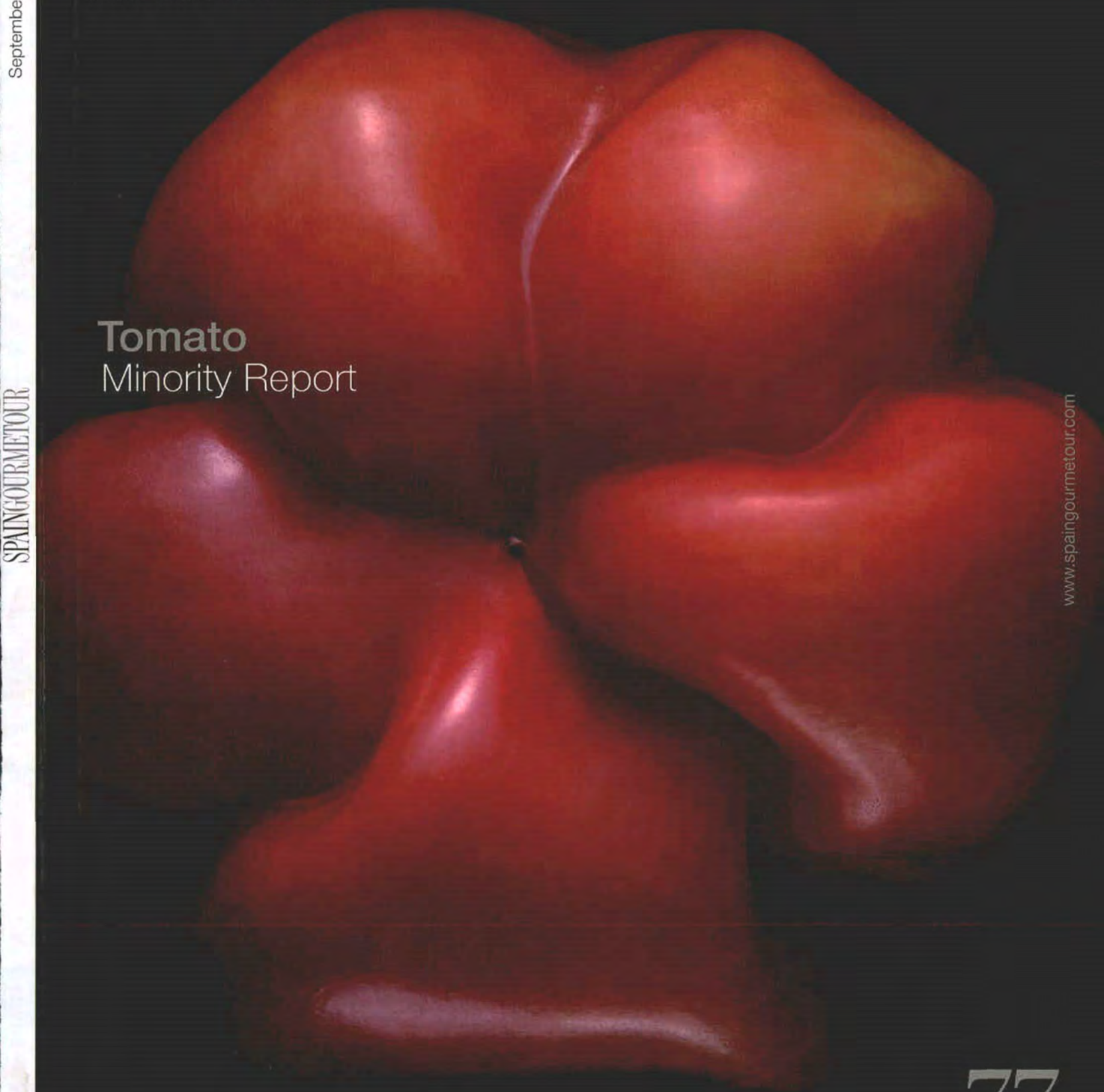
77 September – December 2009

SPAINGOURMETOUR

Food, Wine & Travel Magazine



Tomato
Minority Report

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EDIT

Tomatoes. What could be more Mediterranean? Yet they originally came from Mexico. A Spaniard brought some home in 1523 and Spain has been growing them ever since; discover some lesser-known types in this issue.

The latest variety in our series on native grapes is Bobal, to which there are written references dating back to 1478, and which determined young winemakers and estate owners are now successfully restoring to former glory. Perseverance is also showing results for the pioneers of biodynamic wines, now slowly but surely carving a market niche for themselves.

Spain's charcuterie is an inexhaustible subject which we revisit with a panoramic survey that takes in a lot more than the now familiar *chorizo*. Another Spanish institution, the *Menú del Día*, is holding its own very nicely against the fast food invasion and the foreign trend of a quick sandwich at one's desk!

Our tour of UNESCO World Heritage Sites comes to a close with a visit to Ibiza (where the nightlife is by no means the only attraction), followed by the wonders of Tarragona, former capital of Hispania.

Then there's the story behind one of Spain's best-known brands of beer, for which we have the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 to thank.

All in all, plenty of reading for the long winter evenings. And please keep those comments and suggestions coming!

Cathy Boirac
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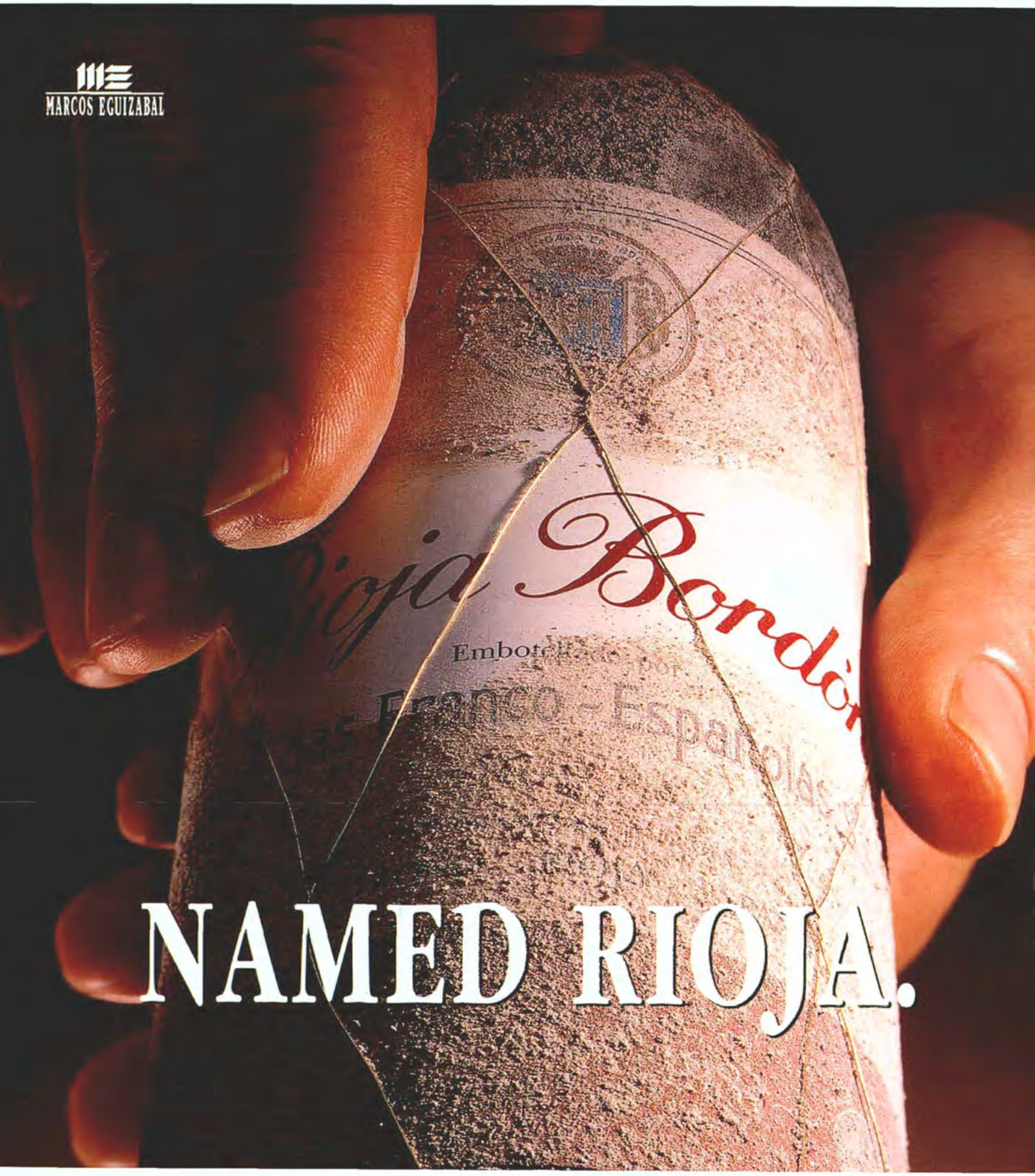

