tinto del País (Tempranillo) and 15% Albillo, and is built like an Olympic weight-lifter: a powerful nose, great depth of fruit and flavour on a long palate, and dark, almost purplish highlights in its uniquely-shaped bottle. Paradoxically, it's drinking already, but with that underlying strength it's the kind of thing that would comfortably accompany even the most wintery of meals: very much a wine to watch.

So, whether your taste is for light and bright value-for-money-wines pretty in pink for a summer's afternoon, or something more powerful and traditional to bring lightness and a shaft of summer lightning to a sombre winter's supper, there's something from Spain to keep you and your guests in the Pink of Courtesy...

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SEA URCHINS

FEASTING ON THE UNTHINKABLE

Text & Photos: Deborah Biringer Luhrman

Imagine a bright Sunday morning along Spain's rugged Costa Brava. It's mid-winter, but several families have gathered in a sandy cove and before noon the day is warm enough to start peeling off jackets. Children are chasing a football through the seaspray, while the adults crowd around a bristling mountain of freshly gathered sea urchins.

Deep green, purple or brown, the sea urchins are opened by a man wearing heavy gloves who slices off the bottom with a big pair of curved scissors and passes them around. The prickly half shells are gingerly rinsed in a bucket of seawater, leaving five coral-coloured pieces of meat inside. The treasure is scooped out with a crust of bread and eaten eagerly. Two dozen or more *garotes*, as they are called here, are polished off by each person and tossed into the pile of empty shells. The feast is accompanied by cloves of garlic, tender onions and thick slices of the local sausage called *butifarra*. It's all washed down with copious amounts of red wine or cava.

Beach parties featuring sea urchins are a Catalonian tradition that dates back to Roman times. The delicacy is also enjoyed along the coast of Asturias and in Cadiz, but they were practically unknown elsewhere in Spain until the last few years. Chefs at some of the most fashionable restaurants in Madrid and Barcelona have recently discovered the exotic sea urchin and exalted the humble fishermen's treat to the heights of *nouvelle cuisine* where it is poised to become the caviar of the 21st century.

A TASTE OF THE SEA

You'll either adore them or despise them, there's no middle ground. That's

what I was told as I set out for the Costa Brava to write about sea urchins. I knew I would have to taste the odd animals and I can't say I was looking forward to it. Less than an hour after the train arrived, I was seated in the elegant Sa Punta restaurant near Pals face-to-face with a platter of sea urchins on the half shell.

What a relief it was to discover that they are delicious! In polite company in a gourmet restaurant, the coral is scooped out with a small spoon and eaten like an oyster. The aroma is pure seaspray and the taste is unlike anything else. It is sweeter than the freshest lobster, with a delicate texture similar to the succulent section of a mussel, but without the rubbery parts.

A poetic gourmet from Galicia, Julio

Camba, has penned the most famous tribute to the hedgehog of the deep. «The sea urchin is an extract of the sea», he wrote, «The wind of a squall, the essence of a storm. When you eat the first one, your mouth fills not with saliva but with seawater, with all its marine aromas and flavours. And after eating 15 or 20 dozen... the finest lobster will taste like tortoise and the best clams will taste like an old tyre.»

One of the men most responsible for turning the Catalan speciality into a gourmet sensation is Jaume Garrigó, 44, who has devoted most of his life to diving for, selling and promoting sea urchins.

Jaume comes from a family of fishermen, but he always preferred to seek his prey underwater. He learned to scuba dive at age 14 from a group of Italians who came to the Costa Brava to collect red coral for jewelry. «There were no wetsuits on the Costa Brava or even in Barcelona back then», he recalls, «So I used a sweater and wore three pairs of pants. I'm not sure it kept me warmer physically, but it did psychologically.»

As the coral reef disappeared, Jaume turned to gathering sea urchins which he relentlessly peddled from the back of his van to all the local restaurants. Since sea urchins are highly perishable and cleaning them is a bit of work, it was a hard sell. «Find another job, they all told me», he now says with a broad smile, but perseverance and a winning personality triumphed.

A big breakthrough for Jaume and his Madrid-born wife Mari Angeles came about three years ago. «We started to experiment with canning the sea urchin coral to preserve it», he explained, «But it has to be scalded or cooked first and our friends who are chefs complained that they couldn't use it that way, that 50% of the flavour was lost.»

So taking a cue from the chefs, they began freezing sea urchin coral and packaging it under the brand name Eris-Mar. Currently the only company in the world to sell fresh-frozen sea urchin coral, Eris-Mar produces about 1,300 kilograms a year. In addition, they ship up to 40 tonnes of live sea urchins annually to wholesale markets and restaurants. About a quarter of the production goes to France while the rest is served in Spain's poshest restaurants, for instance Neichel or Florian in Barcelona and Juan de Alzate in Madrid, where the coral is used as an exotic stuffing for raviolis.

DENIZENS OF THE DEEP

Sea urchins are found at depths of six to 18 metres (20 to 59 feet) in the Medi-

Recipes

The following recipes are provided by Jaume Font of Sa Punta restaurant in Pals, Gerona.

Sea Urchins au Gratin with Cava (*Erizos de mar gratinados al cava*)

Serves 6:

36 sea urchins
1/2 l cava dry or brut
1/2 l heavy cream
6 egg yolks
300 g butter
juice of one lemon

Open and clean the sea urchins. With a finger, loosen the coral so that it falls to the bottom of the shell. If any of the sea urchins are not very full, add additional frozen sea urchin coral.

For the sauce, put the cava in a pan and reduce by half over medium heat. Add the cream and continue cooking until it begins to thicken. Make a hollandaise sauce with the egg yolks, butter and lemon. Then add the cream mixture. Fill the sea urchin shells with the sauce and brown in a broiler.

Warm Timbale of Rock Fish with Sea Urchin Vinaigrette (*Buding templado de pescado de roca con vinagreta de erizos de mar*)

Serves 6:

750 g cleaned rock fish
300 g white bread with crusts removed
350 g milk
40 g butter, melted
5 eggs, separated
salt
pepper

For the vinaigrette:

1/4 l seed oil
salt
pepper
1/4 l cava vinegar
1 egg white
80 g sea urchin coral
100 g bread crumbs

To make the timbale:

Break the bread into pieces and let it soak in the milk for one hour. Season and mix with the flaked fish, the egg yolks and the melted butter. Beat egg whites into stiff peaks and add to fish mixture. Grease a large mold or six individual molds and coat with bread crumbs, turn the mixture into the molds and bake in a pan of hot but not boiling water.

To make the vinaigrette:

Put the egg white, salt, pepper into a blender and turn it on, slowly adding the oil and vinegar. If it is too heavy, add a little water and then add the sea urchin coral and blend again.

To serve, unmold and cover with sauce or place the timbale on top of the sauce and decorate. The timbale should be served warm and the vinaigrette should be cold.



Scrambled Eggs with Sea Urchin

Poached Turbot Supreme and Seaweed with Musseline Sauce and Sea Urchins (*Suprema de rodaballo al vapor de algas con salsa muselina y erizos de mar*)

Serves 6:

1.5 kilo of turbot
100 g seaweed
100 g sea urchin coral
300 g butter
6 eggs yolks
50 g flour

fish brot
200 g heavy cream
juice of 1/2 lemon

Clean and debone the turbot. Place it in a buttered poaching dish, season it and add the seaweed. Separately, cream the butter with the egg yolks and the lemon juice. To make the musseline take a quarter of the butter mixture and add flour to make a roux, add fish broth and season, then strain through a fine sieve. Add the cream and cook until it is reduced, remove from the fire and add the rest of the butter mixture. Strain again to obtain a fine musseline.

To serve, put the turbot on a platter, cover with sauce and place in the broiler. When browned, sprinkle with sea urchin coral and decorate with seaweed.

Scrambled Eggs with Sea Urchin (*Revuelto de erizos de mar*)

Serves 6:

150 g sea urchin coral
12 eggs
300 g cream
salt
olive oil
24 empty sea urchin shells

Beat the eggs with the cream and the salt. Put the oil in a frying pan on medium heat and add the egg mixture stirring constantly with a wire whisk until it starts to set. Add the sea urchin coral, stir, and remove from the heat without allowing it to cook because if it is heated the sea urchins can lose 50% of their aroma and flavour.

Fill the empty shells with the eggs and serve immediately.



AS THE SUN SET SLOWLY
BEHIND THE OLD TOWN,
WE SHARED A COOL,
FRAGRANT PENEDES WINE.

WE'D SPENT THE DAY
WANDERING THROUGH THE
VINEYARDS IN THE
MOUNTAINS OF THE PENEDES
REGION NEAR BARCELONA.
NOW, AS WE RELAXED,
WE BEGAN TO REALISE
HOW THEY GAINED THEIR
REPUTATION AS SOME
OF THE WORLD'S FINEST WINE
MAKERS.

WE'D CHOSEN A PALE,
YET FRUITY PENEDES WHITE
WINE WITH A LOVELY,
DELICATE BOUQUET. LATER,
WE CHOSE ONE OF THE
SUPERB PENEDES REDS, WHICH
ARE SMOOTH FULL-BODIED
WINES, GOOD ENOUGH TO
ACCOMPANY JUST
ABOUT ANY DISH, ANYWHERE.



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*Restaurante La Torreta
Barcelona Murray London '89*

terranean and picked off the rocks by scuba divers wearing protective gloves. The best gathering spots along the Costa Brava are at the bottom of towering cliffs and far away from populated beaches. Sea urchins are also harvested in rough ocean waters in Asturias (see inset) and along the coast of Brittany, Ireland and Chile. But the calm seas of the Mediterranean make diving much easier and harvesting more dependable.

The spines are sharp and contain a toxin that is relatively harmless to humans. A bigger danger is the possibility that a bristle can break off under the skin and become infected. The animals have a mouth on the bottom and five teeth that are sharp enough to bite through small crustaceans. However, most of the time they eat algae and plants. They are only harvested in the cold winter months, November to April. The rest of the year the edible part becomes very small.

It takes 250 to 300 sea urchins to produce one kilogram of edible coral, which sells wholesale for 11,500 pesetas (\$123). That's a relatively down-to-earth price compared with some restaurants in Paris which serve the fresh variety, flown in from the coast, for as much as 50 francs (\$10) apiece. The Japanese are also big fans of sea urchins and accustomed to paying dearly.

CANNED SEA URCHINS FROM ASTURIAS

The people of Asturias along Spain's wind-swept Cantabrian coast are also fond of sea urchins. Here they are called *oricios* and eaten fresh or steamed, accompanied by big glasses of Asturian hard cider.

Oricios are gathered in rocky coves in the remote western part of the region and scuba divers hunt for them when the sea is calm enough to permit diving, but since they must be harvested in winter, a week can sometimes go by with no good diving days.

Several companies in Asturias have begun canning sea urchin coral over the past few years. Apart from fresh sea urchins which are very difficult to find in Spanish markets, the canned variety is the only option available to consumers for home use. For the moment Eris-Mar's frozen variety is only sold to restaurants.

Canned sea urchin coral from Asturias is called *caviar de oricios* and is generally used in scrambled eggs, salads and sauces to accompany seafood. While some gourmets argue that the heating process used in canning diminishes the flavour, conserved sea urchins have enjoyed great success since they were introduced four years ago. This despite the fact that they sell for about 1,000 pesetas (more than \$10) for a 120 gram can. A sea urchin paté is also produced here using the coral mixed with butter and hake.

Plans are afoot in Asturias to begin exporting canned sea urchins to France, Germany and even Japan. However, there is a limit to nature's bounty and if demand continues, Asturia's canners are thinking about setting up a sea urchin farm to ensure a steady supply.



Sea urchins are enjoyed in Catalonia, along the coast of Asturias and in Cadiz.

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Sea urchin coral is sweetest and notably plumper when the sea is calm and the moon is full. The coral is sometimes called caviar or roe, but that is really a misnomer since the edible part is actually the sexual organs. Both male and female sea urchins are eaten, but experts say the females taste sweeter. All of which gives rise to numerous legends about their aphrodisiac qualities.

NEPTUNE'S MEDICINE CHEST

For the ancient Greeks sea urchins were an appetizer *par excellence*, as well as a cure for baldness. An Athenian medical text from the 4th century BC said, «Sea urchins are good for the stomach and create an appetite even in the worst cases. They are diuretic and are an adequate remedy for jaundice. The ashes of burned sea urchin shells heal wounds and the same ashes, mixed with honey, can be applied to the head where hair has fallen out to make it grow again.»

The Romans also enjoyed sea urchins and it is said that Napoleon ate them for strength before going into battle.

Even surrealist painter Salvador Dali, who lived on the Costa Brava in Cadaqués, was said to be fascinated by the sharp but sweet creatures. He painted them as subjects and sometimes used them as a natural dye to make a red-coloured pigment.

Nowadays, people seem to prefer sea urchins on the table rather than on their bald heads. Back at Sa Punta restaurant, chef Jaume Font prepared four other sea urchin dishes to show the variety of ways they can be used by a creative kitchen. First came my favourite, a rich and sweet sea urchin au gratin with cava, served in three shells arranged decoratively on the plates. Next he prepared a warm timbale of rock fish in a creamy sea urchin vinaigrette sauce which provided a deliciously delicate contrast to the sturdy timbale.

We were too full for much more but nibbled on an updated version of the traditional Spanish scrambled eggs, this time with sea urchin coral and served again in the shells. Eris-mar has developed a special process of sterilising and preserving the prickly shells so that the spines stay put and they can be used as serving dishes in restaurants.

Finally for the main course, poached turbot supreme and seaweed in musseline sauce with sea urchin coral. It was a wonderfully flavoured dish and beautiful to look at with the white fish and sauce offset by bright green sea lettuce and dark red sea urchin garnish.

Chef Font has been using sea urchins in his kitchen for 12 years and has some

Chefs at some of the most fashionable restaurants in Madrid and Barcelona have recently discovered the exotic sea urchin and exalted it to the heights of nouvelle cuisine.

expert advice. «You must not cook them», he warns, «They lose all their perfume, flavour and taste.» To make a sauce using sea urchins, he says to puree the coral and add it at the last minute before serving.

There are days when Jaume Garrigó wishes he had chosen a more conventional profession, for instance selling Spain's popular serrano hams, but some people are destined to be different and he's already hard at work on his next culinary innovation, sea anenomes. We'll save that story for another time.

SEAWEED, A VEGETABLE OF THE FUTURE

The Japanese have long enjoyed the benefits of eating seaweed and it's an essential ingredient in *sushi*, the Japanese raw fish rolls that are all the rage in California. But Europeans are just beginning to catch the new wave.

Seaweed has been showing up recently on the menus of some of Spain's most innovative restaurants as a vegetable to accompany fish. The trend-setting Cafe de Oriente across the street from the royal palace in Madrid, for example, serves poached turbot on a bed of steamed seaweed. It's not just for decoration either, restaurateurs say their customers enjoy seaweed and are beginning to recognise its enormous nutritional benefits.

Eris-mar, the only company in Spain selling fresh, edible seaweed, is also behind this trend. They have developed a unique saltpacking system that allows seaweed to be kept fresh in the refrigerator in a styrofoam box for up to four weeks.

Four types of Spanish seaweeds are available: green beans of the sea (*Himantalia elongata*), which are brown in colour and skinnier than green beans of the land with a slightly slimy texture but a pleasant taste; dulce (*Palmaria palmata*), which has a broad red leaf and an arsenal of proteins and minerals; wakame (*Undaria pinnatifida*), which is a brownish seaweed favoured by the Japanese; and sea lettuce (*Ulva lactuca*), which has an almost artificially bright green colour and an appealing taste, but is somewhat more rubbery than your average garden variety. Only sea lettuce comes from the Mediterranean, all the other varieties are harvested along the Cantabrian coast in Galicia.