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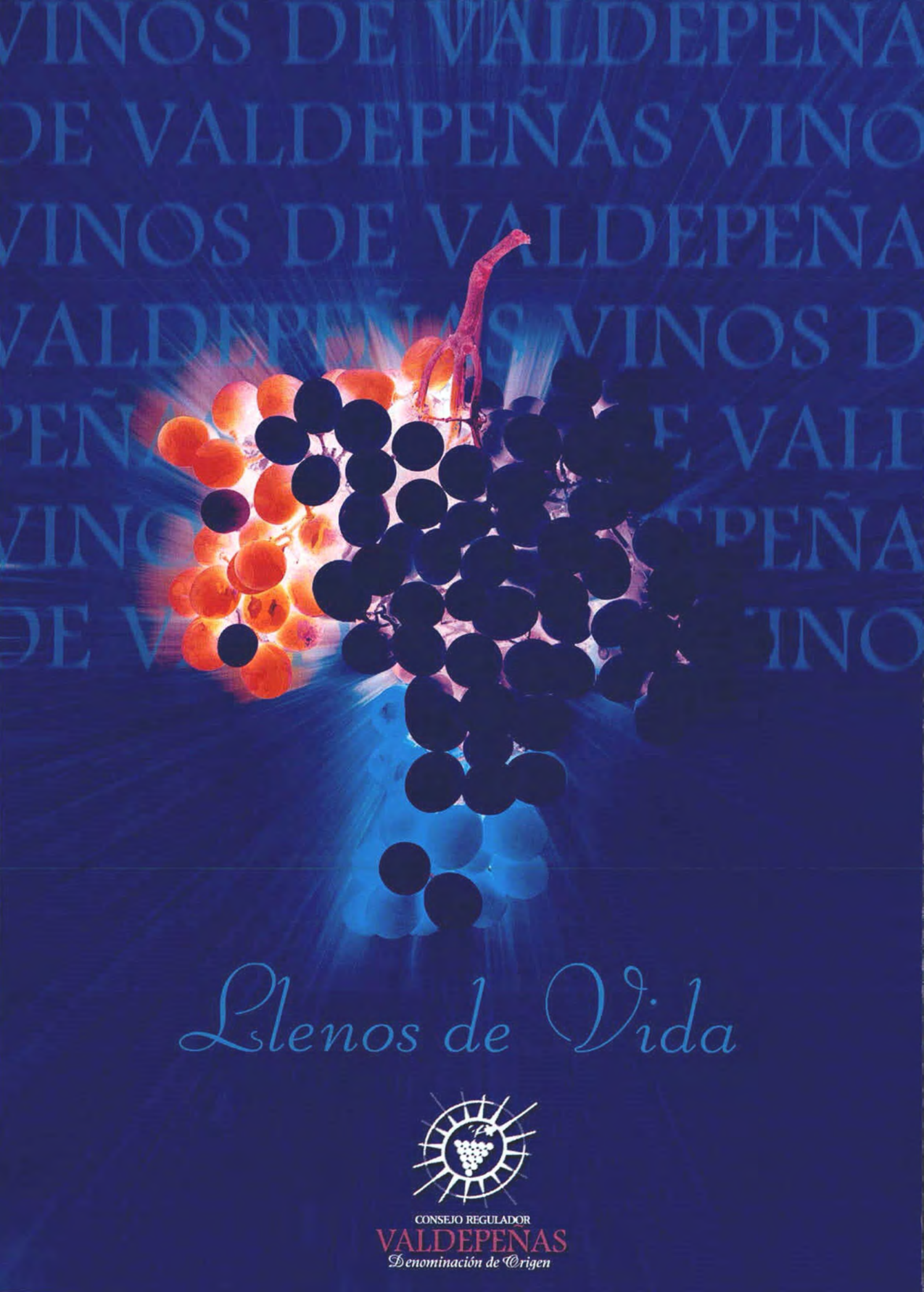
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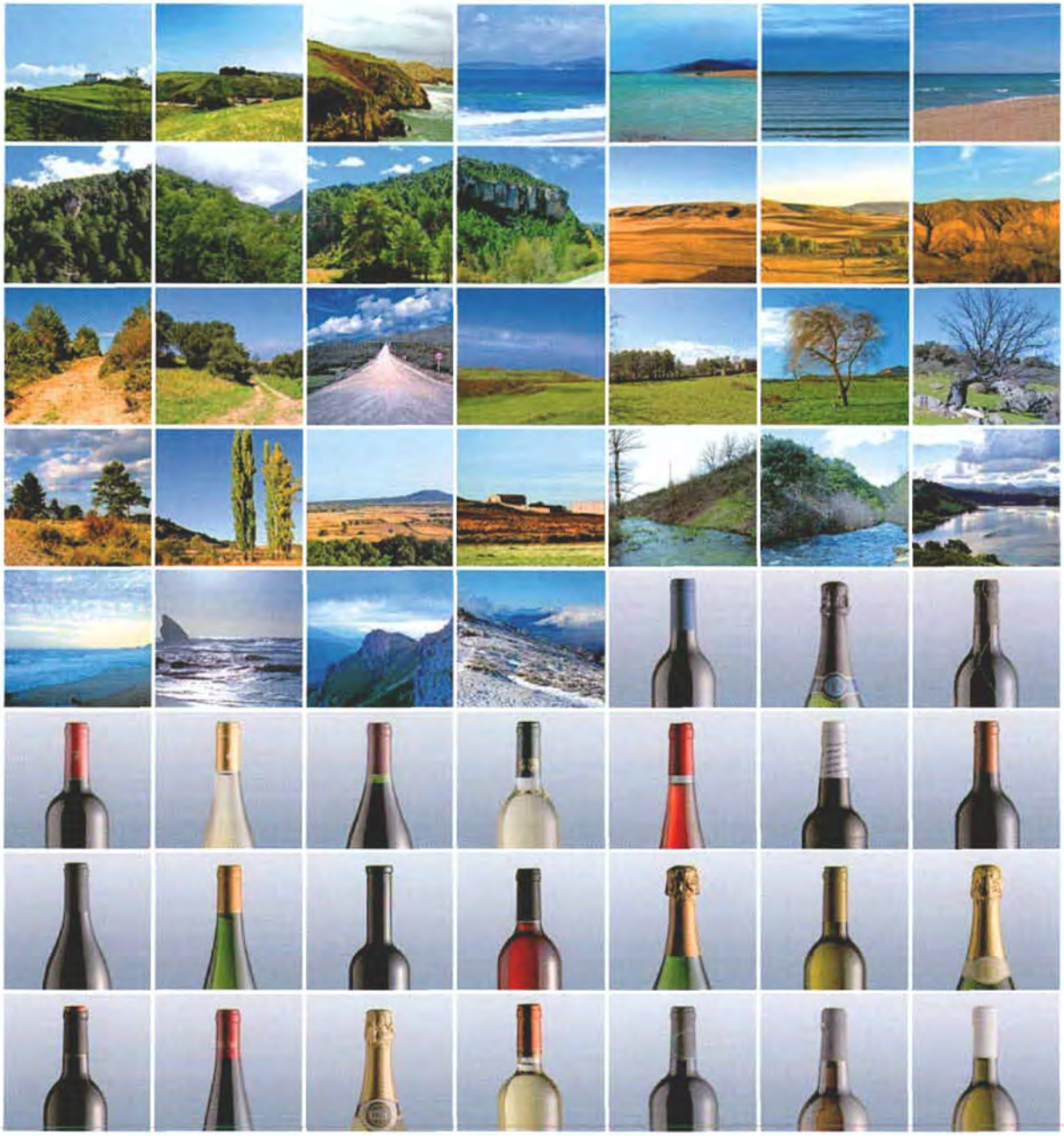

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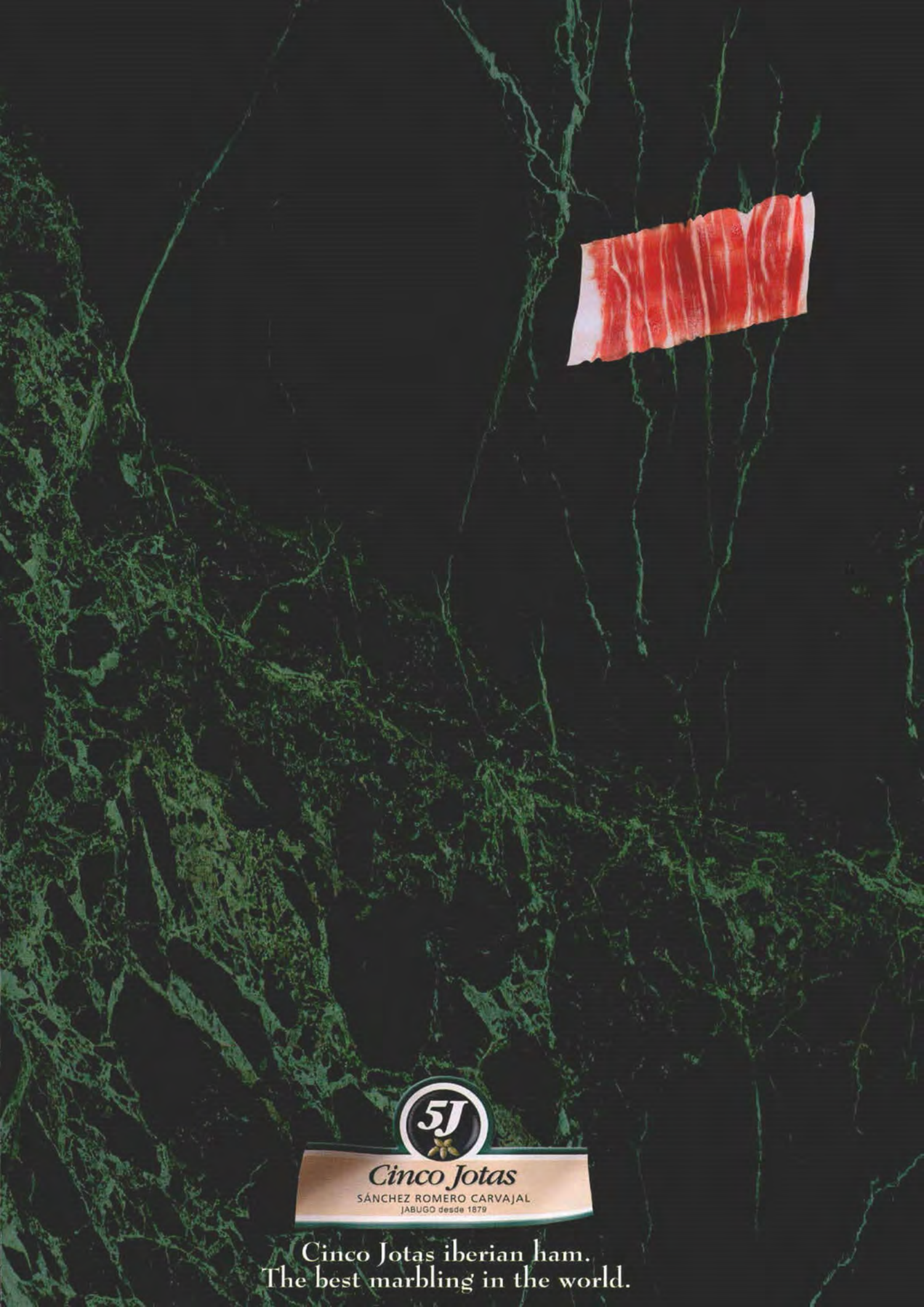
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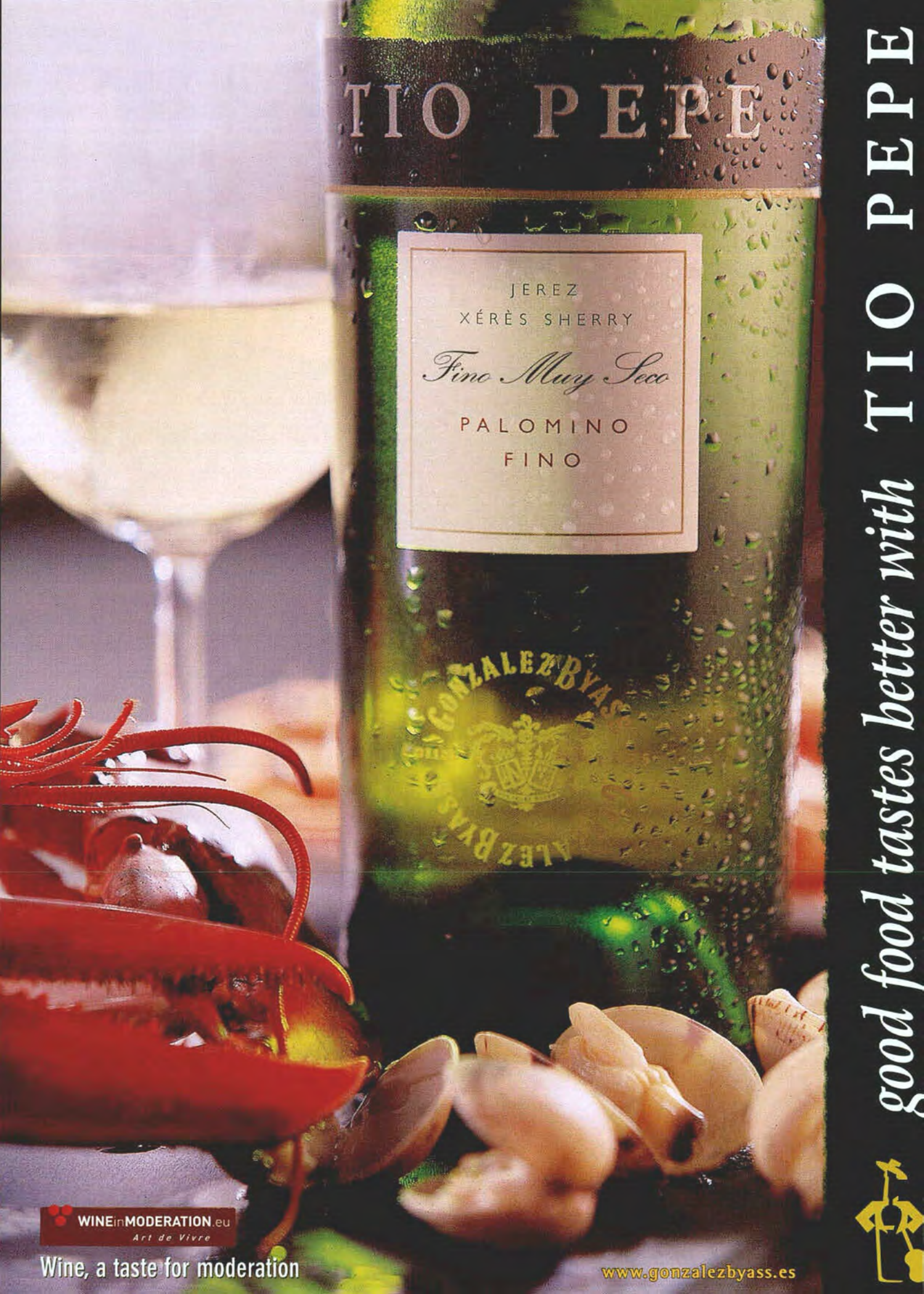
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TOMATO

Minority Report

Spain is a major player in the tomato industry. But beyond the big business lies a little-known world of traditional

tomato varieties, planted and consumed at a local level, with a peerless flavor that sets them apart from the industrial crop. Paul Richardson investigates for *Spain Gourmetour*.

TEXT
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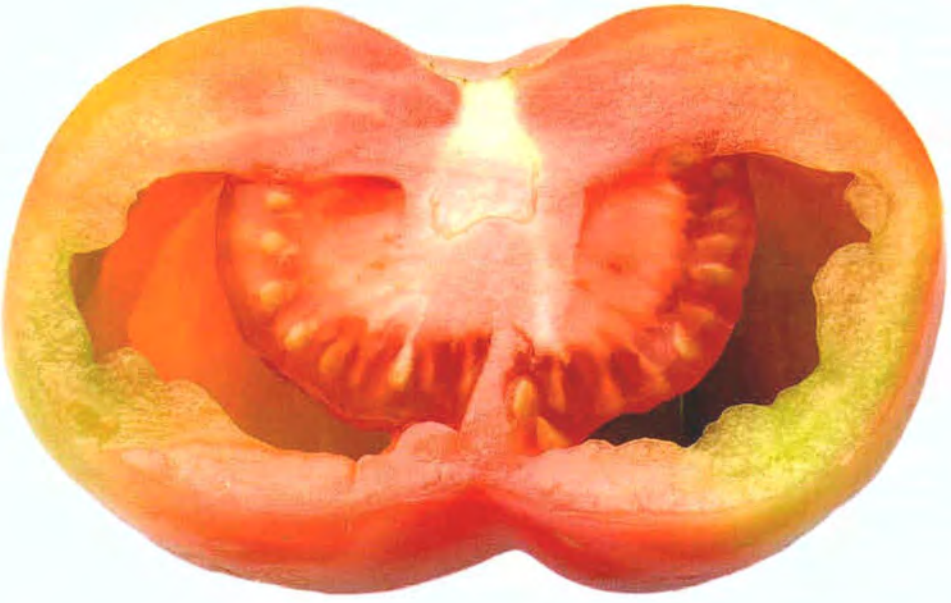
Whenever the subject of tomatoes comes up in conversation, you will almost always hear the same complaint: they don't taste as good as they used to. The reasons are not hard to find. Supermarket tomatoes are intensively grown in greenhouses, often out of season; they are picked green and ripened either in transit or artificially, using chemicals. But the single most important factor in the tomato's perceived decline is the question of variety. The modern hybrid varieties used in today's hyper-efficient tomato industry cannot compete with traditional varieties in terms of flavor. Indigenous (also called heritage or heirloom) tomatoes were once common in Spain, but when the new generation of high-cropping, disease-resistant varieties came along in the 1970s they experienced a dramatic decline. Many are now on the verge of extinction, surviving in small plots cultivated by elderly farmers for domestic consumption.

Spain has a long and fruitful relationship with the tomato. Though not the world's largest producer (that title goes to China, which produces around 15% of the global total, compared with Spain's 3%), it is certainly an enthusiastic consumer. It is no exaggeration to say that the tomato represents an irreplaceable part of the diet and lifestyle of the Iberian Peninsula. In Spanish cuisine, tomatoes are generally used fresh in salads or for cooking, though bottled and canned products such as *tomate frito* (sauce made from tomatoes and extra virgin olive oil) have always been popular, and the new wave of ready-made pasta sauces, ketchups and the like are making inroads into the local market. Dishes like *gazpacho* (southern chilled soup traditionally made with tomato, sweet bell pepper, cucumber and bread, and flavored with garlic and vinegar), *salmorejo* (cold soup made with tomatoes, bread, extra virgin olive oil, garlic and vinegar) and *pisto* (a type of ratatouille) would be unthinkable without tomato. Meat, fish and vegetables of all sorts are commonly prepared with tomato, implying the presence of a fresh tomato sauce. The classic Spanish *sofrito* (sautéed garlic, onion and tomato in extra virgin olive oil), the base for a multitude of Spanish dishes, generally includes tomato. It's hardly surprising, then, that Spanish consumption of tomatoes is among the highest of any country in the world, estimated at 17 kg (37 lb) per person per year.

"Eaten by foreigners"

Originally hailing from the foothills of the Andes, the tomato belongs to the same family as the eggplant, potato and deadly nightshade. Its Latin name, *Lycopersicon esculentum*, picturesquely translates as "edible wolf peach". Though Columbus first observed it on



his earliest voyages in the New World, it was Hernán Cortés who eventually brought it back from Mexico in 1523. Initially a small berry-like fruit and yellowish in color, it had to overcome a certain resistance in cultures where it was believed to be either poisonous and/or an aphrodisiac. The tomato (from the Aztec word *tomatl*) was not commonly eaten anywhere in Europe until the 17th century, and the northern countries were particularly suspicious of this strange new fruit. In 1596, an English writer described it not only as "rank and stinking" but much worse: "eaten by foreigners".