While seaweed has little chance of replacing roast lamb or grilled steak in the affection of Spanish diners, much of the country's cuisine includes fish and seaweed as a logical partner.

Seaweed recipes courtesy Eris-Mar

Seaweed Salad with Prawns and Walnut Vinaigrette (*Ensalada de algas con langostinos y vinagreta de nueces*)

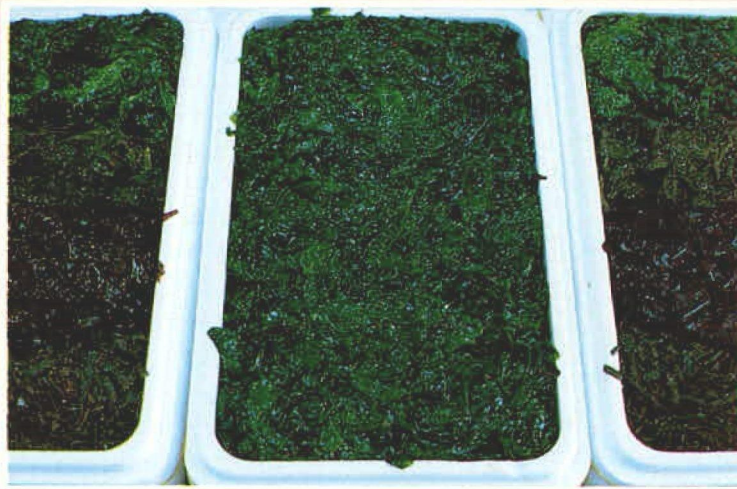
40 g seaweed
lettuce
cleaned, cooked prawns
walnuts
walnut oil
sherry vinegar

Chop the seaweed and lettuce. Add nuts and prawns. Toss with oil and vinegar.

Green Beans of the Sea (*Judías verdes de mar*)

green beans of the sea
shallots
butter
white wine
cream
pepper

Steam the seaweed for one minute. Meanwhile, saute shallots in butter and add a splash of white wine. Add the seaweed, cream and pepper. Serve hot as a side dish with steamed or broiled fish.



Seaweed has been showing up recently on the menus of some of Spain's most innovative restaurants as a vegetable to accompany fish.



ON BOARD THE
 TRAIN,
 THE 'GIRALDA'
 BAR CAR IS THE
 PLACE FOR
 A PRE-LUNCH
 FINO -THE PALE AND
 ELEGANT SHERRY
 WHICH IS THE
 PERFECT APERITIF
 BEFORE THE
 CLASSIC SPANISH
 CUISINE SERVED
 ON BOARD.



Spring in Seville... the scent of orange blossom perfumes the air, the streets are bright with the flounced dresses of young and not-so-young - Spanish ladies; the sound of flamenco music pours out of every bar, and the old city comes alive at dusk. It is the time of the 'Feria', the spring festival which sweeps the Sevillanos and visitors to their city along on a wave of energy, goodwill, fine sheries, tasty tapas and throbbing guitar music.

It is also the time when Al Andalus comes to town; Spain's luxury train cruises into the city to start its Southern Journeys.

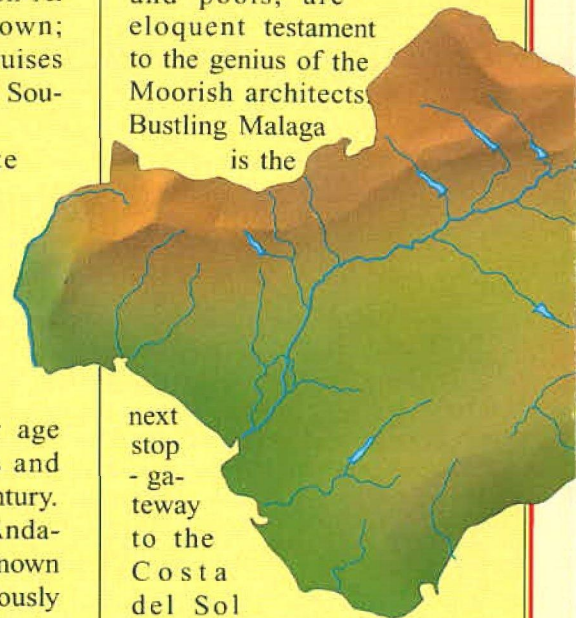
For those fortunate enough to board Al Andalus at Seville's elegant new railway station, they are about to embark on a magical journey in the style and elegance of an earlier age but with the comforts and amenities of the 20th century. Al Andalus - or The Andalusian Express, as it's known in English - is a meticulously re-created gem of a train; its carriages began their lives bearing the royalty and nobility of Europe on their journeys around the continent in the leisurely days of the 1920s. Now, perfectly restored and modernised, Al Andalus offers today's travellers to Spain a completely new way of exploring this fascinating country.

On its Southern journeys, during the spring and summer, Al Andalus departs Seville for Cordoba, an enchan-

ting city of flower filled courtyards, cobbled streets, and its unique Mosque one of the true wonders of the world.

Al Andalus is a meticulously recreated gem of a train which bore the royalty and nobility of Europe in the days of the 1920's.

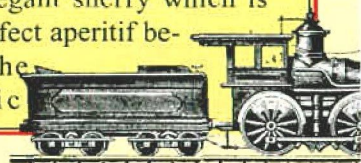
A walk around Cordoba gives a tantalising taste of old Moorish Spain that is echoed in the train's next stop Granada. The Alhambra Palace and the glorious gardens of the Generalife, with their cooling fountains and pools, are eloquent testament to the genius of the Moorish architects. Bustling Malaga is the

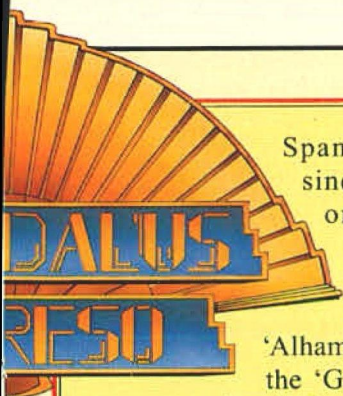


next stop - gateway to the Costa del Sol before Al Andalus cruises back to Seville, giving its passengers the chance to enjoy the superb scenery in relaxed, air conditioned comfort.

By night, the bar car is transformed into the lively heart of the train - music, dancing, conversation and singing may entertain passengers into the small hours.

On board the train, the 'Giralda' bar car is the place for a pre-lunch fino - the pale and elegant sherry which is the perfect aperitif before the classic





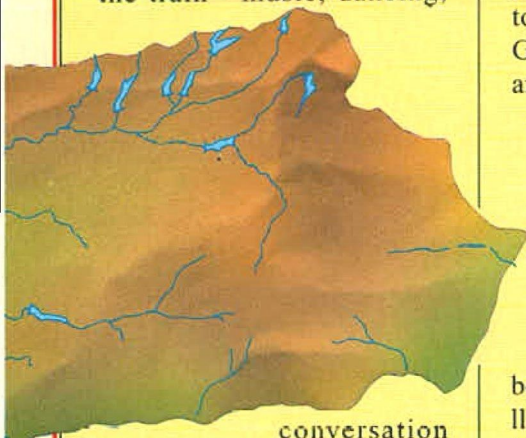
Spanish cuisine served on board. Two

restaurants - the

'Alhambra' and the 'Gibralfaro'

- are luxuriously furnished in art deco style, with comfortable sofas, crisp linen and attentive service from the highly experienced staff. A wine list offering the best of Spain's vintages is offered to complement the meals. By night, the bar car is transformed into the lively heart of the train - music, dancing,

Al Andalus comes to a halt at night: room stewards turn the elegant cabins and suites into comfortable bedrooms.



conversation and singing may entertain passengers into the small hours. But for those who want a quieter environment, by day or night, the Club Car 'Medina Azahara' will be a favourite spot: leather chairs and card tables create more peaceful areas for reading, talking or simply watching the scenery roll by. Al Andalus comes to a halt at night: room stewards turn the elegant cabins and suites into comfortable bedrooms, and the two large shower cars pro-

As the summer days lengthen and the south of Spain becomes hotter, Al Andalus heads for the north... to 'Green Spain', and the hills and valleys of Galicia, Asturias and Castile.



vide twenty spacious shower/dressing rooms presided over by an attendant.

As the summer days lengthen and the south of Spain becomes hotter, Al Andalus heads for the north to 'Green Spain', and the hills and valleys of Galicia, Asturias and Castile. The Northern itinerary follows (albeit in reverse) the old route of medieval pilgrims, 'The Way of St James' - or 'Santiago', as he is known in his country. From Santiago de Compostela to Barcelona, Al Andalus cruises through spectacular scenery - mountainous peaks, fertile vineyards and green fields. Visits to the most famous towns of Green Spain, including Leon and Burgos, and the wineries of the Rioja district, will be highlights of the journey, which ends in Barcelona site of the 1992 Olympics and one of Spain's most exciting cities. "The Way of St James" may even bring other

benefits to 20th century travellers on board Al Andalus: in the middle ages, pilgrims who completed the pilgrimage were allegedly promised a shorter stay in purgatory but even if this no longer holds true, a journey on Al Andalus will provide a lasting memory to those fortunate enough to enjoy the luxurious splendour of this beautiful train.

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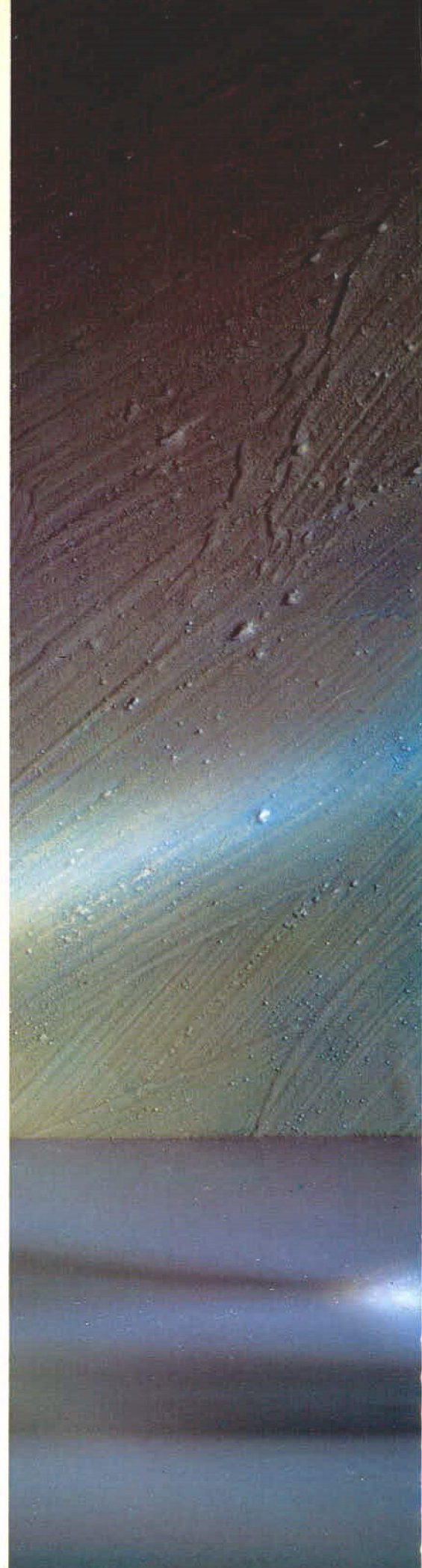
SPANISH MINERAL WATER

Eternal Springs

Text: **Luis Palacio**

Gone are the days when water was just water. Mineral water is now so firmly established as a consumer product that its finer points are coming to be appreciated: people really do prefer some to others. In Spain, they are spoiled for choice.

There is not one region of Spain without its mineral spring. Galicia is famous for its Mondariz water, Andalusia for Lanjarón, Catalonia for Vichy Catalan and Castilla-La Mancha for Solán de Cabras, to give just some examples. The whole country is rich in mineral water sources. Today, they are being tapped —and bottled, tetrabriked or canned— industrially, though the benefits of mineral water have been appreciated and exploited for centuries.





Water has always played a vital role in Spanish folk culture. Many of its legends and traditions are based on water-associated rituals. One custom, which is still kept up in many towns and villages, is to drink from a particular fountain on the morning of San Juan's Day, which coincides with the summer solstice, the traditional belief being that the fountains were inhabited by the countless fairies and nymphs which populate Spanish folklore.

On a more factually historical note, Spain's mineral waters were recognised and exploited as far back as the period of Roman occupation. The many thermal baths throughout the country are just one of Rome's contributions to Spanish civilisation. Some of the springs and spas dating back to that period are still in use today, albeit having undergone many alterations in the interim: the baths in Archena (Murcia) and Montemayor (northern Caceres) are classic examples.

Indeed, many of the major public works carried out by the Romans were concerned with harnessing water in one way or another: Segovia's aqueduct is one of the most triumphant and dramatic survivors.

The importance of water was equally recognised by that other great civilising influence, the invading Arabs. This is attributable, at least in part, to its significance for the Islamic religion. Nineteenth century English traveller and commentator Richard Ford dedicates a chapter of his book *«Gatherings from Spain»* to popular drinking habits and there reports that: «The Moors, who came from the Middle East, greatly appreciated the value of this element (water); they tapped the best springs with great care, also storing their water in great pools and cisterns». They also knew how to make the most of its aesthetic potential: the cooling, soothing effect of the constant splashing of water in the gardens of Granada's Alhambra is a classic example of its skilful use as an integral element in Arab architecture.

Curiously, this attention to the importance of water seems to have lapsed during the Middle Ages, only re-emerging in the mid-18C. This was when, on the ruins of the baths and springs discovered and developed by the Romans and Arabs, new spas and fountains were constructed which are still with us today.

FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

Many Spanish place-names reveal them to be sources of mineral water. Take, for example, the word *caldas*. According to the dictionary, these are thermal baths (their waters varying in both composition and temperature) constructed at points where natural springs emerge. These appear all over Spain: Caldas de Reyes (Pontevedra), Caldas de Luna (León), Caldas de Malavella (Gerona), Las Caldas (Asturias), Caldas de Partovia (Orense), Caldas de Besaya (Cantabria), Caldas de Bohi (Lerida)... Some of the



The bottled water sector in Spain is currently undergoing rapid expansion, with annual growth figures of over 20% year after year.



eponymous baths are still in use, their waters also sometimes bottled and sold. Vichy Catalan from Caldas de Malavella, and Font del Bou from Caldas de Bohi are two examples.

In Spain as a whole, there are over a hundred springs whose waters are now being bottled (this term is used generically here to include tetrabrik packaging and canning) and sold commercially. The sector's leading association, ANEABE (*Asociación Nacional de Empresas de Aguas de Bebidas Envasadas* - The National Association of Bottled Drinking Water Companies), represents about a hundred brand names, or 98% of all the mineral water bottled in Spain. A look at the list of Association members

reveals just how widely spread the companies (and their sources of water) are. They range from Elgoibar in the Basque Country to Marmolejo in Jaen, from Calasparra in Murcia to Babilafuente in Salamanca. There are also mineral water sources in the Spanish archipelagos: one in Deiá, Majorca in the Balearics, and one in Taco, in the Canary Island of Tenerife.

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE...

The bottled water sector in Spain is currently undergoing rapid expansion, with annual growth figures of over 20% year after year. This fact makes it one of the fastest growing segments of the food sector as a whole.

According to the latest available ANEABE figures (for 1989), the Association's members bottled 1,766 million litres of water in that year, a 23% increase on the previous one. Other sources, however, claim higher figures, placing the quantity bottled at over 2,000 million litres. These "production" figures place Spain in fourth position in Europe, after France, Germany and Italy.