Since then the tomato has taken the world by storm, becoming the most widely cultivated vegetable species of all. According to the FAO, on a global scale it is grown on a surface area of between 2.5 and 2.9 million ha (6.2-7.2 million acres). A total of 122 million tons (244 billion lb) are consumed each year worldwide. Yet this quantity is made up by a handful of varieties which are not exactly valued for their flavor, but for other properties such as color, resistance to disease, and above all, heavy cropping. Commercially-grown tomato varieties can be divided into a number of basic types, such as Beefsteak, Moneymaker, Marmande, and the newest type of LSL tomato ("long shelf life") within which Daniela, a variety developed by Israeli scientists, is overwhelmingly the world leader. Then there is the so-called American type (including Ace, Sunny and Empire), the French type (Savor, Medea, Top21 and Romeo), vine tomatoes (many of them LSL, such as the popular Durinta) and the cherries, ironically, the modern tomato type closest to the fruit's original size and shape.

Rare and precious

Spain has a magnificent heritage of traditional tomato varieties, many of which are native to counties. The agricultural cooperative La Verde in the mountains of Cádiz (southern Spain), possessors of the country's biggest private bank of tomato seeds, currently stocks seeds of about 120 Spanish varieties, though the co-op's spokesman Manuel Zapata believes that there are more out there–"many, many more". Exactly how many is hard to say: as Zapata points out, formerly "local" varieties have now spread to other parts of the country, leading to a nearly infinite number of varieties or sub-varieties each with its own set of variables.

One can imagine that these old-fashioned tomatoes, with their incomparably superior flavor, might have a bright future in a market hungry for it. In agricultural terms, however, the situation of these varieties is far from rosy. Large-scale intensive agriculture has no place for the pink tomato of Huesca, to give just

FROM THE MOUNTAINS OF MONTSENY TO MODERNITY

Sergio and Javier Torres are a pair of identical twins whose restaurant Dos Cielos can be found on the 24th floor of Barcelona's most spectacular new hotel, the ME by Meliá. The dining room and kitchen (remarkably, there is no physical division between the two) have wonderful views over land and sea from the French architect Dominique Perrault's striking tower block in the Poblenou district.

The Torres twins' dish, Chilled Stuffed Tomatoes with Jávea Salt Fish and Basil (Tomates fríos rellenos, salazones de Jávea y albahacas) uses an organic tomato grown by a friend of the twins, a recluse who lives without electric light or telephone in the mountains of Montseny. Small *tomates en rama* (vine tomatoes), belonging to a nameless local variety, are peeled and hollowed out before being stuffed, either with a basil cream or a mixture of salt fish and artichokes, and decorated with flower petals, seaweed and purple basil leaves. The Montseny tomato is so sweet, says Sergio, that he has even used it in a dessert, sautéing it whole with butter, rum, vanilla and mint.

one example, whose plantlets require twice as long as commercial varieties to come to maturity. Local varieties largely depend on the elderly folk who continue to grow them year after year in their vegetable patches. But what happens when these constant gardeners are finally unable to tend their crops? The chain is broken and the varieties are lost. Zapata describes the situation of traditional tomato varieties in Spain as "very delicate", and points to the organic sector, which is in a good position to promote these excellent and mostly organically-grown tomatoes as a possible window of opportunity. For the moment, traditional and/or "gastronomic" varieties represent a tiny percentage of the world tomato market. Spanish traditional tomato varieties have a presence on the national market that is so small as to be almost non-existent, to say nothing of foreign markets. With a couple of exceptions, these tomatoes are so highly prized in their home regions, and grown in such small quantities, that they are unknown outside their place of origin. Examples of these local heroes include Villa del Prado (from Madrid, central Spain), Label Vasco (from the Basque Country, northeast Spain), *Tomate*

Tigre (from Almería, southeast Spain, its name owing to its vertical stripes of green and darker green), Zafarraya (from Granada, southern Spain), the curiously-named Carne de Doncella ("damsel's flesh", from the interior Andalusian town of Úbeda, southern Spain) and Huevo de Toro ("bull's testicle", from Jaén, also in southern Spain).

The world of the tomato in Spain is a good example of what happens in the absence of protected designations of origin (PDOs) and protected geographic indications (PGIs) to keep order in what would otherwise be an unruly house. Unlike other vegetable crops, notably the pepper (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 76), Spanish tomatoes have only one PGI, and that applies not to a single variety but to an area (La Cañada-Níjar, in the province of Almería) where various types of tomato happen to be successfully grown on a large scale.

"The best tomato in the world"?

The saga of the **Muchamiel** tomato is a perfect illustration of the challenges, as well as the opportunities, facing traditional tomato varieties in Spain. This kind was once well-known in Spain, and especially highly regarded in the coastal region of Valencia (eastern Spain), from whence it hails. (Mutxamel, or Muchamiel, is a village, now more of a suburb, just outside the city of Alicante.) Flattish in shape, with deep vertical furrows and a coloring resembling the Raf (to which it is related), tomatoes of this variety

can often reach impressive size. For Ramón Espinosa of ASAJA (the young farmers' association of Alicante), the Muchamiel is "the best tomato in the world" in terms of flavor. Local restaurants specialize in a simple salad, dressed with extra virgin olive oil and salt, for which they charge a high price. The restaurant Piripi in Alicante, which prides itself on its use of first-class local produce, serves a Muchamiel tomato salad, but only in season. Oddly, given the high regard in which the variety is held locally, it has been allowed to decline almost to the verge of extinction. Only a handful of farmers still grow it in the municipality, and the loss of genetic quality has laid the variety open to problems of disease, reducing yield considerably. As a result of a ten-year project at Miguel Hernández University in Alicante, however, new cultivars have been obtained which are much more resistant to viral infections, as well as much higher yielding. Rafael Martínez at Muchamiel's municipal goverment says the aim now is to get local farmers planting the variety again and begin selling the tomato within a reasonable radius, given that it is picked ripe and has a relatively short shelf life.

In the pink

Other Spanish tomato varieties have fared better in the past and have always been grown and appreciated in their home regions. An example is the pink tomato of Huesca, in the northern part of the region of Aragón. This part of the province, in the foothills of the Pyrenees, has a long tradition of horticulture inherited from

THE HANGING TOMATO: NEXT IN LINE?

In the days before refrigeration, greenhouses and fast distribution, the *tomate de colgar* or *tomate de penjar* (hanging tomato) was a valuable resource in Spanish rural households. The hanging tomato is grown in summer, but its thick skin allows it to be stored for use in the winter months. Once picked they are often formed into bunches on strings and hung in a cool dark place (the wine cellar is a popular choice). Varieties of tomate de colgar can be found all over Spain, but especially in Valencia, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, where the custom of tomato-rubbed bread is deeply rooted. The town of Alcalà de Xivert (Castellón, eastern Spain) is known as the heartland of hanging tomato cultivation in Spain. The local tomate de colgar Herrera was recently awarded a quality seal (CV) by the region of Valencia. Produced by a total of 21 growers in the Alcalà de Xivert municipality, it is sold throughout the Valencia region and Catalonia, and the German market takes some 2,000 kg (4,409 lb) a year.

the Arabs, which has never been lost. The Spanish phrase *de toda la vida* (since forever) applies to the ***tomate rosa de Barbastro*** (pink tomato from Barbastro), cultivated in small plots and traditionally sold in local markets around the province of Huesca. Javier Betorz is president of a newly-created association (*Asociación de Hortelanos Tradicionales y Amigos de la Huerta del Alto Aragón*), which is applying for the Aragonese quality seal C'alial for the pink tomato, granted by Aragón's regional government. Typically on the large side (a single specimen commonly weighs 1/2 kg / 1.1 lb), with thin skin, a pinkish color and fleshy interior, the tomate rosa is superbly delicious, its intense flavor making supermarket LSL tomatoes seem like another species altogether. According to Betorz, this product is best appreciated on its own, cut into thick slices and sprinkled with salt and olive oil. Down the road in La Hoya comarca is the company Huerta Basia (based in the municipality Lupiñén-Ortilla) which has created a registered brand name for the local pink tomato and is attempting to find a gap in the (Spanish) market for a heritage tomato to rival the famous Raf. Francisco Escudero of Huerta Basia even claims that his *tomate basia* is "tastier than the Raf". Iñigo Urrechu of Restaurante Urrechu in Pozuelo de Alarcón (outside Madrid), who serves the pulp of the Basia tomato in a dressed salad with cured tuna belly, shares his opinion. Grown from seeds kept back from previous years, the pink tomato has a

notably short growing season, from early August to mid-October. But that is not the least of its problems. Unlike LSL tomatoes, traditional varieties are picked ripe, when the flesh is softest. This makes them prone to damage–first on the plant, where they are exposed to hailstorms and disease, then in transport–and difficult to store for any length of time. Logistical problems like these are the main reason the pink tomato of Huesca, like many of Spain's indigenous tomato varieties, may struggle to find a foothold in the marketplace.

Return of the native

One might think the pink tomato a freak, a one-off. In fact, pink tomatoes are found in various parts of Spain: in northern Extremadura, in the province of Córdoba, and in the mountains of Aracena, in Huelva province. The ***tomate rosado de Aracena*** (pinkish tomato from Aracena) is currently the object of a unique project, developed under the aegis of the Slow Food movement (an international non-profit organization which seeks to counteract the effects of fast-paced life on eating habits), aimed at promoting this superb and little-known tomato variety. Pedro A. Cantero, professor of food and culture at the Pablo Olavide University in Seville, has been researching the pinkish tomato since the early 1990s, when its cultivation had reached a stage of almost total abandonment. Produced in a high mountain area of around 1,000 m (3,280 ft), in a series of small villages of which the epicenter is Castaño del Robledo, 4 km (2.5 mi) from Jabugo (southwestern Spain, famous for its ham), the variety has a short season beginning in early August. The tomato can grow up to 750 g (26 oz) a piece; its delicate skin when ripe requires wooden boards to prevent the fruit from touching the ground and rotting. But everyone who has tried the pink tomato agrees that, for flavor, few varieties compare. "It's the best, and I'm not saying that just because it's ours," jokes Pedro. Traditionally eaten fresh or bottled for the winter, the tomate rosado from Aracena forms part of a local dish known as *distraído*, combining bread, extra virgin olive oil, tomato pulp, and wafer-thin strips of *tocino ibérico* (Ibérico lard, most likely a by-product of the ham industry centered around Jabugo).

The aim of professor Cantero's project is both to make the pink tomato more widely known and, in due course, to make it commercially viable. It is a hard task, given the variety's delicate constitution and drastically short growing season, but already there are signs of a small revolution in the villages of Aracena. The municipal government of Almonaster la Real has brought out a book, *La Matanza Vegetal*, describing the culture of tomato bottling. In the village of Calabazares, a festival (La Gran Fiesta del Tomate) at the end of August is dedicated to the tomate

TOMATO

COLORS

rosado. The tomato is sold in local greengrocers, and one producer, Balduino Hernández, makes and sells a superb tomato jam which is highly appreciated among the gourmets of Seville.

Catalan biodiversity

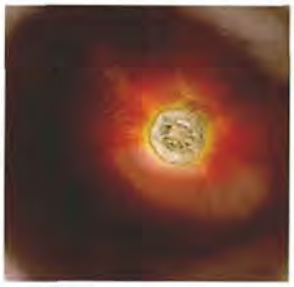
Parallel stories of rescue from oblivion are to be found all over Spain. An important focus of activity is in Catalonia, where the seed bank Esporus (in Manresa, outside Barcelona) is taking steps to preserve the biodiversity of local crops. Tomato varieties held by the bank include Catalan specialities like Tomacó, Pometa, Palosanto and Bombilla (also known as *supositori*, which has something to do with its shape!). Esporus also keeps seeds of the best-known Catalan heritage tomato, the **Montserrat,** appropriately named after the holy mountain of Catalonia and Our Lady of Montserrat, patroness of Catalonia. This variety has been grown for generations in the comarca of El Vallès, and has always been highly valued by local gastronomes, though beyond the county it is barely known. Despite its top quality, the variety suffered a sharp decline in the 1970s and is only now being planted more widely.

Ada Parellada, scion of the Parellada restaurant family of Barcelona, reminds us that *pan tumaca* (bread rubbed with tomato and dressed with extra virgin olive oil, garlic and salt) is one of Catalonia's principal signs of gastronomic identity. As it happens, the *tomate de Montserrat* would not be the best variety to use for rubbing on bread as it has very little pulp and

A WHOLE WORLD OF FLAVOR

After years of being overlooked and dangerously close to being consigned to oblivion, traditional Spanish tomato varieties are entering the world stage. They are unmatched in taste and aim to stand out as an alternative for a market looking for flavor. The following six varieties are championing the cause.

Tomate rosado de Aracena
Large, soft-skinned, pink in color, few seeds. Sweet and succulent flesh.

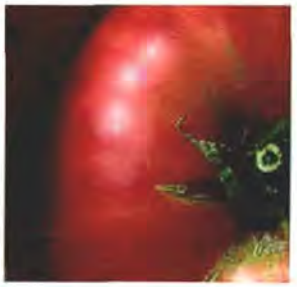


Kumato
Perfect round shape, shiny skin. Dark green, almost black color. Sweet, aromatic flesh.

Muchamiel
Deeply furrowed exterior. Abundant pulp, sweet flesh.

Raf
Irregular shape, deeply furrowed. Thin skin, fleshy, little juice. Sweet/sour flavor, with sweetness predominating. Dark green to light green/red.

Montserrat
Undulating exterior, can resemble a small pumpkin. Variously colored red, green, yellow and pink. Relatively little pulp. Intense flavor.



Tomate rosa de Barbastro / tomate basia
Large tomato, smooth surface. Soft, fine skin. Abundant flesh, very sweet, almost seedless.

plenty of space inside, making it the perfect tomato for stuffing and baking. However, it is delicious in salads, and the Reixach sisters (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 74) at the restaurant Hispania, in Arenys de Mar, serve a simple salad of Montserrat tomato with Figueres onions and *mongetes del ganxet* (white beans) dressed with Arbequina extra virgin olive oil.

The Raf tomato: an example to follow

Despite the grassroots revival of traditional tomato culture, gourmet varieties account for no more than the merest drop in the ocean of Spanish industrial tomato production. The **Raf** tomato may just be the exception. Here is a variety that, against all odds, is doing good business in Spain, with consumers paying up to 10 or 15 euros per kg (2.2 lb) for a tomato that is distinctly on the unattractive side, often a curious shade of dark green which looks to the uninitiated as if the tomato is completely unripe.

The Raf has an intriguing history. Though the name might sound Spanish, it is in fact an acronym for *Resistente al Fusarium* (resistant to the viral disease Fusarium). Though originally created by a French seed company which still owns the patent, its particular requirements (a lightly saline soil, a dry climate and long periods of sunlight) make it ideal for the conditions on the southeast coast of Spain.

Like other speciality tomatoes, the Raf produces low yields; where high-cropping varieties such as Daniela or Atlético easily reach 15 kg (33 lb) per sq m (10 ft), the Raf barely reaches 3 or 4 (6.6 to 8.8 lb). Its growing season is also unusual: thanks to the mild temperatures of Almería (southeast Spain), its birthplace, the Raf is sold from December to April and may be considered one of the few genuine winter tomatoes. The Raf is a descendant of the French Marmande, not a hybrid but the result of selection by growers over the last half century. The variety has been grown for many years in the Vegas de Almería, and particularly in the towns of La Cañada, Níjar and El Alquián, but was unknown outside the province until the late 1990s. It is now highly fashionable, can be bought all over Spain, and is much esteemed by gourmets despite its high price. Dani García of Restaurante Calima (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 70) in Marbella is only one of the reputed Spanish chefs to have fallen under the spell of this unique tomato. Last winter, the menu at Calima featured a Raf tomato stuffed with *pipirrana* (salad made from tomato, onion and cucumber) and raw Motril shrimp.

Back to black

The other great exception to the general rule that Spanish "minority" tomatoes are only consumed in their place of production is the **Kumato**. Although this variety could not be described either as traditional, heritage or heirloom, it is a curious example of the market's response to consumers' demand for a tomato with taste. Known as a "black" tomato, this variety is actually a dark shade of greenish-brown. Its shiny, impeccable, perfectly round appearance might lead you to believe that what we have here is a transgenic tomato. But this is not the case. The Kumato was developed in the early years of the millennium by a Spanish grower in Aguilas, in the region of Murcia (southeast Spain), working for Syngenta Seeds Europe, which was looking for a variety that would flourish in the saline soils of the southern coast of Spain. (Kumato is a registered trademark of Syngenta, which prefers the name Rosso Bruno for the American market.) The unique selling point of the Kumato is that it is edible whether ripe or not–and not only is it edible, but surprisingly tasty, with a sweetness and intensity of flavor not found in your average salad tomato. It was launched in the UK in 2003 and is now being sold in 50 branches of Marks & Spencer in the UK as from May this year, both in the normal size and in a mini version.

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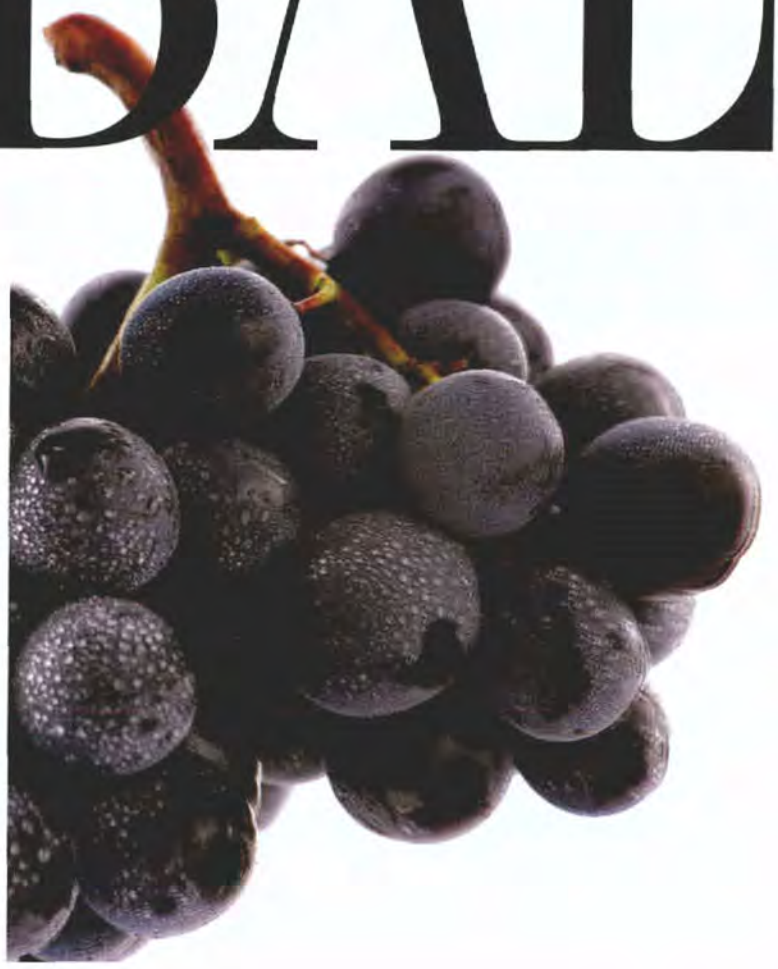
Wise Old Vines

BOBAL

Formerly an anonymous component of bulk wines, the Bobal variety is now revealing its full potential thanks to a new generation of oenologists in the DO Utiel-Requena (Valencia) and DO Manchuela (Cuenca and Albacete). With the emphasis on old vinestocks of a variety that grows almost exclusively in these two areas, they are producing pleasant, fresh rosés and some very personal reds. The experience of the old vines contrasts with the youth of the winemakers who are bringing Bobal to the forefront alongside the great Spanish varieties.