However, Felipe Manzano, General Secretary of ANEABE warns that the last few years' figures «should be interpreted with care. Let's not forget that Spain started off with consumption figures lower than other neighbouring countries. It is only to be expected, then, that current growth should be greater».

Figures published by the food trade magazine *Alimarket* show that per capita consumption figures for mineral water in Spain have risen dramatically over the last few years, reaching 56 litres per person per year in 1989. The 1989 total was the first to exceed Spain's annual per capita consumption figure for wine, namely 40 litres. Even so, a comparison of the mineral water figures with their equivalent for other EC countries —often reaching over 60 litres per head— reveals that there is still considerable potential for growth in this sector.

By type of water (as classified by current legislation passed in 1981), natural mineral waters —namely waters with properties beneficial to health— account for the largest proportion of water bottled, at 1,453 million litres. Next come spring waters, which are chemically pure and with a known bacteriological content: these account for 243 million litres. Finally come "prepared drinking waters" (the term applies to water treated so as to remove

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the taste of chlorine) at 79 million litres. Non-fizzy waters make up 86% of all bottled water produced in Spain.

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

«Despite what the say», maintains Federico Bordería, Manager of Aguas de Gredos, S. A., owners of the Fontdor label, «bottled water isn't tasteless: each type has its own characteristic flavour.»

The taste depends on the quantity of minerals the water contains, so the wide range of Spanish sources means a wide range of tastes: some restaurants now even offer their customers a mineral water list!

That being said, however, water, a naturally abundant resource in many parts of the world, has no great intrinsic value. It could be said, as Felipe Manzano of ANEABE points out, that what the bottling companies are doing is adding value to the product, primarily by bottling and labelling it and then by promoting and distributing it.

The taste depends on the quantity of minerals the water contains, so the wide range of Spanish sources means a wide range of tastes: some restaurants now even offer a mineral water list!

But added value in the case of bottled water is not, in general, high. This makes it a product which belongs to the low-price league. Local consumption is an influential factor here, as it is in other producing countries: consumption is often limited to the geographical area near where a particular mineral water comes from. Only three or four brands are distributed on a scale that could qualify as national, with the rest —the

vast majority— remaining essentially local brands. According to Aguas de Gredos' Federico Bordería: «We leading Spanish mineral water companies use standards of technology on a par with those in use in other producing countries: the product is not handled in any way, and hygiene and security are given top priority. New techniques for capping and security sealing are constantly being incorporated».

Presentation varies considerably within Spain's mineral water sector. Plastic, glass, cardboard and —a recent departure for fizzy water— cans are the most usual materials used by Spanish companies, and the same water is often presented in more than one way. There is also a wide range of formats, from the little individual 0.3 litre bottle to the 10 litre giant-size flagon. On average, 67% of the packaging used is plastic, with the 1.5 litre bottle format accounting for 40% of the container types used.

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PEACHES AND
NECTARINES

THE WHITE WAY

Text: Penny Fisher
Photos: Carlos Ortega

When it comes to fruit, Seville is associated with bitter marmalade oranges, but over the last two decades fruit farmers have planted acre upon acre of peach and nectarine trees, and cornered a niche in the production of the first pickings of the season. Take a juicy bite and you may well discover the flesh isn't yellow, but a sweet and delicious white.





The Andalusian capital of Seville is gripped by early spring fever. A warm sun plays in the many fountains in its grandiose plazas, and the still faint but tantalising aroma of orange blossom fills the air. Easter with its yearly processions which fill the whole city with uproarious crowds and solemn drum beats 24-hours a day for a week on end is a whisper away, and already the frames of las *casetas* (large tents) are being erected for La Feria, a non-stop two weeks of flamenco festivities, which takes place soon afterwards (see Spain Gourmetour, No. 11).

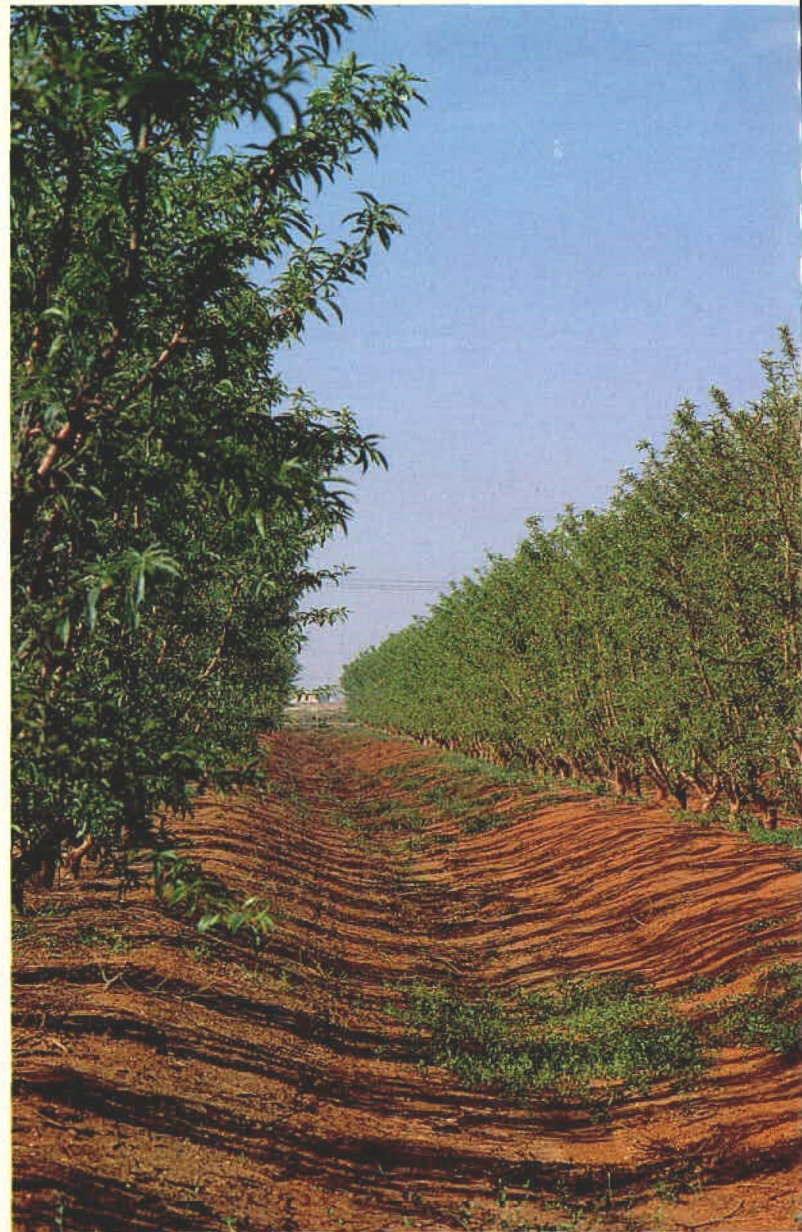
But several miles outside the city on the Hacienda la Jarilla, José Gandía Giner, President of Royal a group of fruit and vegetable producers, is most looking forward to April 25th, the day when the first of this year's crop of seven tons of peaches and nectarines will be ripe for picking. In neatly regimented rows in orchards covering 450 hectares (1,112 acres) around Seville, with little

over a month to go, the warm spring sun following several days of rain is bringing on the first fruits of the season. Planted as if in different platoons of the same company, some platoons of the orchards still bear timid white or delicate pink blossom while others have already shed their blossom and now bear tiny smooth nectarines and miniature downy peaches.

While Royal is kept busy for the entire year round cultivating additional crops such as asparagus and melons, the group can lay claim to being Spain's, and possibly Europe's, largest exporter of peaches and nectarines. This large agricultural co-operative also has a research centre of national importance which applies American research to the Spanish and European markets.

IN FAVOUR OF FLAVOUR

Alexandra, Anabelle, Anita, Audrey, Barbara, Betty, Daisy, and Dolores may sound like names from a school register



Over the last two decades Sevilian fruit farmers have planted acre upon acre of peach and nectarine trees and their production is one of the first of the season.

but they are in fact the names of some of the strains of white-fleshed peaches and nectarines which make up 35% of Royal's peach and nectarine yield (5% of Spain's total yield), a percentage which José Gandía, who is also President of the Peach Section of FEPEX (the Spanish Federation of Producers and Exporters of Fruit and Vegetables), expects will rise with increasing demand since he maintains these fruits quite simply taste and smell better than their yellow fleshed cou-

sins. «Flavour has two fundamental components», he says, «sugar and acid. White fleshed peaches usually contain more sugar than yellow fleshed varieties, and some, although not all, have higher acidity. They also have a superior aroma. If you leave a white fleshed peach in a room it gives off the fragrance of roses.»

The origins of today's white fleshed varieties are curious. According to José Gandía before genetic research began in the US in the 1920s, peaches and nectarines not only tasted better, but in Europe nearly all of them had white flesh.

Incredible as it may now seem, from the 1920s until 1985 all the research carried out in the US, which basically





of a peach and plum, but a fruit in its own right. When research was begun back in the 1920s there were less varieties of nectarines which meant there were fewer possibilities of developing new strains. Flavour has also proved more problematic in nectarines since they are generally more acidic. Now, however, white fleshed nectarines taste significantly better than the yellow ones, they are much sweeter. Until five years ago there were only two or three varieties of white fleshed nectarines and all of them ripened in June. But starting this year we will have new strains ripening from May to September and October.»

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

The experiments are now bearing fruit as demand increases. The difference in cost of producing white as opposed to yellow fleshed peaches is minimal, although a little more care is needed in the handling of the white fleshed varieties since the flesh is slightly softer than that of yellow ones. But at the moment due to demand white fleshed peaches and nectarines are generally priced higher. José Gandía gives an example of Royal's marketing strategy: «Last season we carried out a curious experiment in The Netherlands. In one branch of the largest supermarket chain in the country, Albert Heijn, we put both the yellow and white fleshed varieties on the shelves, but priced the white ones double. Since there was no tradition of white fleshed varieties in Holland we assumed the response would be similar to that of the US. But after only a week, sales of white peaches and nectarines far outstripped those of the yellow ones. A lot of customers said they tasted like the fruit they had eaten as children. The Dutch as a nation are very practical but they clearly preferred to spend twice as much. It's quite simple — they taste better.»

Although US consumption of white fleshed peaches and nectarines only represents 0.1% of global consumption the same

taste trend is underway. In several supermarkets in California customers already favour white fleshed varieties.

Since the market is clearly responding to improved flavour, José Gandía anticipates a change of direction in research in favour of flavour which will in turn provoke a significant increase in consumption. In the last 20 years the consumption of fruit in the US has declined by approximately 30% since the produce hasn't met consumer demand. In Europe,



José Gandía (bottom) anticipates a change of direction in fruit research in favour of flavour which will in turn provoke a significant increase in consumption.

crossed and recrossed yellow fleshed clingstone varieties which are generally used for tinning (*pavias* in Spanish) with European white fleshed varieties, was aimed at achieving the perfectly formed, enticingly coloured, firm peach and nectarine which had yellow flesh getting further and further away from the flavour and aroma of the original European fruits. «The 1980 generation of yellow fleshed peaches and nectarines were beautiful to look at but were almost plastic they had no flavour», José Gandía recalls.

Royal started investigation in collaboration with American research laboratories in 1978 but it took, until 1985 to persuade the Americans to add flavour

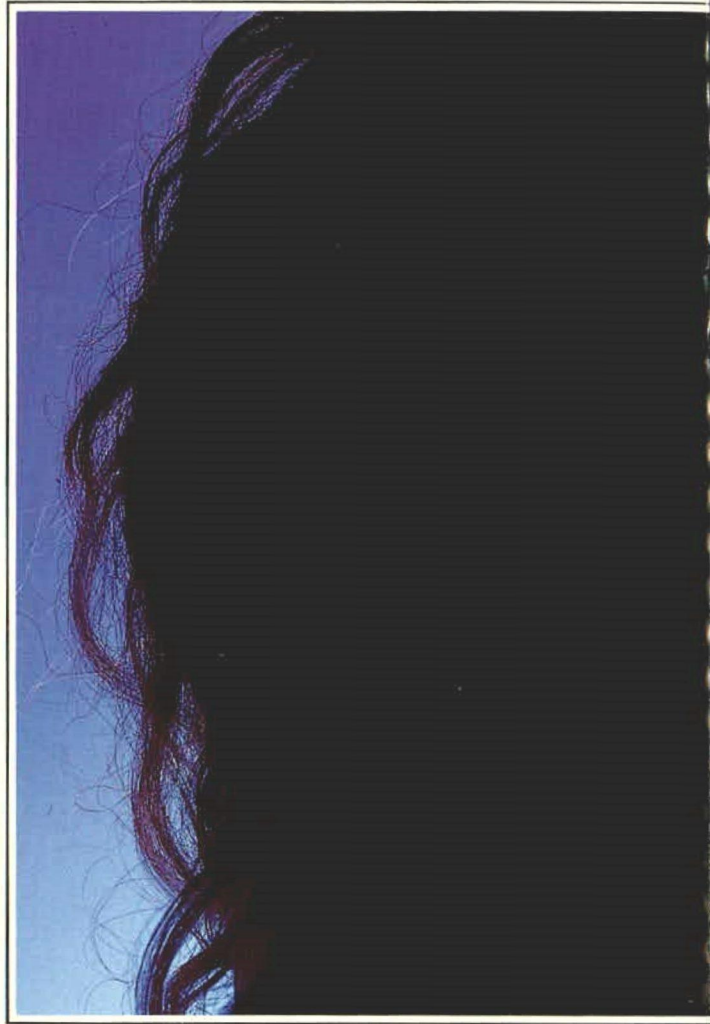
to their research criteria. The white flesh genes had become recessive, reappearing from time to time when yellow fleshed varieties were crossed and the Europeans began to question why the Americans eliminated these specimens. «We asked them to select white fleshed varieties because we knew there would be a market for them in Europe. It wasn't long before descendant varieties of the original white fleshed fruits appeared on European shelves.»

When José Gandía refers to peaches he is generally referring to nectarines as well, although he is ready to make distinctions between the two fruits. «The nectarine isn't as many people believe a hybrid

where the tradition is to market fruit that tastes good, consumption has remained pretty stable.

France, where small but nevertheless significant quantities of these white fleshed fruits, long considered a delicacy, continued to be consumed, is the largest market for white peaches and nectarines. Italy comes second and Spain third,

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but a big revival in eating habits, reflected in the increasing consumption of white fleshed peaches and nectarines, is sweeping Europe. «Europeans no longer eat for necessity but for pleasure», notes José Gandía. «There's been a startling revolution in this direction in the last two or three years. Until recently Germany and Switzerland for example maintained traditional eating patterns which weren't primarily pleasure oriented. This change shows clearly in the case of white fleshed peaches and nectarines: last year Germany alone consumed spectacular amounts of these fruits.»

There is one slight problem in marketing the white fleshed varieties — unless you cut them open it is increasingly difficult to tell the difference. If any difference is discernible the white fleshed varieties have a kind of white bloom and the redness of the skin tends towards a rose as opposed to an orange colour. But with the rapid evolution of genetic breeding some white fleshed varieties now have much darker red skins. «An expert may be able to tell the difference», says José Gandía, «but a housewife in a hurry certainly wouldn't».