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"My father planted these vines back in 1981, soon after he bought the property." Félix Martínez points to the different parcels that surround the Vera de Estenas winery, part of the DO Utiel-Requena, with their Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Merlot and Chardonnay vines. "All the others," says Félix, "about 50% of the 42 ha (104 acres) we have grow Bobal vines that are about 100 years old." His great-grandfather had a winery producing bulk wine, but in 1980 his father, Francisco Martínez, bought the property where the winery (reminiscent of a French chateau) is located, and planted imported varieties in the belief they were what was needed to produce quality wines. This winery's best-known range, labeled Vera de Estenas, started out as a blend of these foreign varieties but, since the rediscovery of Bobal, an increasingly large proportion of this native variety is being included in the blend.

In the 1990s, Francisco's children took over and started doing things differently. They believed the Bobal variety, the one they grew most, could offer both quality and a good selling point. Going against the tradition that considered Bobal better for bulk wines than for quality, they sought out the oldest of the vines, the ones that produced smaller-grained grapes and less than 2 kg (4.4 lb) per stock. It was a risk but, in the late 1990s, their Casa Don Angel, made at the time from 90% Bobal, received very good reviews. It came as a surprise that such a pleasant wine with such personality could be produced from Bobal. Until then, this variety had been used for mass production, with young wines being sent quickly to the port of Valencia and from there to foreign markets receptive of wines with a high skin-to-juice ratio and plenty of color. Félix offers me some Casa Don Angel 2005, now made exclusively from Bobal, with 18 months in Allier oak and a production of just 8,000 bottles. "It's now on the wine list in a restaurant in Napa," he says proudly. I was surprised by its bright purplish color combined with a very pleasant freshness in the mouth. "Bobal oxidizes very slowly and keeps its color and fruitiness for years. And its acidity is well-balanced," says Félix. It seems to me to be a wine with mature fruit, plenty of body, sweet tannin and a slightly bitter finish.

Inland Valencia

Vera de Estenas is one of the oldest private wineries in the DO Utiel-Requena, in Valencia, a province on the east coast of Spain that is much better known for its long white sand beaches than for its interior. Here, far from the tourist attractions along the coast is where the DO's 40,600 ha (100,325 acres) of vineyard are located, 77% of which grow the Bobal variety. Bobal is apparently a native of Utiel-Requena from where it spread to other nearby areas, especially to what

is known today as the DO Manchuela. The first written mention of the variety appears in the book *Espill* or *Llibre de les dones* by the Valencian poet and doctor Jaume Roig (early 15th century, 1478), one of the great works of medieval literature in the Catalan language. In the 19th century, the variety came into its own because it was resistant to phylloxera, and production was stepped up in Utiel-Requena for shipping out through Valencia. Only in 1957 did Utiel-Requena gain DO status, but there was still a large market for *doble pasta* (high skin-to-juice ratio) wine with plenty of color, and Bobal was ideal for bulk production. It was especially valued for its color and resistance to oxidation, but few people imagined it could be used for anything different. Then, in the mid-1990s, just like Félix did in Vera de Estenas, several young oenologists started using it for quality red wines.

The problem with Bobal is its high tannin content and the fact that the grape seeds mature unevenly in young, very productive vineyards. But rosés need very little maceration so there is no time for bitter flavors to form, and the freshness of the variety can be brought out with all its color and aromatic potential. And some great rosés are produced–fresh, with a very bright color and very pleasant red berry aromas, such as the Enterizo rosé from the Coviñas cooperative or the Vega Infante rosé from the Bodegas Utelianas cooperative. But the main challenge was to obtain quality red wines, as Daniel Expósito, oenologist at Dominio de la Vega, explained to me. Daniel knows that one of the difficulties with this variety is to avoid rough, tannic wines with greenish hints in the mouth. After a visit to Barolo in Italy, where he realized that wines could be excellent even if the tannin content is high, he decided to

try his luck with Bobal. The secret lies in the plant and in finding the ideal vineyard for producing quality wines. He took me along to one of his favorites: La Muela. This vineyard does not belong to him but he supervises it, along with almost all the vineyards that provide him with grapes. There he showed me some venerable twisted, knotted vines and explained that only very old vines can be used to produce quality wines. "These ones produce from 800 g to 1 kg (1.7 lb to 2.2 lb) per vinestock." And it is the grapes from these old vineyards that are used to make Arte Mayor, a wine with personality and no vintage as it combines wines made and aged in different years. Daniel is absolutely convinced that this variety has a great future and insists that it requires greater research. He is currently collaborating on the CENIT program (the National Strategic Consortium for Technical Research, run by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Technology) on a 4-year research project involving 25 wineries in different parts of Spain which aims to determine how climate change is affecting vine-growing and winemaking in Spain. His winery is participating in the projects on cava (Requena is one of the few parts of Spain where it is possible to produce for the DO Cava outside Catalonia) and on the Bobal variety. In the latter, the focus is on the polyphenols and identifying the tannins and how they behave.

Research for the future

This need for research was one of the leitmotivs in conversations with producers of Bobal wines. I talked to Pablo Ossorio, a native of El Bierzo in northwestern Spain and oenologist for the Murviedro wineries, one of the great private wineries in the DO Utiel-Requena, which also has wineries in the DO Valencia and the DO Alicante. "I like to be practical. When I see a problem, I try to find a solution. Here Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah do very well, but what I have most of is Bobal." In 1999, he brought out Corolilla, a Bobal wine that is the source of constant critical acclaim and awards, such as the gold medal received recently for Corolilla Crianza 2006 at the 2009 Brussels World Competition. But this was no romantic adventure. It developed out of his need to produce wine from about 10,000 tons of grapes, a large proportion of which were of the variety that predominates in the DO Utiel-Requena. For years, he has been introducing improvements in the winemaking process, using micro-oxygenation to remove any grassy aromas and cold maceration to bring out the fruitiness and tannin without the presence of alcohol, and to stabilize the color. But he realized that with his grapes there was insufficient glycerin, the substance that gives volume in the mouth, and he set up a research project to find a yeast that would enhance this sensation. The yeast appeared in the Monastrell variety, which he is now using in his wines.

Pablo Ossorio agrees that quality comes from old, low-yielding Bobal

vineyards. He has his own favorite area within the DO but confirms something that Vicente Pérez, president of the Regulatory Council, had already told me. "Here we have too much of the good stuff," says Vicente, referring to the fact that almost half of the Bobal vineyards are over 50 years old. Seeing my surprise, Pérez explained that not many wineries are using Bobal to produce quality wines. In fact, only 35 of the 115 wineries in the DO are producing wines with a majority of Bobal. "The yield from these vines is low, so they are not very profitable for growers." This has led many of them to pull up their old vines, replacing them with more productive ones or with other varieties. Fortunately, the concept of quality with Bobal is catching on and the number of customers for Bobal grapes is growing. It will be the market that will keep these vineyards going, with wineries having to pay growers for the quality they want, plus a bonus to make up for the low yield.

One of these 35 wineries is Bodegas Torroja, a family-owned business that started experimenting with Bobal in 1998. I spoke to Juan Carlos García, just back from two presentations in Korea and Hong Kong. "When you travel, you realize the value of what you have at home." Bobal is his native variety, although in this winery they are also producing a white from Tardana grapes, another native and less well-known variety. We had lunch in the restaurant they opened up in the old winery building as part of the area's wine tourism plan and he told me how, in the late 1990s, they realized they could do something with the most prevalent variety in their region. So, in 1998, they started to make wine from barrel-fermented Bobal aged on the lees. It took them a couple of years to fully understand the process, but in

2000 their barrel-fermented Sybarus came out successfully. "It is a very robust vine that produces a large amount of grapes but, if you want quality, you have to tend the plants carefully. The main problem is that the grapes do not ripen uniformly. The seeds take longer than the rest. This can be resolved by using very old vines, ones that are at least 40 years old." He aims to focus on fruity flavors with a touch of wood, and he says that the specific characteristics of the variety are "plenty of red fruit, blackcurrant, balsamic flavors, a little licorice and aniseed." These can be brought out by applying different techniques: cold maceration prior to fermentation, avoiding contact with the seeds, then malolactic fermentation in the barrel and 3 months of daily batonnage to get a silky smooth texture from the fine lees, and then final aging for 6 to 14 months in French oak.