COMMON MARKET COMMENTS

Although it's four years since joining the EEC, Spain is still waiting for 1996 when the final trade barriers are brought down. In the meantime in the export of fruit and vegetables Spain is subject to quantity barriers as well as time restrictions which means that Spanish exports are limited to early and late season fruit exports. For this reason, much of the research is focused on developing early and late strains. José Gandía however doesn't anticipate major increases in exports to EEC countries post 1996 where 400,000 tons of peaches and nectarines were destroyed last year due to excess production. «I don't believe there will be a very significant increase in export figures because labour costs are now high in Spain. Agricul-

tural wages in some regions here are higher than in parts of Britain. This wasn't always the case. When wages were cheaper Spain experienced a Japanese-style growth. I think a balance will be reached. Quality will be the key to competi-



tion and the better organised producers will be the ones to profit. On the contrary, Spain will increase imports. In the last four years since joining the EEC for example Spain has increased its fruit exports by about 5% while fruit and vegetable imports have increased from 50,000 tons to 550,000 tons in 1989 and 700,000 in 1990. We import significant amounts of tomatoes from Holland for example.»

ANDALUSIA'S ADVANTAGE

Spain as a whole produces some 500,000 tons of peaches and nectarines principally in the regions of Seville, Valencia, Murcia, Lérida, Zaragoza, Tarragona and Huesca of which only 50,000 or 10% are exported. Of this 10% Seville represents 60% or 30,000 tons for mar-



Peaches (two above) and nectarines (two below). The nectarine is not, as many people believe, a hybrid of a peach and plum, but a fruit in its own right.



keting outside Spain making it the most significant export region. «There are several reasons», says José Gandía. «Seville has a favourable microclimate which means it can corner the early market. The highest percentage of exports for example takes place in May and early June before France

and Italy produce their yields. In the last 20 years there has been a series of aggressive producers in Seville which has made it into the most progressive region in peach and nectarine production. Three of the biggest exporting companies of peaches and nectarines in Europe are based here.»

The high standards achieved are corroborated by José García Aragonés, Head of Foreign Trade Inspection in Seville: «Spain is practically the only country which produces peaches and nectarines in late April and in May for the European market. The majority of this fruit is classed in Category 1. There are no problems with quality control of these fruits in Seville because the companies maintain their own very high standards.»

Of Seville's three major producers, Royal is the most important, representing 10% of Spain's total exports. «As a company the objective of Royal is to offer produce which tastes good», say José Gandía. «This year we will start putting stickers on our fruit so customers will identify Royal with flavour. The way we see it, in the years to come eating should be a festive occasion, an act of pleasure. Our aim is to evolve our produce to give maximum pleasure to consumers both by improving the quality of our produce and by increasing the diversity of varieties.»

And following a suitably frosty winter with good spring rainfall peach and nectarine eaters are in for a lot of pleasure this season — and it's started already.



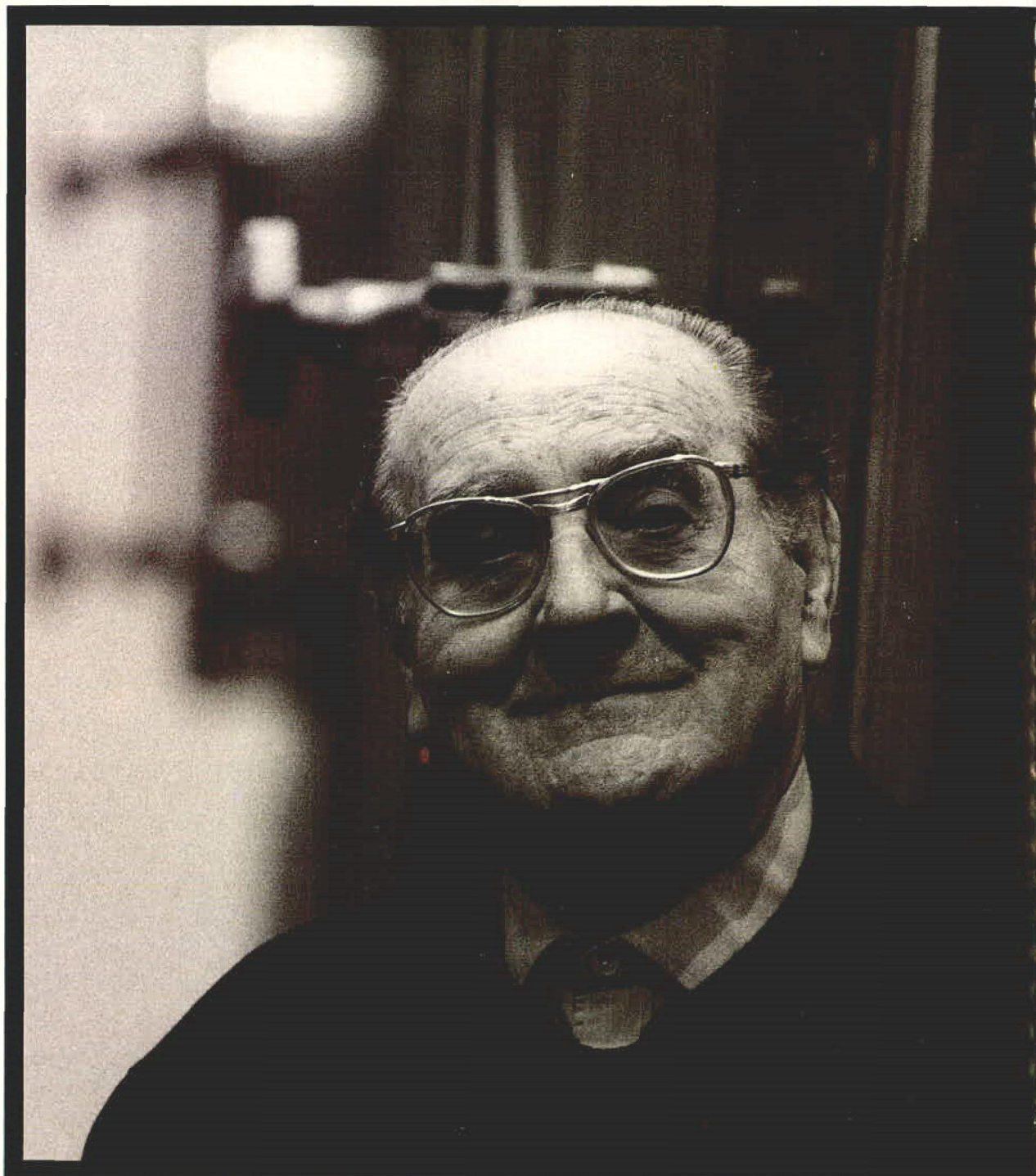
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TO THE MANNER BORN

Club de Gourmets Magazine for January/February 1991 published the results of a survey carried out in four of Spain's top restaurants (in Madrid, Barcelona, San Sebastian and Murcia). In three of the four, Chivite's Gran Feudo was the best-selling rosé. The same rosé was served at Felipe González's banquet in honour of Queen Elizabeth during her state visit to Spain in 1988. Six years ago, I used to drink Gran Feudo red, bought at my local North London supermarket, with supper every evening. Until 1992, Gran Feudo Crianza (red) is what you will be getting with your in-flight meal when you travel KLM. This kind of distribution smacks of masterful marketing, the tactic generally recognised as Spanish wine's passport to international success for the future. Who is the whizz-kid that identified the modern marketplace with such clairvoyant precision? I went to Cintruénigo in Navarre to interview the man in question: 80-year old Julián Chivite.



JULIAN CHIVITE

Text: **Hawys Pritchard**
Photos: **Pablo Neustadt**

Julián Chivite Senior is the head of Navarre's oldest bodega. Though the current winery was founded in 1860, documents exist showing that the family business actually dates back three hundred and fifty years, or ten generations of Chivites. October 1990 saw the inauguration of a new extension to the bodega, doubling its capacity and incorporating the very latest equipment (50 stainless steel tanks, a refrigeration plant, an automatic press...), planned to coincide with the celebration of Mr. Chivite's eightieth birthday. The fact that the event was attended by the President of the Regional Government of Navarre and made front page news in the local press says something of the status of both man and bodega.

The bodega stands in the little town of Cintruenigo, not far from Tudela, the «capital» of this southerly part of the huge northern province of Navarre. A kingdom in its own right for many centuries and ruled by the French for part of that time, not until the 16th century did the area of Navarre to the south of the Pyrenees become annexed to the crown of Castile. Today's province shares a 130 km. (81 miles) border with France so that, all things considered, it is unsurprising that this whole area of Spain traditionally exhibits strong tendencies towards independence and looks northwards to France for trade links.

PIONEERING EXPORTERS

A wine-producing area since the time of the Roman occupation, Navarre is best known today for its Garnacha-based rosés.

However, experiments at EVENA, Spain's ultra-modern viticultural research station in nearby Olite, have given rise to a new policy for planting and producing the DO as a whole, laying greater stress on quality red wines. The local pattern of small-scale land distribution means that viniculture hereabouts is dominated by the co-operative system: some 86% of Navarre's wine currently comes from its co-operatives. But it is the tiny percentage in private hands that is responsible for building Navarre's reputation abroad. The kingpin of this tiny percentage is Julián Chivite Senior.

Chivite Senior's father began exporting to France in the 1860s. On taking over the bodega in 1948, his son went on rapidly to become an exporter on a grand scale. His catchment area now extends to 32 countries and his sales account for 50% of Navarre's total exports.

TEAM-WORK

At 80, Julián Chivite can occasionally permit himself the luxury of starting the working day a little later than his family team. Consequently, my interview with him was preceded by a chat in the award-lined boardroom with the three members present that day. These were eldest son Julián and only daughter Mercedes, who currently share responsibility for exports, and Fernando, the family oenologist who is in charge of purchasing and production. Middle son, Carlos, is the company's financial administrator.

The first and obvious comment was what a well-balanced team it is. They claim

Julián Chivite Senior is the head of a family business which dates back three hundred and fifty years.



Mercedes, Julián Jr., Fernando and Carlos, the new Chivite generation with El Jefe, as they call their father: a very well-balanced team, where each one has his own area of responsibility.

to have just been naturally interested in convenient areas of the business. «I don't know what we'd have done for an oenologist if Fernando hadn't turned out to be one», observed Mercedes calmly. Like Nature, the Chivite family clearly abhors a vacuum.

They might each have their own area of responsibility, but they all clearly know the business through and through, talking about varieties, soil types and markets with a confidence born of thorough knowledge. Hadn't they ever thought of going in for anything else? Well no, not really. This was what they knew about. Their father used to take them to the vineyards as children and explain everything to them. He also insisted on sending them abroad as much as possible, so they are all fluent in French and English.

FOREIGN CONQUESTS

For Julián Junior and Mercedes, this is clearly a major boon in dealing with their

foreign clients. Julián looks permanently worried, but though one might speculate initially that being poised at the helm of the business might account for this, it turns out just to be the cast of his features. He has been involved in the business since 1970, having previously studied at Bordeaux, and has clearly been groomed to head the team.

Mercedes, unchallenged as the team beauty and dressed with understated chic, handled the PR aspects of my visit with informal charm while also contributing an important share of the information. I was shown the whole range of wines, now sporting newly-designed labels. The stars, the 125 Aniversario Gran Reserva (Tempranillo) and Chivite Reserva (Tempranillo and Garnacha) are labelled with the classic, upmarket look they deserve, while the Gran Feudo —matured red (Tempranillo and Garnacha), white (Viura) and rosé (Garnacha) have had their labels changed as little as possible so as not to cause confusion among the faithful around the

world. The range is completed by a new unaged red, Viña Marcos (Tempranillo and Garnacha).

Commenting on the success of Gran Feudo rosé in Spain's top restaurants, Mercedes explained that it is company policy to include the bottling date on the label and to encourage restaurants to buy in small batches at a time to ensure that the wine is drunk as young as possible. Navarran rosés, while all sharing a characteristic freshness, range from dryest of dry to soft and fruity: Chivite's belongs to this second type.

Their biggest customers abroad include France, Switzerland, Belgium, England, Denmark, Sweden and Canada. If any could be said to be receiving particular attention at present, it would be Holland, where sales have multiplied six-fold since KLM chose Gran Feudo crianza (red) from a world-wide selection of fifteen wines as its airborne «house red».

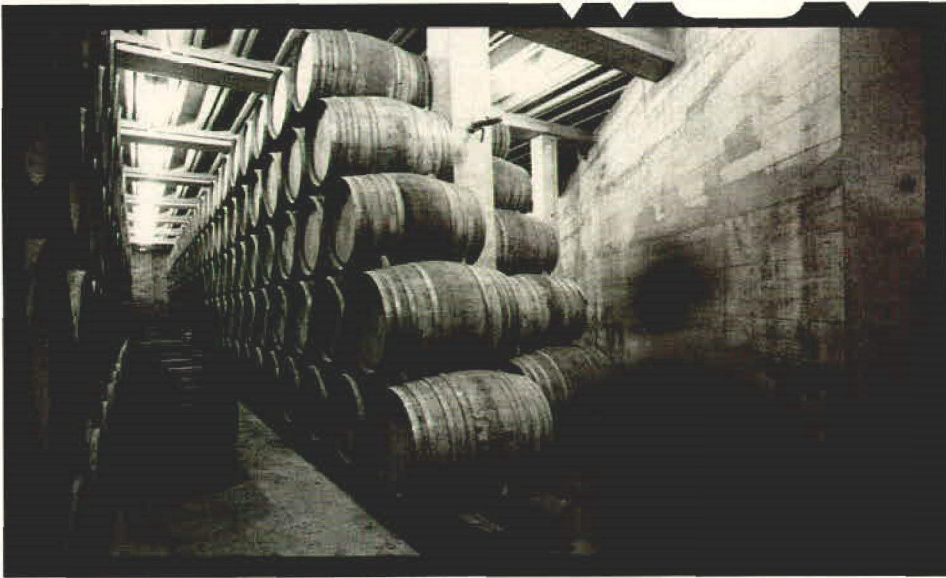
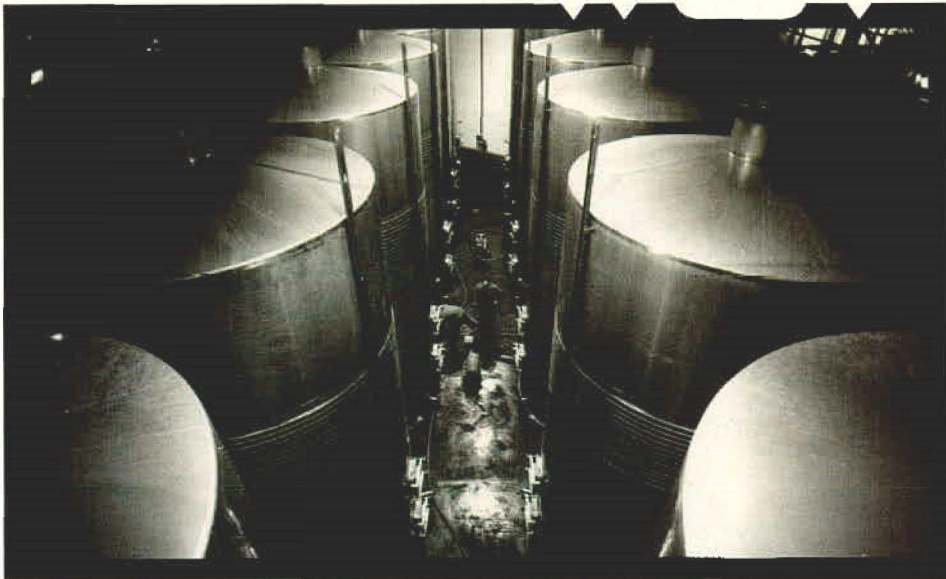
THE FAMILY OENOLOGIST

Dark, mustachioed, and exuding dynamism, Fernando is a mine of information

LANJARON FROM THE TOP OF SPAIN



*Natural Spring Water from Sierra Nevada - SPAIN.
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about local wine-growing past and present. He studied oenology in Bordeaux and Geisenheim, and confesses to European leanings in his approach to winemaking, a fact that he attributes to having opted for the Rhine at a time when Spain is tending to look more and more to California as its oenological Mecca. The Chivite vineyards are scattered and are given over mainly to Tempranillo, Garnacha, Mazuelo and Viura. Grapes are also bought in from local growers with whom the bodega has long-term contracts. Fernando explained that though Navarre is traditionally thought of as Garnacha territory, there is evidence to show that until the last century Tempranillo, currently being promoted as part of the DO's new policy, was a classic local variety.

October 1990 saw the inauguration of a new extension to the bodega, doubling its capacity and incorporating the very last equipment (50 stainless steel tanks, a refrigeration plant, an automatic press...)

What did he think of the current tendency towards «noble» varietal wines and the fact that, in the light of American research, one could theoretically grow the most surprising varieties in unthought of areas of the country? He thought jumping on that particular bandwagon risky and would be sorry to see Spain losing regional specialities.

THE BOSS

The three younger Chivites that I met communicate amongst themselves with delicious badinage, the sweet-faced Mercedes revealing herself to be a wicked tease. They are also hugely well-informed and utterly dedicated to the business. It was

from them that I gleaned my first impressions of *El Jefe* (The Boss) — Julián Chivite Senior. They speak of him with unmistakable affection and admiration as something of a phenomenon, proudly recounting anecdotes which have clearly acquired the status of family legend over the years, like the one about his changing the itinerary of his honeymoon so that he could pop in on some customers. The fact of his having become a father late in life — his eldest son is now only 40 — has perhaps enhanced his mystique for them. The apparent inevitability of their involvement in the business seems almost the result of a benign master plan of their father's. There was something suggestive of the living legend in the way they spoke about him. Was this someone to look forward to meeting or not?

It was. El Jefe arrived, impeccably groomed and emanating that whiff of exquisitely dry eau de cologne so typical of the well-to-do of his generation here in Spain. Having established that I was not just British but Welsh, he launched into a choreographic account of a rugby try he had scored in France in his youth. Settling down at the microphone with evident pleasure, he told me his story, with many an incursion into the history of Navarre en route.

The youngest of 13 children, again of an elderly father (of whom he speaks with as much affection and pride as his own children of him) the wine business would not, apparently, have been his first choice. Poor eyesight prevented his becoming either the footballer or civil engineer that he would really have liked to be. One can't help feeling that his obvious business acumen would not have found the outlet it needed in either of his first choices of profession. Having read that he had been the prime mover in achieving D.O. status for the wines of Navarre (finally established in 1967). I had somehow assumed that he had been motivated to do so by a desire for recognition for Navarre, and raised the subject in that vein.

—«I had a real battle over that Denomination question», he responded. «None of the other local producers was interested. Some even thought I was trying to cash in on their success. I have to say, we've since wiped them off the map.»

—«But why did you feel Navarre needed DO status just then? It had always done very well without it.»

—«Madrid was offering tax relief on exports and other financial benefits. But nobody locally could see that the money was there for the asking!»

—«So you were looking to foreign markets even then?»

—«Of course.»

Temptation

Temptation proceeds from Castile and León.

Seductions cultivated without haste and favoured by the climate: kidney beans from El Barco de Avila.

Dishes fit for the gods that are a provocation. Iberian lomo,

red sausage from Cantimpalos, cured ham from Guijuelo... the pleasures of the flesh.

And what cheeses. Fresh, cured. From Valdeón, from Villalón, from the



Tiétar goat... A little bite of very cured sheep's cheese: impossible to say no! And for original sins, the wines of Castile and León. From Rueda, from Cigales, from Toro, from El Bierzo and from the

Ribera de Duero. For all tastes. Temptations with certificates of origin. To taste them is to surrender to their charms. The fact is that there are temptations... that are natural.





talking about the late 60s, and about Navarre —an area even today still very much in the shadow of its prestigious westerly neighbour, La Rioja.

As Mr. Chivite chatted, I became aware of evidence of what I can only call his wine-growing pedigree. His business sense may be absolutely up to the minute, but his knowledge of his product and even of his markets are redolent of traditional expertise, of knowledge absorbed from generations of experience as opposed to a quick course in oenology and marketing. On the subject of new trends in wine-growing (stress on the «noble» varieties, the risk of loss of local «personality») he was firm in his belief that local soil and climate will always leave their individual stamp on any variety.

CHATEAU CHIVITE

Another current trend on which we touched was the tendency in Spanish wine-growing towards the notion of the château. This happens to be a subject near to

Mr. Chivite's knowledge of his product and even of his markets are redolent of traditional expertise, of knowledge absorbed from generations of experience as opposed to a quick course in oenology and marketing.

the collective Chivite heart since they have recently bought a valley estate near Estella —Señorio de Arinzano— which is to be just that. Of its 180 plantable hectares (445 acres), 130 (321) are already under Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Tempranillo, and they plan to plant a white variety on the slopes. The property in-

cludes an actual castle with a tower which is to be renovated and one of Spain's top, internationally-known architects, Tudela-born Rafael Moneo —the city of Stockholm has designated him to build its new museum of modern art —has been commissioned to design its bodega. It is to be the source of a whole new range of Chivite reserva and gran reserva wines.

Here again, pedigree showed. For the Chivites, a château is more than an excuse for the undeniable cachet of being able to label a wine «estate bottled». As Mr. Chivite Senior and Fernando explained, the château is essentially a subdivision within a Denomination of Origin, whose particular soil and microclimate produce wines with

a personality all their own. To the informed wine-buyer, the fact of a Chivite wine being estate bottled will signify certain predictable characteristics.

THE FUTURE

So this is the direction that Bodegas Julián Chivite is to take in the future. Long-established leaders in their chosen area of the national and international marketplace, they are now literally breaking new ground. There is a quiet confidence about them all, as there might be among a team whose leader has shown such sureness of step all along his professional career.

As for El Jefe himself, he remained canny to the last. Blandishments get you nowhere with him. Mention of the 80th birthday celebrations, the tributes to him in the papers as major local employer, leading local exporter and so on, might have been expected to bring a proud smile to the lips of some. There had indeed been lots of tributes, he agreed, adding with a twinkle: «You know, that sort of thing's better for business than any amount of paid advertising.»



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THE RIVER DOURO

UPCURRENT ADVENTURE

Text & Photos: **Rafael Calvete**

The River Douro has its source in the notoriously chilly province of Soria. It wends its way through the open countryside of the Castilian meseta to emerge eventually into the Atlantic at Oporto, in Portugal.

A group of stalwarts decided to follow its course, through history-charged terrain, in two small motor launches. The Soria to Oporto route seemed just too easy, so they opted for adding an extra element of adventure by travelling up-stream.

The River Douro has its source in the Picos de Urbi6n mountains, 2,200 metres (7,216 feet) up in the province of Soria. It wends its way through Spain, heading eastwards at first as if attracted by the warmth of the Mediterranean. After passing through the town of Soria, however, the river curves and makes towards Almaz6n where it takes its definitive westward route towards Portugal and, eventually, the city of Oporto where it debouches into the Atlantic.

The English-speaking world knows the Douro by its Portuguese name; in Spanish, it is called the *Rio Duero*. At first sight, the Portuguese stretch of the river looks almost man-made. Nevertheless, this is where it is at its deepest and therefore most easily navigable. Within Portugal, a considerable stretch of the Douro passes through mountainous terrain whose heights have been rounded and eroded by the wind over the centuries. In other parts, the landscape is harsher and more dramatic, with overhanging rocks looking for all the world like giant bunches of grapes.

And indeed, these are vinegrowing lands, the hillsides patterned with vineyards and dotted with old buildings, many of which are bodegas producing the world famous *Vinho de Porto* (port wine).

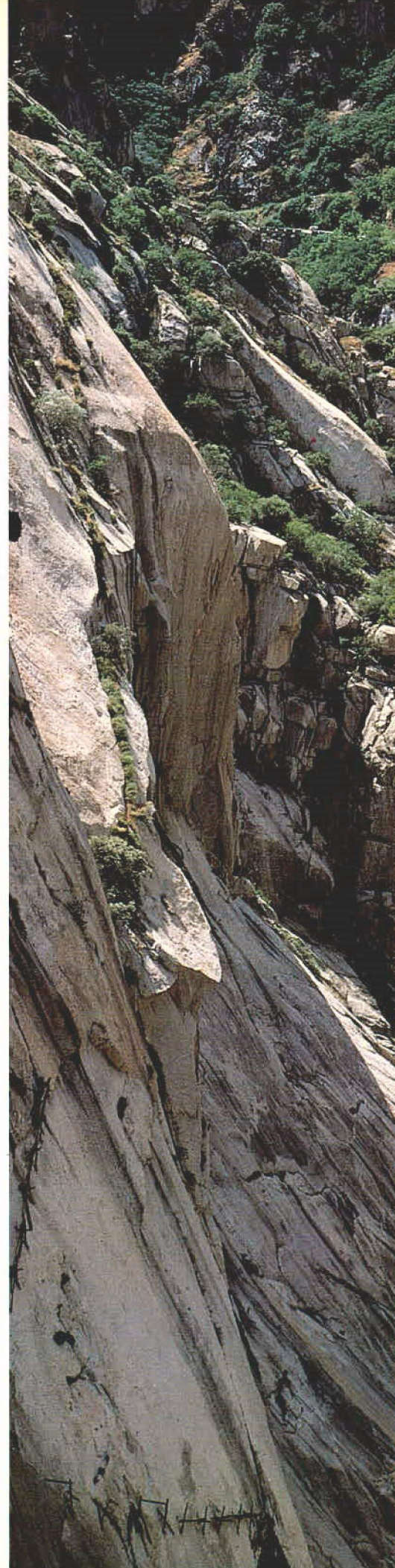
The river disappears deep into this landscape in places to emerge into the open again in other stretches. Its curves weave in and out, sometimes through stunningly beautiful canyons which the river itself has eroded.

Still in Portugal, approaching the frontier with Spain, there is an abundance of bird

life, particularly of water birds and birds of prey: ospreys, vultures, bee-eaters, ducks and owls are just some of the species to be seen as one travels along the river.

The Portuguese stretch was the easiest of all. So easy, in fact, that we made it from the Atlantic to the little quay at Vega Terr6n, at the confluence of the Douro and the River Agueda, in just one day. But we were gradually leaving the fertile landscape along the Douro behind us and entering the territory where the adventure really began.

Once we entered this second phase, the tone of the whole exercise changed. As it crosses into Spain, the Douro becomes turbulent, fast-flowing and unpredictable. It runs along the frontier for several kilometres, from Vega Terr6n to the





There was so little depth of water in some places that we had to tow the boats along with ropes for several kilometres. Helped by the jeeps and moving by fits and starts, we made our way to target.

Castro Reservoir, before finally entering the Castilian province of Zamora.

The landscape in this stretch is very different from what we travelled through on our first day. History is everywhere. The little village of Feroselle (Zamora), for example, perched strategically high on a hilltop near the confluence of the Douro and the River Tormes was once a Celtic settlement, or so stone axes and other relics from that period found near the Douro seem to suggest.

It was at the Embalse de Castro reservoir that our journey began to get really tough. From this point on all the way to Soria there are long stretches with rapids, some of them very dangerous indeed. And apart from these, there was the problem of innumerable locks and dams — over 50 in all, ranging from large to small. At some times we had to take the boats out of the water and carry them overland, and at others to tow them through the water.

The road does not follow the course of the river consistently, so the support vehicles following our river expedition were not always at hand. From the Portuguese frontier to Soria — just over 600 kilometres (373 miles) — there were some very long innavigable stretches. What took us all by surprise was the tremendous force of the river as we sailed against the current.

SAILING THROUGH HISTORY

Following the route of the Douro is like sailing through history, passing a wealth of monasteries, castles and ancient noble towns which stand along its course. This is Castile, inspiration for many a poet, its very name conjuring up pictures of endless plains, mountains chiselled by icy winds and cultivated fields that stretch beyond

the horizon. Curiously, the Douro seems to have been exempted from the austerity which so typifies Castile and its inhabitants.

I'm sure that none of us had imagined how challenging and exciting this poplar-lined stretch of river was going to be. When you travel by car and see a line of poplars in the distance, you always assume that there is a river running parallel to it. From a distance, the trees are a clue by which you interpret the passing landscape, but seen from the river, they take on quite a different perspective. The trees seemed to grow from the very depths of the water, protecting the river banks and forming a natural barrier against humankind. On more than one occasion, we had trouble getting over the little dams which punctuate the length and breadth of the Douro.

As you navigate a river, you realise that water is not only a source of life but of livelihood for a whole range of anonymous people. They live by it, as did their fathers and forefathers. All were amazed that we should have chosen to sail upriver, and confirmed that no-one had ever done it this way before. In the little village of Villamarciel not far from Tordesillas (Valladolid), there is one lock which is a genuine museum piece. Its machinery has been functioning for over a century, and for the last forty years has been in the charge of Antonio Casado. Further along, we came to the Cistercian monastery of San Bernardo, where a group of schoolboys was thrilled to see two motor launches travelling by, apparently in the wrong direction. The older people in the

area remember that when they were young, the water of the Douro was drinkable — no one would think of drinking it today.

Another source of livelihood attributable, at least in part, to the Douro, is agriculture —the main source of wealth in the Douro Basin. And there are winegrowing areas all along its course: Oporto in Portugal, and three DO areas within Spain —Ribera del Duero, Rueda and Toro. What must be Spain's most famous wine —Vega Sicilia— belongs to the first of these.

Right in the heart of Castile, we were approaching Peñafiel with its forbidding castle looking down at the town from the top of a solitary hill. Peñafiel stands on the banks of the River Duratón, one of the Douro's main tributaries, and was an important defensive point for the area in medieval times. Opposite Peñafiel, on the left bank, is Curiel, famous for its fortified palace, another important fortress in the late Middle Ages. Best seen from near the Roa Bridge, this little town is charged with history, since both Roman and subsequent Arab invaders have left their permanent mark here.

Soon we had reached Aranda de Duero where we stopped for lunch and a few hours' rest. Its riverside location has helped make Aranda into the prosperous industrial town it is today, and it is also a source of very good wine. But it is best known for good eating, with juicy roast lamb as one of its classic dishes. Very little is known of Aranda de Duero before the 11C except that it was sacked and destroyed by the Arabs in 861 and rebuilt by Ordoño I (850-866).

REACHING OUR GOAL

Tired, and by now longing to get the Douro over and done with, we made our way towards our final goal, the town of Soria. Even so, there were still obstacles in the way, compensated for by the stunning landscape en route.

We were now heading up towards the source, the Douro here flowing through a high plateau of red sedimentary clay. It was from here on that things got really complicated, since the river began to get shallower. There was so little depth of water in some places that we had to tow the boats along with ropes for several kilometres. Helped by the jeeps and moving in fits and starts, we made our way to target, passing through a highland landscape rich in historic relics and dotted with monumental towns and castles, such as Berlanga and Almazan.

The Douro flows gently through Almazan, where its backwaters have formed a little "beach". Owing to its strategic location, this town became a key Arab strong-

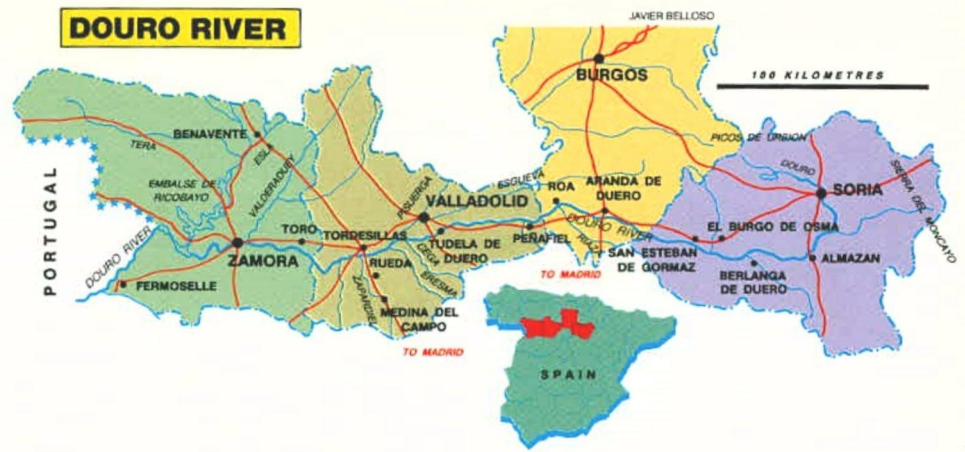


From the Portuguese frontier to Soria —just over 600 km.— there were some very long innavigable stretches. What took us all by surprise was the tremendous force of the river as we sailed against the current.

hold after being captured from Alfonso VI of Leon after heavy fighting. It was, for a time, the seat of Peter the Cruel and the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, also lived here later.