History in the vineyard

Finca Ardal is another of the family-run wineries that has recently decided to focus on Bobal as a way of setting its wines apart and offering something different. After a longstanding tradition as bulk producers, in 1987 they built a new winery on their estate with the idea of producing quality, bottled wines, so they did as others around them were doing: they planted imported varieties. But they still had to find a solution for the vines they already had, so they started working in the field. In the mid-1990s, they changed the traditional growth stance from vase-shaped to espalier, and tried out different pruning methods to reduce yield. Meanwhile, they were collaborating with the Technological Institute for Viticulture and Oenology in Requena together with the Wine Chair set up by the Polytechnic University of Valencia. The research they were doing also involved Richard Smart, the well-known viticultural researcher and consultant from Australia. Luis Orozco, owner of Finca Ardal, tells me they started to vinify Bobal in 2000, although their first 100% Bobal wine, bearing the Ocho Cuerdas label, was only placed on the market in 2008, after 14 months in mainly French oak barrels. "Bobal is an intense variety. It needs time in the wood to gain balance, to grow and develop its aromas, to become well-rounded." Their second Bobal will be on the market in late 2009, in this case after 2 1/2 years of aging in exclusively French barrels. Luis considers Bobal to be a promising variety but insists that the vines need to be carefully tended. "Over 3.5 kg (7.7 lb) per stock is just too much."

Not only does Luis have to tend his vines but he also has to keep a careful watch on the soil in his vineyards. "We found the remains of an ancient Iberian settlement in the middle of one of our vineyards, and practically half of the contents of Requena Museum are from here." Mention should also be made of the cultural

importance of wine in this area. Asunción Martínez Valle, the dynamic municipal architect of Requena, has been studying the archaeological remains associated with local wine production. At Pilillas, there are six wine presses carved out of rock for treading grapes, dating from the Iberian period in the 5th century BC. The potter's wheel found at Casillas del Cura, close to Pilillas, is believed to have been used to make the amphorae used for fermenting the must produced at Pilillas. These archeological sites, together with other local remains, form part of the project entitled "The historical and cultural urban landscape of Requena: 2,500 years of wine production", which aims to obtain UNESCO recognition for the area as Heritage of Mankind in the Cultural Landscape category. This project can be expected to increase interest in the DO Utiel-Requena Wine Route, set up by a number of wineries together with local restaurants, the main one being El Carro de Utiel, and offering a firsthand taste of local wine history, especially in the town of Requena. And from one attraction to the next, I head to the wonderful Hoces de Cabriel Natural Park. From there, I crossed into another Spanish designation also growing mainly Bobal, the DO Manchuela, in the provinces of Cuenca and Albacete.

Recent private initiatives

Before leaving Valencia, I stopped off at Cuevas de Utiel, the area covered by Vinos de la Tierra El Terrerazo or, in other words, Bodegas Mustiguillo. This is a 300-ha (741 acres) estate. The grapes used to produce Quincha Corral and Finca Terrerazo grow on 120 ha (295 acres). The former is the upmarket label, a Bobal monovarietal, and the latter a blend of 70% Bobal, 25% Tempranillo and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. The winery's third wine, Mestizaje, contains 60% Bobal, and the remainder is Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Tempranillo and Garnacha in different percentages as required for each vintage. Oenologist Toni Sarrión did not grow up in the wine business but, rather, in a family that owned a large construction company. In 1997, he decided to leave the family business to learn about wine production and produce wine from grapes that previously were sold to other local wineries. From the start, his main interest was the local variety. His work in the vineyard is now responsible for some very personal wines that are reaping rewards in markets such as Switzerland, the UK and the US. He considers it essential to carefully plan harvesting because some vineyards produce grapes that mature differently, even on the same bunch. "It's important to keep track of what's happening in the vineyard to ensure that the bunches are as small and loose as possible." He explains that in the oldest vineyards (the ones that produce the grapes for Quincha Corral and Finca Terrerazo), they used to mark each plant with building site tape using a color code to indicate the degree of ripening in preparation for harvest. His most special vineyard dates from 1909 and was featured in a study carried out by the Valencia Wine Chair with Richard Smart to identify wood for the purpose of selecting ideal clones for quality vines. They now know more about their vineyards, so colored tape is no longer needed to mark out the separate harvesting areas. The harvested grapes are vinified and aged separately, even if they come from the same plot. Then blending takes place gradually in the wooden vats used for fermentation, because they do not have large tanks for the final mixing. The purpose of all this becomes clear when Toni invites me to taste the wines; they offer all the structure and power of Mediterranean wines, with the elegant freshness that is the trademark of Bobal grapes.

The DO Manchuela is home to another winery belonging to something of an "outsider" in wine production. This is the project set up by Víctor de la Serna at Finca Sandoval. But Víctor is not a real outsider. He was born locally and is one of Spain's leading wine and food writers. His knowledge is combined with the experience of oenologist

Rafael Orozco, a great champion of the Bobal variety. Víctor acknowledges that at the start he was not totally convinced about the virtues of this variety but they went ahead anyway, and in 2006 produced the first wine with Bobal from a 5-ha (12 acres) vineyard planted by Orozco's grandfather in 1939. Víctor now considers Bobal to be of special interest if planted at an altitude of 700 m (2,296 ft) or higher, and he agrees that the older vines are best because their yield is more regular. "They give very good black grapes with plenty of aromatic strength and can lead to lively wines with less warmth than Garnacha or Monastrell." He considers that since this wine develops slowly, it works best when blended with other varieties. Finca Sandoval produces no Bobal monovarietals, but Bobal can be found in all their wines. The most representative example is Signo, made from 90% Bobal with 10% Syrah to give added silkiness and round off the Bobal tannins. The main task ahead, in his opinion, is to carry out research and single out good-quality old stock. This is precisely the goal set by the DO Manchuela together with the Vine and Wine Institute of Castile-La Mancha (IVICAM) which, in June 2009, set up new joint projects to characterize and differentiate the Bobal wines, carrying out clonal selection to improve stocks. There are certainly sufficient vineyards in La Manchuela to provide the raw materials needed for this study. Altogether there are 70,000 ha (172,974 acres) under Bobal, although only 2,000 (4,942 acres) of them are attached to the DO along with other white (Albilla, Macabeo, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Verdejo) and red varieties (Tempranillo, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Garnacha, Merlot, Monstrell and Moravia Dulce). The wineries in this part of Spain are traditionally bulk producers, and most of them maintain this activity, providing an outlet for the many vineyards not covered by the DO. But at the DO Manchuela, there is now increasing concern for a variety that is attracting growing interest in foreign countries because of the greater appeal of native varieties. Even the large cooperatives, which tend to be more reluctant to change, are now focusing on Bobal in its own right and have decided to enter the DO with quality bottled wines. One example is the San Antonio Abad Cooperative in the town of Villamalea (Albacete, central Spain), which has 800 members and handles 25 million tons every harvest. The first steps they took were to identify old vineyards under the leadership of their field adviser and, in 2001, they established quality parameters for alcohol content, color, pH and grape health. In 2008 they went a step further by giving priority to grapes from certain selected vineyards. So far, for bottled DO Bobal, they only produce a rosé, Altos del Cabriel, which in 2009 won them a gold medal at Vinalies Internationales in Paris. The other cooperative in Villamalea, Vitivinos, is much smaller, with only about 50 members who bring in grapes from vase-shaped vines planted over 30 years ago. With careful selection of harvests and close monitoring of parcels as soon as new shoots start to appear, they have been able to produce wines such as Azua Bobal Viñas Viejas, a red which won a silver medal for the 2003 vintage at the 2007 World Brussels Competition.

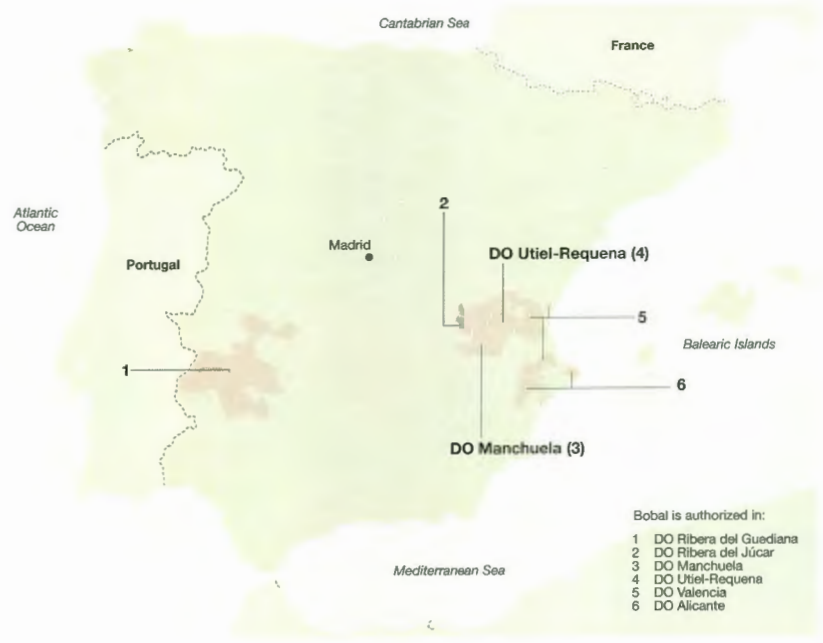
Balanced vineyards

But the most interesting work being done on Bobal in La Manchuela is in small private wineries, all of which started out when a grower, having seen generations of his family selling their grapes to third parties, decided to start

producing his own wine from a plant with which they were very familiar. This was the case with Pagos de Familia Vega Tolosa, SA, a winery that started out in 1998 with bulk products which it continues producing, bringing out its first bottled wine in 2001. But it was only in 2007 that they placed their first 100% Bobal wine on the market. "I went to a trade fair in London and the retailer asked me for something special, something out of the ordinary." Juan Miguel Tolosa thought of the old Bobal vineyards planted by his family and produced Vega Tolosa Bobal Viñas Viejas, now his premium wine that he exports throughout Europe and the US. Juan Miguel never misses an opportunity. "Not long ago, I was called in to pull up an old vineyard because I have a tractor I could use for the job. But when I saw 80-year-old vines, I decided instead that I would rent the vineyard from the owner." He shows me round this vineyard proudly and explains that it will allow him to produce larger quantities of Viñas Viejas. Juan Miguel never stops thinking about his market. At present he is working on his winery's website so that consumers can see a picture of the vineyard that produced the bottle they are drinking, following the