Suddenly, we found ourselves in a pool brimming with water with rocky outcrops around us like something from a lunar landscape. Looking down on us as if giving us a final blessing was the beautiful late 17C Hermitage of San Saturio, clinging to the bank of Douro in apparent defiance of the laws of gravity. We were now very near Soria. A walkway through an arch of poplars leads to the *alameda*, a pretty park immortalised by turn-of-the-century poet Antonio Machado. «These poplars along the banks of the Douro, which keep one company with the sound of their dry leaves when the wind blows, have their barks carved with initials which are the names of people in love, and numbers which are dates.»

We moored at a little quay just outside the town where the rest of the expedition and a group of curious bystanders had gathered to wait for us. After a well-earned rest, we set about exploring Soria. It is a lovely old town on the eastern extreme of the San Marcos mountain range and is widely skirted by the River Douro. During



the Roman period, this was a settlement of the Arevaci, the Celtiberian tribe whose capital was Numancia until it was destroyed by the Romans. In the 12C, Alfonso VIII injected prosperity into Soria, and stately homes and castles were built here.

The Peninsular War of 1808-1818 spelt disaster for Soria since most of its buildings were burned down during the invasion. Among the architectural gems to have survived in the town itself is the church of Santo Domingo. A Romanesque building from the second half of the 12C, its finest feature is its main façade which shows

clearly the influence of the architecture of France, more specifically of Poitiers. Another treasure is the Palace of the Counts of Gómara, designed by Francisco López del Río and dating from 1592.

By now it was dusk and we were forced to cut short our exploration of the town and head directly for the source of the great river which had been the fount of such challenge and pleasure during our upstream battle. Up in the Cumbres del Moncayo, we inhaled the pure mountain air and yelled in triumph for all the world to hear. We had made it!



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A HISTORY OF SPAIN



In 1492, with Spain's several kingdoms having recently and definitively been united into one single nation, a Spanish expedition discovered the New World. This fact, in conjunction with the establishment of a central government in Madrid under just one monarch, led to Spain's acquiring an empire which was to be the most powerful in the world throughout the 16C. Like all empires, it had its favourable and unfavourable consequences.

AMERICA

Shortly before midnight on 12th October, 1492, with the sailors restless from their apparently interminable voyage, some of them sighted land some two leagues away. Laying their vessels to, they waited for daylight and set off for shore in an armed boat, landing at Gunhani (possibly present-day Watling, one of the Bahama Islands). The landing party was led by Christopher Columbus, Martín Alonso Pinzón and Vicente Yáñez. In this hitherto uncharted territory they encountered pacific, naked Indians —Spain had entered a whole new phase in its history as, indeed, had the American Continent.

AND THE EMPIRE

It is likely that other voyagers had landed there before the Spanish, but none of them had reported the fact, possibly being unsure of where they had been and not realising its significance. The Spanish, to both their credit and discredit, knew exactly what they were doing. On Friday, 3rd August of the same year, two caravels, the Pinta and the Niña, and a larger vessel, the Santa Maria, had set sail fully equipped and under the direct patronage of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Catholic Monarchs, from the little port of Palos, near Huelva in western Andalusia. The fleet

was captained by master navigator Christopher Columbus, whose nationality, provenance and earlier life are still a matter of conjecture though his maritime knowledge and experience are unquestioned.

Though the cost of equipping the ships does not seem to have been excessive —some two million *maravedis*, or seven hundred thousand present-day dollars— it has been said that Isabella was obliged to pawn her personal jewellery to pay for it. This is not all that surprising: she had done so before to help finance the recapturing of cities occupied by the Muslim invaders in Spain. Be that as it may, this controversial voyage into the unknown had been carefully planned, with every effort being made to predict all contingencies, taking on the most expert men and studying all the



ORONCZ

Text: Jesús Torbado

information available at the time. The second of the four transatlantic crossings commanded by Columbus, made the following year, was undertaken by a fleet of seventeen vessels carrying over two thousand five hundred men and equipped with everything necessary for establishing a colony on a grand scale. They took with them pigeons, hens, dogs, cats, cows, horses, goats, asses, wheat, rice, orange trees, sugar cane, beans, vines... In exchange for these, they would bring back to Europe maize, tomatoes, potatoes, tobacco, peanuts, and many more novelties by now familiar to us all.

It was a genuine case of «discovery», though nowadays, 500 years on, this term is considered controversial. It unquestionably led to large-scale conquest and colonisation such as, it could be argued, has never been achieved before or since. Taken as a whole, the enterprise could be said to be characterised by generosity and grief, adventure and carnage, honour and injustice in equal measure. For more than three hundred years, a substantial portion of the American Continent, from Mexico to Patagonia, was the dominion of the Spanish Crown, and millions of Spaniards travelled there to live, work, and eventually to prepare and direct its subsequent independence. Spain's legacy to America was to be its language, today spoken by some four hundred million people, the Catholic

faith, and a culture engendered by a rich racial mix such as never emerged in, for example, the British or Dutch colonies.

As might be expected, many weird and wonderful events occurred in the course of an enterprise of such magnitude. The period produced its villains and heroes, saints and criminals, exploiters and defenders of justice, and many conflicts of opinion... It would be unreasonable and impossible to try to characterise the whole phenomenon on the strength of any particular one of its many facets. The legend of the great explorers, conquistadors and captains, Francisco Pizarro, Hernán Cortés, Vasco Núñez de Balboa, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Juan Ponce de León, Francisco de Orellana, and hundreds of others like them, constitutes one of the most amazing in the entire history of mankind. For almost a century adventure succeeded adventure, as men undertook death-defying voyages to achieve the incredible discoveries which today we all take for granted.

ENEMIES EVERYWHERE

Spain was evolving into a great empire and this, inevitably, was not without its political consequences. Powerful enemies loomed on all sides using every means possible, from propaganda to piracy, to try to benefit from the wealth obtained from the New World. This period saw emergence of the printing press as a force to be reckoned with, and many of Spain's enemies put it to effective use by publishing horror stories intended to blacken the Spanish reputation. Relying mainly on the frequently exaggerated evidence of often fanatical Spaniards (historian and missionary Friar Bartolomé de las Casas being an outstanding case), they publicised the worst aspects of Spain's colonial behaviour, their accounts often based on far from disinterested manipulations of the truth.

This «Empire on which the sun never set», as it was later to be known in Spain, was initiated during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, becoming ever greater in the course of the 16C, with Charles I and Philip II as its principal figures. Even Ferdinand and Isabella, having successfully ousted the Arabs from Spanish soil, played their part in establishing the empire by taking territories in North Africa and subjecting the king of Tunis to their sovereignty.

Spain's arrival in America coincided with the end of the Middle Ages and almost eight hundred years of internal warfare in Spain. It coincided, too, with the emergence of a form of national unity after the expulsion of the Islamic invaders and the union of the principal kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula.

The cessation of warfare on their home ground had left many professional soldiers without the means to earn their living, a considerable proportion of the population that was avid for action, albeit lacking in resources or a clear vision of the future. These, then, were the social strata from which the majority of the conquistadors and colonisers emerged: peasants with no expectation of inheritance, impecunious gentlemen, students, par-

The Monastery of La Rabida in Huelva (top) and the Monastery of Guadalupe, in Caceres (bottom) have close links with the Americas.



ORONCZ



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L. D. GORDON/THE IMAGE BANK

Whole towns in America, like Quito imitated Spanish architecture outright or found their inspiration in it.

ishless priests... Andalusia and Extremadura were the two regions of Spain which made the greatest contribution in terms of manpower (very few women were involved) to the wave of emigration to America.

Extremadura then, as now, was one of the most depressed regions in Spain. Folk legend has it that the intrepid Pizarro had once been a swineherd in his native town of Trujillo (Extremadura). He was, in fact, an impoverished landowning gentleman who kept livestock, but the legend serves to symbolise the social origins of many conquistadors. The towns and villages of Extremadura still retain many stirring mementoes of the discoveries achieved by men born there. «*Apenas dejaron nada en su patria*» («They left next to nothing in their homeland») go the words of a song of the period. And indeed, the wealth which many of them accumulated remained largely in America, where nearly all of them died. Even so, Extremadura today is a veritable museum of mansions of the period and, more particularly, of churches and monasteries. The Catholic Church, then a powerful political force, was adept at obtaining considerable donations from the most devout. Many of the religious treasures existing in Spain today, particularly in the southern half of the Peninsula, date from those years of splendour.

As the Empire grew in importance, the great cities of the period —particularly those most involved in trade with America, such as Seville and

Cadiz— were enriched by splendid civic and religious buildings, and some still possess fascinating archives and examples of American art, though far fewer than they ought. The effects of the colonisation and conquest back in the homeland lasted as late as the turn of this century. In some northern areas —in the rainy, mountainous region of Asturias, for example— emigres returning from America were known as *indianos*, and built houses quaintly echoing those they had occupied in Cuba or Argentina, even to the palm trees in the garden.

During the colonial period, America was also endowed with churches, cathedrals, governmental mansions and private stately homes which either imitated Spanish architecture outright or found their inspiration in it. Whole towns were built in the Spanish style, their aesthetic conception in keeping with the Spanish names they were given. The wealth of Spanish colonial art in America, particularly from the Baroque period, is a prime example of the artistic and cultural communication between the two continents.

Most of the material wealth generated by the conquest of America did not, however, stay in Spain. The monarchs,



TURISPAÑA



THE SPANISH EMPIRE UNDER PHILIP II (1581)

During the colonial period, and particularly from the Baroque, America was endowed with churches and cathedrals.

masters of these riches by royal right, poured it principally into financing wars in Europe provoked by religious differences or questions of family politics. Much American gold was, as Quevedo commented referring to the international bankers who thrived during that period, «buried in Genoa». Trade in goods was almost exclusively monopolised by foreign merchants who kept their profits out of Spain, and the greater part of the silver brought back from America was traded with India in return for silks and other luxuries, with the profits remaining in the hands of the intermediary

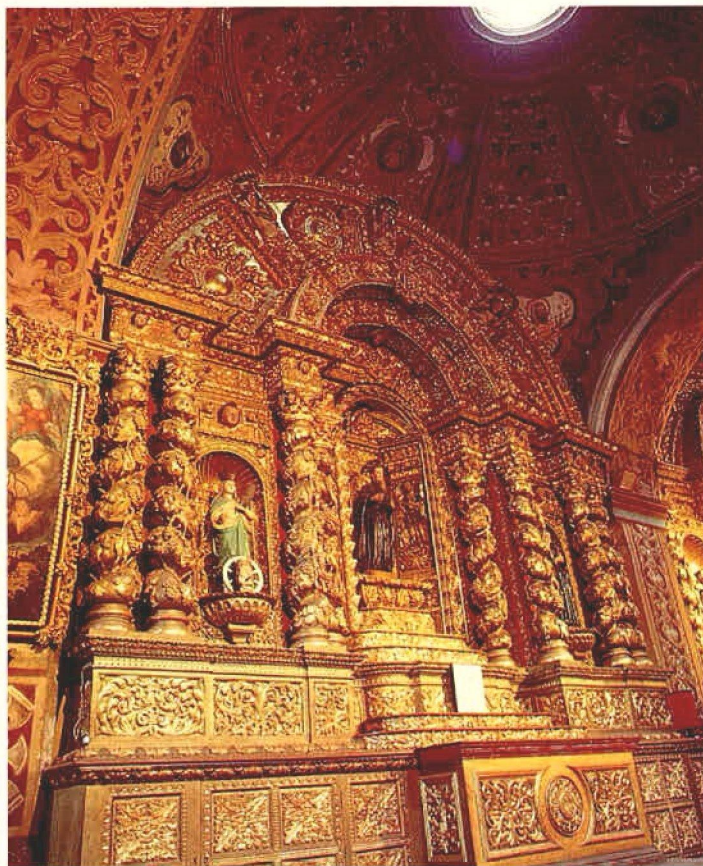
bankers. A good deal of silver and gold was also lost to pirates such as Sir Walter Raleigh acting in the name of Spain's then greatest enemy and competitor, Great Britain.

**RELIGION & POLITICS:
ONE AND THE SAME THING**

Queen Isabella of Castile, chief instigator of the voyages of discovery, died in 1540 and her husband, Ferdinand of Aragon, in 1516. It had taken seven years of explanation and assurances for Columbus, supported by the educated monks who had helped him plan his voyage, and possibly claiming to have been there already, to convince them that across the ocean lay vast, rich lands. The politics of the Catholic Monarchs, described by one modern historian as «socially enlightened» for their method of government and power sharing have, as tends to happen with all «great» politicians, been the subject of much study and debate. For «reasons of State» they decided to expel all Jews who were unwilling to convert to Catholicism (those who did convert remained to occupy very important positions, particularly in the financial field), since Roman Catholicism was the foundation stone of the newly united nation. Other countries, Britain, among them, had done the same thing already. Ferdinand and Isabella supported the courts of the Inquisition since they provided a guarantee of national unity in the face of the threat of Protestantism then spreading through Central Europe.

Their defence of Catholicism as a basis of state unity is understandable considering that an end to the centuries-long struggle against Islam had only just been achieved. Along with dynastic questions and the defence of the recently acquired empire, it was to be one of the main causes of the wars in which the Spanish monarchs engaged in Europe a few years later.

The Catholic Monarchs were survived by just one daughter, Juana. She later became known as *Juana la Loca* (Joan the Mad) when she lost her



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With the building of El Escorial, a new architectural style —austere and unornamented— appeared.



The Spanish Gothic evolved into an individual, highly decorative style known as the Plateresque. A fine example is the University of Salamanca.

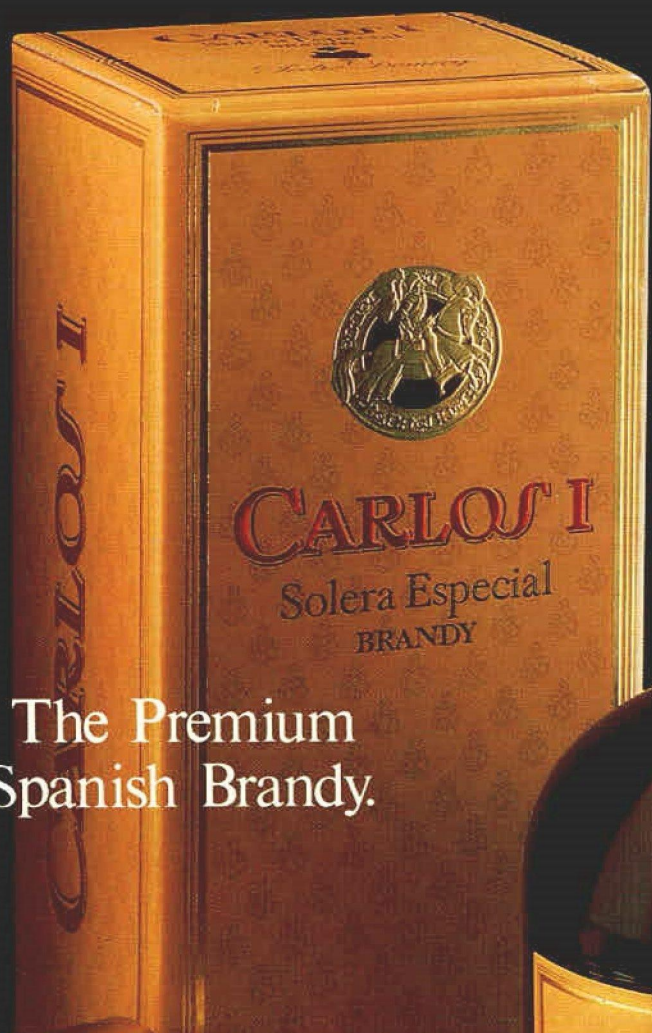
reason on the death of her husband, the Hapsburg prince *Felipe el Hermoso* (Philip the Fair), after only two months on the throne. Cardinal Cisneros, a cleric as dynamic as he was intelligent, acted as regent until the arrival in Spain in 1518 of the young son of Juana and Felipe. Born in Ghent with the new century, he was to become Charles I (Charles V of Germany), the monarch who achieved for Spain an empire so vast that it embraced not only America but also parts of Central Europe and Italy.

Charles reigned as Emperor for nearly forty years until 1556, to be followed by his son, Philip II, who occupied the throne for the following forty-two years until 1598. They were the great administrators of Spain's empire at its height. As well as being the period of the Spanish Renaissance, this was also the time of the great divide among the Christians of Europe and of an increasing threat to the Empire from the Turks. All in all, it meant uninterrupted warfare for Spain.

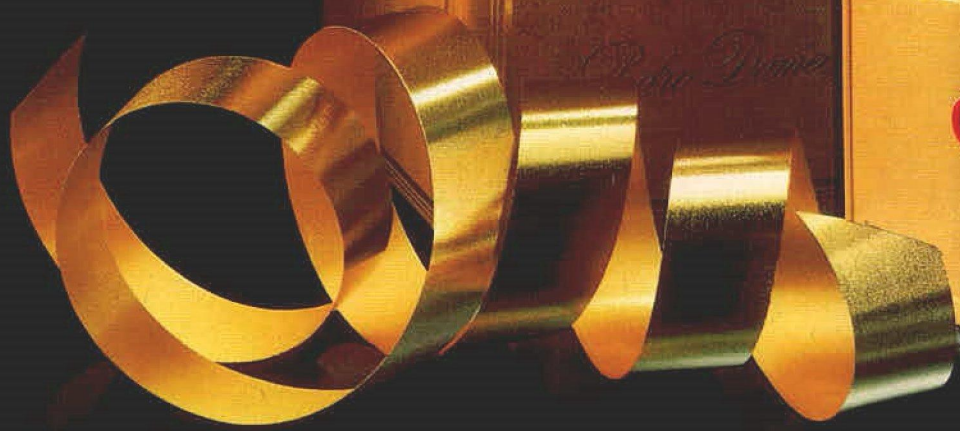
King Charles was obliged to deal with nationalist revolts by the Castilians and the Valencians. He had arrived in Spain accompanied by an advisory team of German bankers. Among these was the powerful Fugger banking family, who later used financial influence to achieve Charles' coronation as Emperor of Germany in 1519. France's François I became a prime enemy in consequence, to be finally defeated whilst attempting to take control of the Emperor's Italian possessions.

The reigns of these first two Hapsburg monarchs were an endless succession of wars: in Flanders, against France and Britain; against the Turks, and even against the Pope himself. Each of them in his time was the most powerful monarch in the world and each of them, particularly Philip II, again used Catholicism as the central prop of his power. Many of these wars were motivated by dynastic questions: some historians even maintain that both father and son put family interests before those of the nation. The last years of the 16C in Spain were overseen by Philip from the splendid monastery of El Escorial just outside Madrid, built in commemoration of a victory over the French in 1557. Both the man —an austere melancholic— and his politics, though the subject of much academic study, are still a fount of controversy.

One fact emerges unquestioned: for Spain, the reigns of Charles I and Philip II represented the pinnacle of its importance as a world power. Nor is there any question that these monarchs sacrificed the wealth reaped from the Americas to their religious beliefs and family preferences. One major permanent benefit, however, was that the period saw the emergence of a new society which produced cultural figures who remain pillars of Spanish culture to this day. Spanish ships plied the oceans of the world, carrying exports of wine as far as cities within the Arctic circle. Spanish missionaries taught in Manila while the kings' armies were the most feared in the world, with the names of the great military leaders —Gonzalo de Córdoba (nicknamed *El Gran Capitán*), the Duke of Alba, Farnesio, Admiral Bazán, John of Austria— familiar in embassies the world over. In brief, Spain was a great empire, subject to the same credits and crit-



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MEMENTOES

THE ART OF THE EMPIRE

The Renaissance: Strong links with Italy, then partly under the control of the Spanish Crown, created an environment favourable to the absorption of Renaissance influences, both in art and literature. In architecture, however, the Spanish Gothic held its own, evolving into an individual, highly decorative style generally known as the Plateresque, so called because of its similarity to intricate silver-work. There are many fine examples of this style: the Palaces of La Calahorra (Granada) and Cogolludo (Guadalajara); much of Avila and Toledo; the University of Alcalá de Henares (here Arab influences are still discernible within the recently-adopted Gothic), though the university town of Salamanca is the supreme example of this ornamental interpretation of the Gothic.

Buildings dating from about 1530 on use a more purely decorative style which shows less Gothic influence: the Alcázar of Toledo, the Palace of Monterrey in Salamanca, Charles I's Palace within Granada's Alhambra and Granada Cathedral are prime examples. From the '60's on, with the nation influenced by the boost to Catholicism represented by the Council of Trent, and with the building of El Escorial (Madrid), a new architectural style appeared. This austere, unornamented style leapt. This austere, unornamented style is generally known as Herrerian after Juan de Herrera, the highly influential architect of El Escorial, Valladolid Cathedral and many other major buildings.



The Spanish sculptors of the period, like A. de Berruguete, were very influenced by Italian artists.



The painter of the century was unquestionable «El Greco» who established himself in Toledo.

Sculpture: The sculpture of the period is clearly inspired by Italy, many of whose artists were brought to work in Spain and eventually ousted the Gothic style. They influenced some very distinguished Spanish sculptors, whose work is particularly evident in the cities of Castile: Diego de Siloé (Burgos), Alonso de Berruguete (Museum of Valladolid; Toledo Cathedral); Juan de Juni (Valladolid and Segovia). Under Philip II, sculpture took on a chillier tone, as exemplified in El Escorial.

Painting: Here again, Italian influence held sway. The most notable painter of the period was, perhaps, Pedro Berruguete, father of the sculptor mentioned above. But the painter of the century was unquestionably the Cretan-born artist nicknamed «El Greco», who established himself in Toledo after having «failed» at El Escorial. There are many works of his throughout Spain, though the greatest concentration is in his adoptive city of Toledo. His strong personal style did leave room for the absorption of Italian influence. Other major painters of the Spanish Renaissance include the Mannerist Luis de Morales, Alejo Fernández from Andalusia, Flemish painter Pedro de Campaña (Pieter Kempe-ner), Pablo de Céspedes, and portraitists Sánchez Coello and Juan Pantoja, whose works provide a visual record of the personalities of the reign of Philip II.

Extremadura and Latin America: Extremadura is full of historic mementoes of the conquest of America. The Plaza Mayor in Trujillo, presided over by a statue of the conquistador Pizarro, is one of the most splendid in the whole of Spain. The Monastery of Guadalupe has close links with the Americas; this was where Columbus arranged the Christian

baptism of the Indians brought back to Spain after his first voyage. The Monastery of Yuste was the isolated retreat where Emperor Charles I chose to prepare himself spiritually for death. Medellín, Jerez de los Caballeros and Villanueva de la Serena are the birthplaces of some of the best-known conquistadors.

Huelva: Palos, at the mouth of the River Tinto, is the port from which the first caravels set sail and also the home town of many members of their crew, among them Pinzón. In the nearby Gothic and Mudéjar Monastery of La Rabida, Columbus and his son Diego were lodged in 1484 and there, with the Franciscan monks, he planned his voyage. The monastery is today one of the principal historic centres associated with Columbus.

Seville: Seville enjoyed a monopoly of trade with the Americas for the best part of two hundred years and there are many mementoes of that period: the Casa de la Lonja (Exchange), designed by Herrera and today used



The Museum of Valladolid keeps some of the best sculptures of Juan de Juni.

as the Archive of the Indies is one of the finest buildings. Some maintain that Columbus is buried in Seville Cathedral, and that a tree planted by him still thrives on La Isla de La Cartuja, an island in the River Guadalquivir which is to be the site for EXPO 92.

Cadiz: The beautiful city on the Atlantic coast was another of Columbus' ports of both departure and arrival. Seville's monopoly of trade with America and, consequently, the Casa de Contratación (House of Trade) were transferred to Cadiz in 1717, and it maintained strong cultural links with America until the 19C.



Charles I's Palace in Granada is an example of the Renaissance period in Spain.

icisms as any other empire in the history of mankind.

EL ESCORIAL

In 1581, Philip II was recognised as king of Portugal, thus acquiring all that nation's many possessions in Europe and more especially overseas, and almost doubling the size of the Spanish Empire. It now included thousands of kilometres of coastal Africa and Asia as well as numerous islands in the Far East and part of the territory which is encompassed by present-day Brazil. This last attempt to unite the two Peninsular kingdoms ended in failure and since then, these contiguous nations have lived independently of each other.

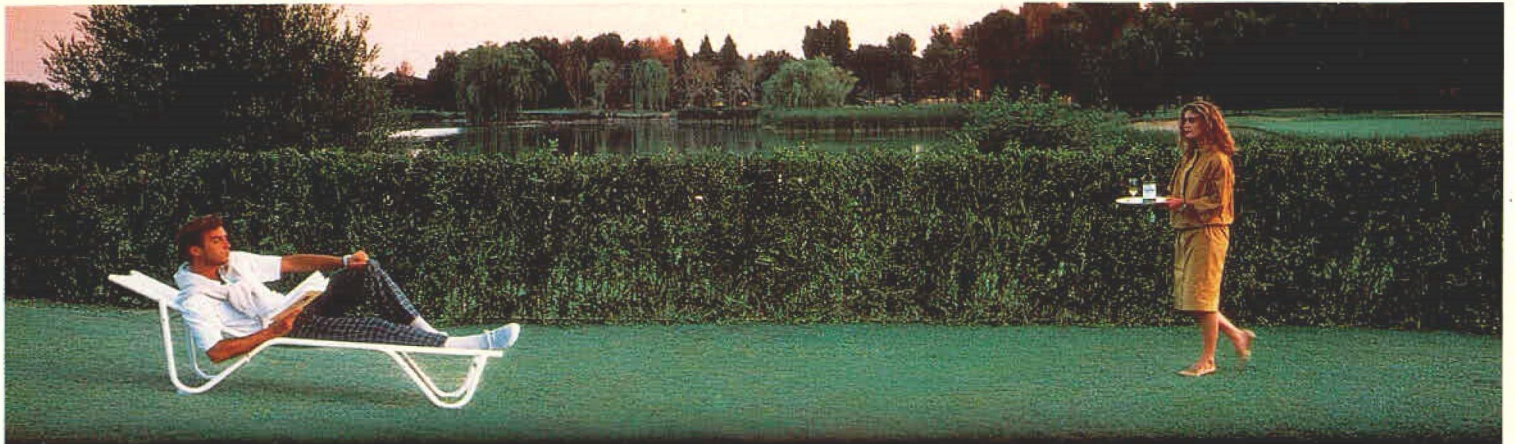
Meanwhile, the colonisation of America continued. The legislation imposed from Spain was, typically of Philip II, always prudent and almost always admirable. All too often, however, it was not observed by the colonists. From Valladolid and Toledo, which each served as capital of Spain for a time, and later from Madrid, chosen as the definitive capital by Philip II in 1560, ambassadors, scribes and clerics were despatched to the four quarters of the globe. Madrid was then little more than a large village situated on the northern edge of the Plain of La Mancha, with a healthy climate thanks to its proximity to the mountains. It soon acquired the status and attributes of a city, and still has a quarter known as *El Madrid de los Austrias* (Hapsburg Madrid), which contains the buildings constructed after the arrival of Philip II. Toledo

and Valladolid also have important religious and civic buildings dating from that period.

Even so, the city with the strongest American links was, right from the start, Seville. Its port on the River Guadalquivir was the reception point for all the ships arriving from across the Atlantic and where most administrative activities were concentrated. The life of the city at that time is reflected in much of Spanish literature, with Cervantes in particular portraying its multifaceted ebullience with his usual skill. The city's early links with America have led to its having been chosen to host EXPO 92, a Universal Exposition to be held in 1992 to mark the quincentenary of Spain's discovery of America.

The beautiful façade of the Palace of Monterrey in Salamanca.





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In this issue, we begin a new series on books about Spain aimed at pointing readers eager to know more about the country as a whole, its culture, food, wine, and so on, in the right direction. We shall be featuring both recent publications and books that have been on the market for some time, some in English and some in Spanish. By way of an aperitif, we start off with a selection on Spanish food.

North American Penelope Casas fell in love with Spain and its gastronomy many years ago when she first came here as a student. Already interested in food, she would ask for recipes in all the bars and restaurants she frequented. The result was her first book on Spanish food and wine which incorporates over 400 recipes. It is divided into 13 chapters organised by type of food, and has two additional chapters on Spanish drinks and wine.

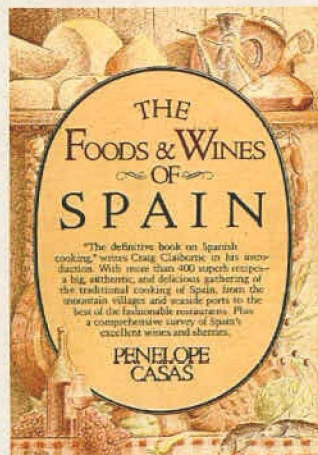
In her introduction, Casas points out that there is no single Spanish cuisine but rather as many types as there are regions. Although her recipes are not organised by region, each chapter mentions relevant regional information and many recipes are even accompanied by a full explanation of their geographical and culinary origins. This is also an eminently practical book: not only are the recipes very clearly explained, but Mrs. Casas also tells you where to buy (at least in the States) Spanish ingredients that are difficult to come by abroad or indicates substitutes that can be used instead. It is rounded off with menu suggestions and a very thorough index.

Though an *aficionada* of all Spanish food, Penelope Casas, like many Spaniards, is especially fond of *tapas*. Her second book is given over entirely to these little aperitif dishes, and is encyclopaedic in its range. She divides it into four chapters: Tapas in Sauce; Marinades, Patés, Salads and Other Cold Tapas with Bread or Pastry; and Tapas with Some Last Minute Preparation.

She has travelled widely all over Spain, picking up tapa recipes from bars en route.

The Foods and Wines of Spain.

Penelope Casas.
Alfred A. Knopf (New York) 1984,
Penguin Books (London) 1985.
458 pp.

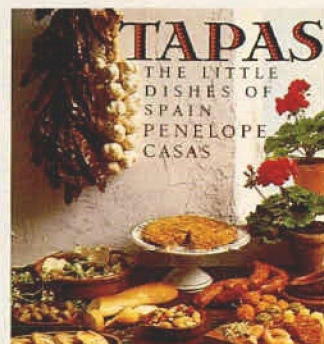


Here she gives over 300, from the most typical (potato omelette, squid in batter, croquettes, and so on) to house specialities from all over the country.

I have to confess to a personal weakness for cookery books—they are so often written with such genuine care and enthusiasm for their subject. These two books from Penelope Casas are a classic case in point. ■

Tapas. The Little Dishes of Spain.

Penelope Casas.
Alfred A. Knopf (New York) 1984,
Pavilion Books (London) 1987.
220 pp.

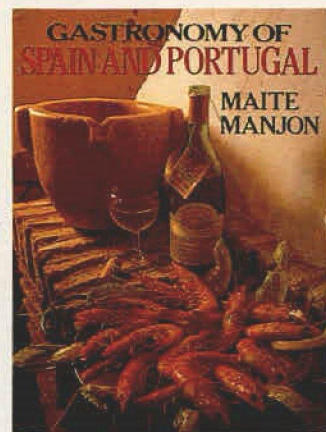


Maite Manjón will be a familiar name to Hispanophiles: she is the author (and in some cases co-author with her husband, wine expert and historian Jan Read) of several books on Spain in general and its gastronomy in particular. This is not a cookery book in the usual sense of the term but rather a gastronomic dictionary with over a thousand cross-referenced entries in three languages (English, Portuguese and Spanish) aimed at helping the reader get to know the cuisine of Spain and Portugal. Having said that, it includes information about culinary traditions, fiestas, regional specialities, anecdotes and, of course, recipes.

Although its idiosyncratic organisation makes it a little difficult to find one's way around this book at first, one soon gets used to it and it turns out, in fact, to be very practical—a whole new approach to the food and wine of the Iberian Peninsula. ■

Gastronomy of Spain and Portugal.

Maite Manjón.
Garamond (London) 1990.
320 pp.



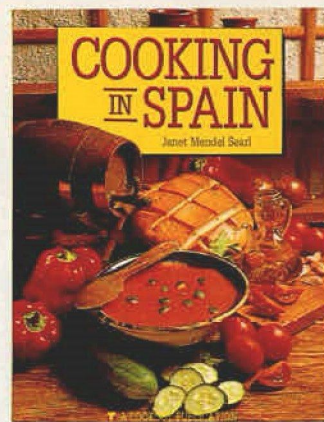
Janet Mendel Searl has dedicated this book to «the women of Mijas, who took me into their kitchens». It was through her local neighbours that this American, who has lived on the Costa del Sol for over twenty years, first became interested in Spanish cooking. Her introduction to Andalusian food triggered off an interest which has since led her to explore the regional cookery of the whole country.

For several years, Janet Mendel Searl has written a monthly cookery column in Lookout, the long-established English language magazine aimed at Spain's large English-speaking community and Hispanophiles everywhere. This book is written with the same readership in mind, and Mendel Searl tries to serve the same function for her readers as her Spanish neighbours originally did for her. This possibly contributes to the fact that this book is very practical and easy to follow: it gives a description of the gastronomy of each region, a long chapter on the traditional Spanish market and what can be found there, and another entitled «In the Kitchen», which includes menus for all sorts of get-togethers. It is so clear that even the total novice can confidently tackle cooking something genuinely Spanish, and there is also a useful Spanish/English glossary.

Janet Mendel Searl gives over 400 recipes, organised by principal ingredients. They are all particular favourites of hers: unsurprisingly, many of the best are Andalusian. ■

Cooking in Spain.

Janet Mendel Searl.
Lookout Publications, S. A., Puebla Lucía,
29640 Fuengirola (Málaga), Spain, 1987.
393 pp.



QUICK CONVERSION

In our recipes, quantities are given in metric measurements. The charts on this page show approximate equivalents between Imperial or American measures, and metric measures.

FLUID MEASURES

METRIC/BRITISH STANDARD

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 10 MILLILITRES = 1/3 OUNCE | 1 TEASPOON = 5 MILLILITRES |
| 50 MILLILITRES = 1 3/4 OUNCES | 1 TABLESPOON = 18 MILLILITRES |
| 100 MILLILITRES = 3 1/2 OUNCES | 1 OUNCE = 28 MILLILITRES |
| 250 MILLILITRES = 8 1/2 OUNCES | 1 PINT = 570 MILLILITRES |
| 500 MILLILITRES = 17 1/2 OUNCES | 1 QUART = 1.14 LITRES |
| 1 LITRE = 1 3/4 PINTS | 1 GALLON = 4 1/4 LITRES |

FLUID MEASURES

METRIC/U.S. STANDARD

| | |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 10 MILLILITRES = 2 TEASPOONS | 1 TEASPOON = 5 MILLILITRES |
| 50 MILLILITRES = 3 TABLESPOONS | 1 TABLESPOON = 15 MILLILITRES |
| 100 MILLILITRES = 3 1/2 OUNCES | 1 OUNCE = 30 MILLILITRES |
| 250 MILLILITRES = 1 CUP + 1 TABLESPOON | 1 CUP = 235 MILLILITRES |
| 500 MILLILITRES = 1 PINT + 2 TABLESPOONS | 1 PINT = 475 MILLILITRES |
| 1 LITRE = 1 QUART + 3 TABLESPOONS | 1 QUART = 950 MILLILITRES |
| | 1 GALLON = 3 3/4 LITRES |

OVEN TEMPERATURE

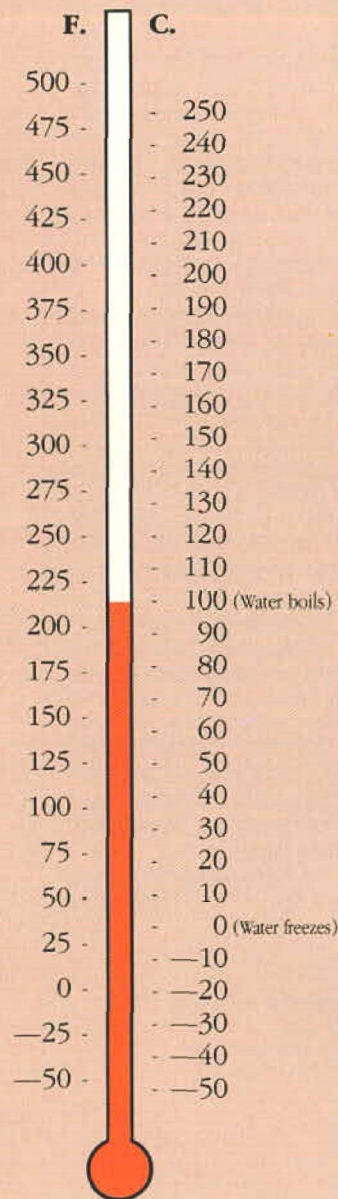
| TEMPERATURE | DIAL NUMBER |
|------------------------|-------------|
| VERY SLOW = 250F/120C. | = 1/4 |
| SLOW = 300F/150C. | = 1 |
| MODERATE = 350F/180C. | = 4 |
| HOT = 400F/200C. | = 6 |
| VERY HOT = 450F/230C. | = 8 |

WEIGHT

METRIC/OUNCES & POUNDS

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 10 GRAMS = 1/3 OUNCE | 1/2 OUNCE = 14 GRAMS |
| 50 GRAMS = 1 3/4 OUNCES | 1 OUNCE = 28 GRAMS |
| 100 GRAMS = 3 1/2 OUNCES | 1/4 POUND = 110 GRAMS |
| 250 GRAMS = 8 3/4 OUNCES | 1/2 POUND = 230 GRAMS |
| 500 GRAMS = 1 POUND + 1 1/2 OUNCES | 1 POUND = 450 GRAMS |
| 1 KILO = 2 POUNDS + 3 1/4 OUNCES | |

TEMPERATURE



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GOURMETOUR

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Daniel Vázquez Díaz

Fresco: THE SHIPS



Photo: © Monastery of Santa María de la Rábida (Huelva).

THE PAINTER...

Vázquez Díaz was one of Spain's leading twentieth century figurative painters. Along with Solana, Zabaleta, Zuloaga and Benjamín Palencia, he was one of a group of artists who sought to create a new, authentically Spanish style of painting while maintaining the figurative tradition inherited through Impressionism. Unlike internationally recognised painters such as Picasso, Miró and Gris, who were totally committed to the avant-garde, the members of this group retained strong links with the classical tradition so that their works take a more personal, and often profoundly Spanish, approach.

Solana and Vázquez Díaz were the linchpins of the movement known as the Madrid School in the first half of this century. Vázquez Díaz was to be the *maestro* of many contemporary Spanish painters who followed in his wake. Many of Madrid's avant-garde abstractionist-inclined El Paso group of painters in the 1950s were disciples of his and recognised his influence.

Born in Nerva (Huelva) in 1882, Vázquez Díaz soon left for Paris.

There he spent long periods, beginning his career as a painter and meanwhile absorbing the influence of Cubism. On his return to Spain, he settled in Madrid. He died in 1969.

His oeuvre shows a preference for *costumbrista*, or slice-of-life, subjects and for portraits, some of which — such as his portraits of Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío and bullfighter Domingo Ortega — are among the masterpieces of Spanish portrait-painting.

His most famous work, however, of which this picture forms a part, are the frescoes painted in the Monastery of Santa María de la Rábida (Huelva), a visual narrative account of the Discovery of America.

Vázquez Díaz style is sculptural and vigorous, his figures sturdy but full of expression, with form taking precedence over colour and light and occasional hints of Cubist influence.

His subject matter is often charged with symbolism, often markedly Spanish. Both the sobriety of his style and his subject matter have made Vázquez Díaz a key point of

reference for subsequent generations of Spanish artists.

... AND THE PAINTING

This painting forms part of a series of frescoes depicting the Discovery of America painted by Vázquez Díaz for the Monastery of Santa María de la Rábida. The Prior of this monastery, Fr. Juan Pérez, was one of the first people in Spain to support Christopher Columbus in obtaining the backing he needed to turn his planned voyage into reality.

The scene is the embarkation of the crews of the three caravels, the Pinta, the Niña and the Santa María, in the port of Palos de Moguer in Huelva.

An assorted group of figures, many of them sailors, some bearing coils of rope, a clergyman, and representatives of other assorted occupations populate the foreground. Some are gesticulating towards the ships, others are chatting among themselves whilst others are simply making their way towards the vessels.

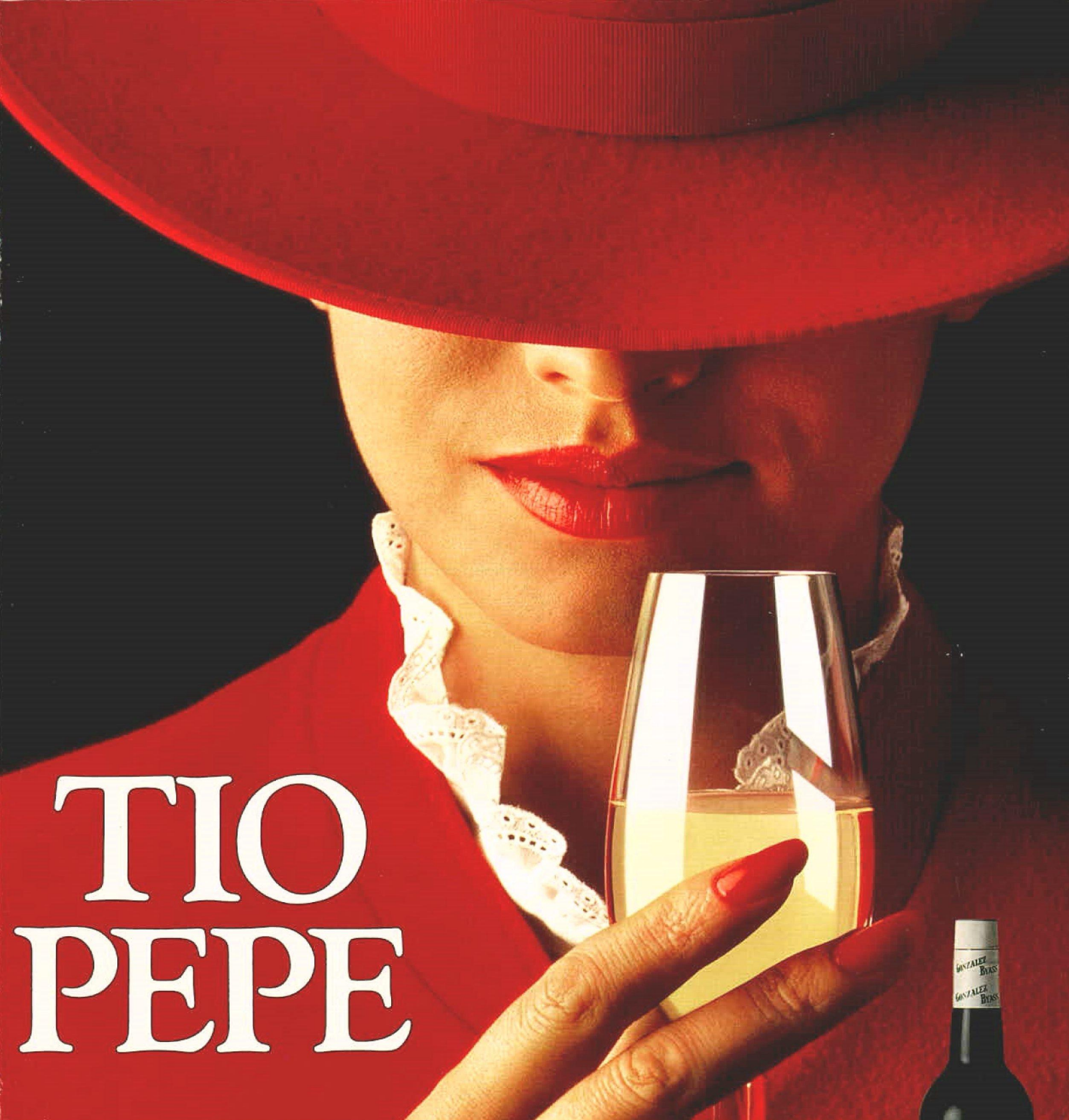
Behind them, in the second plane, are the sea and the

caravels on which men are still at work, with countless banners, flags and standards waving in the wind. In the background is the town with its white Andalusian houses, stone church and, behind, its castle.

The work is a classic example of Vázquez Díaz's style. Strong, sculptural forms and robustly expressive faces; a palette limited to just a few pale or drab colours, predominantly blues, greys, earth tones and ochres, and, overall, a greater concern for form and draughtsmanship than for atmosphere, light and colour. There are also certain suggestions of Cubist influence and a distinctly Spanish, Mediterranean, flavour about the delight in the play of light on solid forms.

The entire work reflects an austerity suggestive of the sobriety generally associated with much of Spanish painting. Yet despite the solemn grandeur and solidity of its forms, the composition is harmonious and full of movement, its rhythms capturing the excitement of an event which was to prove historic not only for Spain but for the whole of mankind — the Discovery of America.

José María Ortega Sanz



TIO PEPE

THE NATURAL APERITIF

VERY DRY FINO SHERRY



GONZALEZ BYASS



Heavenly Spain.



This church is on the route to Compostela which, literally translated, means "The Field of the Stars".

Guided by those stars, the medieval Pilgrims used to worship at churches such as this one, when on their way to visit the tomb of St. James at Santiago de Compostela. The area is typified by such important places of historical interest as Pamplona, Logroño, Burgos, León and Lugo. They are rich in cathedrals, churches, monasteries and city walls, built thousands of years ago.

Enjoy a memorable meal in one of the typical Galician restaurants —the seafood and fish are out of this world.

It's all part of the heavenly experience.

All this and sunshine too. Consult with your travel agency.

Logroño. Iglesia de la Sonsterra.



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Spain. Host to the Olympic Games and 1992 Seville Universal Exposition.



EXPO'92