BOBAL IS NOT JUST FOR WINE

For years, the wine sector has been studying the antioxidant properties of grape polyphenols in wines. Resveratrol has attracted the most interest, with advanced research being conducted in the US, France, Italy and, of course, Spain. "Basically, resveratrol is just one of the plant's defenses against a fungus," says Félix Cuartero. This professor of oenology (who retired from the Requena Wine School, where he worked for 30 years offering guidance to most of the oenologists mentioned in this article) made a decision three years ago to join forces with five other local partners to set up Viña Bobal, producing natural grape juices and canned grape flesh. Together with Plácido Navas from the University of Seville, they discovered that Bobal has a high level of resveratrol, more than Pinot Noir or Cabernet Sauvignon. Also, Félix was very concerned about the many vineyards that were being uprooted in the area ("it could lead to desertification and have devastating social effects") and decided to use the antioxidant properties of Bobal in other products, not just wine. "It is not a medicine," says Félix, pointing to Bobalin, a natural grape juice obtained from ripe grapes using non-violent methods. "It's pleasant to drink, it's a perfect dietary complement and it's good for you." It is 100% concentrated juice, with no preservatives, as the antioxidant tannins in the juice preserve it for up to two years. The other product is red grape flesh, also made from Bobal grape juice but thickened with agar agar (a seaweed) so it gives you the natural antioxidants of the juice plus the trace elements from the seaweed. Félix gives me some to try and convinces me. It makes a perfect jam substitute (to accompany foie gras, cheese or toast) but without any added sugar.



IVICAM-certified traceability number that figures on the label. As regards the current market situation, he is optimistic. "In the future, the market will call for native varieties at affordable prices. The next three years might be tough, but then the future should be very promising."

The case of Bodegas Ponce is more recent. Juan Antonio Ponce is a young oenologist who worked in different parts of Spain in the shadow of one of Spain's best-known wine consultants and oenologists, then decided to return to his roots and work on the Bobal vineyards planted by his grandfather. He created his own winery in 2005. Juan Antonio has gone a step further, keeping up with the times by working biodynamically on his vines and wines (What is biodynamics?, page 48), aiming to achieve natural equilibrium between plant and soil, grape and wine. Unlike other viticulturalists, he does not find it difficult to work with Bobal and produce quality wines. "The main problem," he says, referring to Bobal wines, "is that vines have been encouraged to give a high yield. I think a variety that has always been in its local area gives good results. What is especially difficult is to get a vineyard that gives a fruity, fresh wine without rusticity and green tannins." This is only possible by achieving equilibrium, a word that comes up repeatedly in our conversation. He currently has 18 different vineyards, some inherited from his family, others purchased over the years, and some rented, which he controls at every level. From these 18 vineyards, in 2008 he produced 18 different wines in an effort to express in each of them the specific characteristics of their terroir, because Juan Antonio believes the soil where the vine grows is almost more important than the age of the plants... although his youngest vineyard is 30 years old. In the end, five wines were placed on the market, from Clos Lojen, a fruity, simple blend from different parcels, to wines that come from a single vineyard such as PF, from ungrafted vines, or Estrecha, a very interesting Bobal from the vineyard of the same name, a wine with mineral touches from the soil that give it a very attractive complexity. When asked about the future of Bobal, Juan Antonio is certain: "The market likes to see something different and unusual," and Bobal meets that demand.

Almudena Martín Rueda *was in charge of export promotion for a Spanish wine Designation of Origin for seven years and, for the last two years, has been an editorial coordinator at* Spain Gourmetour.

WEBSITES

www.artafterscience.com
(English) During 2008, Canadian artist Zev Robinson filmed a documentary, "La bobal and other stories about wine", in which he traces the grapes from the vineyard to a UK winestore. Interviews with growers, winemakers, specialists and retailers in Spain and the UK give a thorough overview of the sector and the Bobal variety in the DO Utiel-Requena.

www.utielrequena.org
(English, Spanish) The website for the DO Utiel-Requena Regulatory Council.

www.rutavino.com
(English, Spanish). Page of the Utiel-Requena Wine Route with information on history, accommodation, restaurants and local tourist facilities. It also offers the possibility of requesting a customized route or ordering a bus and a guide for groups.

www.do-manchuela.com
(Spanish) Website for the DO Manchuela Regulatory Council

www.bodegamustiguillo.es
(English, German, Spanish) Website of Vinos de la Tierra El Terrerazo

BIODYNAMICS

in Focus

Often inspired by their winemaking experiences and colleagues in France, and recognizing the need to work in harmony with nature, some of the most talented contemporary Spanish winemakers are turning to biodynamics. Here we look at the reasons why they are taking this alternative approach to viticulture and winemaking, the challenges that it presents and why they generally choose keep their practice under wraps.

Text
Patricia Langton/©ICEX

Photos
Pablo Neustadt/©ICEX

Illustrations
Javier Olivares

If you haven't visited a fully biodynamic vineyard, you can expect to see a few aspects that make it quite different from a conventional one. A biodynamic vineyard is likely to be far more colorful in terms of vegetation and animals. There are plenty of hedges, bushes and wild flowers to encourage insects and birds to make their homes in the vineyard. Hens are scuttling about and a few cows are happily grazing nearby. There are also a few manual ploughs and there's no sign of mechanized machinery. Nothing strange so far, this vineyard seems a bit like a farm with mixed agricultural activities, just as it could have been over 100 years ago. Then you spot something a bit weird hanging from a treetop, and the vineyard owner tells you that it's a stag's bladder filled with yarrow. He also tells you that he fills a cow horn with manure and buries it in the soil during winter. These and other natural preparations are lined up in Hessian sacks inside the bodega and used as vineyard treatments at different times of the year. There are no traces of synthetic fertilizers or pesticides here; this is a way of working in complete harmony with the forces of nature.

The biodynamic movement in Spain

It is certainly quiet, and it couldn't be described as a revolution, but there is a small but passionate band of producers in Spain who are making serious wines and happen to use biodynamic methodology. Who are they and why are they taking this route?

To find out who is doing what you need to ask a few questions; official lists of biodynamic wine producers don't exist in the way that lists of organic wine producers do. It's a case of infiltrating the biodynamic network,

asking for names and encouraging people to talk.

In Spain, biodynamics is still in its infancy. Many of the big names who practice biodynamics–including Ricardo Pérez Palacios, Peter Sisseck (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 68) and Bertrand Sourdais–don't draw attention to the fact, at least not on their wine labels. They don't use it as a marketing tool, and indeed many reputable biodynamic producers are wary of the negative connotations of witchcraft and strange ancient practices that can be associated with the field or the risk of simply baffling the consumer with its complexity. I'll return to Pérez Palacios, Sisseck and Sourdais shortly.

Let's start by taking a look at Emilio Valerio, a DO Navarra (northern Spain) producer headed up by the man of the same name that has launched its first biodynamic wine: Viñas de Amburza. Taking a different approach to the one described above, this new wine appears with the nothing-to-hide description *vino biodinámico* clearly displayed on the front label in a bold attempt to create a market for quality wines based on biodynamic principles.

Viñas de Amburza, which debuts with the 2005 vintage, is a very approachable blend of Garnacha, Graciano, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot (this mix is expected to vary from vintage to vintage). It is the culmination of a project which started a decade ago to produce wine and olive oil. Over 50 small parcels of vines are now under biodynamic cultivation to serve the biodynamic venture around the town of Dicastillo (Tierra Estella, a tourist hotspot in southwestern Navarre).

As Emilio explains, the conversion to a comprehensive biodynamic way of working and the return to a more traditional form of vine growing at their Laderas de Montejurra vineyards was gradual. "Firstly and most importantly you have to adopt a biodynamic philosophy, and this covers many aspects: defining the vineyard area, the objectives, the relationship with the environment and the people who work the land, the link with our culture and our agricultural traditions... We started with this philosophy and then we gradually introduced biodynamic practices such as the reinvigoration of soils with compost, first from sheep and now from cattle. We also encouraged insects such as bees and dragonflies and increased cover crops and other forms of vegetation, and we started to make preparations–yes, we bury the horns–and follow the cycles of the moon and the planets. Most importantly, we started to observe our vineyards and olive groves more closely and learn from our experiences."

Interestingly, Emilio does not see biodynamics as an extension of organics. "Culturally and philosophically it's a completely different proposition," he says, but adds that "a biodynamic wine should always be organic." (Viñas de Amburza

Bertrand Sourdais

carries organic certification from CPAEN, *Consejo de la Producción Agraria Ecológica de Navarra*).
Isn't this a challenging way to make and sell wine? Can biodynamic wines be profitable in his view? He says: "The challenge is to make biodynamic wines the most respected in the market and establish a following of consumers that only drink these wines... It's not profitable in the more commercial sense of the term, but it can be profitable for a small wine business."
He concludes: "Navarre has a good climate for biodynamics and for us it's not a problem if our harvest is small; when there is a lot of rain our vines are more resistant to disease. The biggest challenge is coping with 'fruit days' (What is biodynamics?, page 48), but we have to be strong, and as we have many different parcels of vines that isn't really a problem."

Careful analysis before taking the plunge

Both the organic and biodynamic schools of thinking reject the use of pesticides and work in harmony with nature; it's not unusual to find that serious advocates of organics are dipping a toe in the water with biodynamics. With this in mind, and having tasted some of their consistently good wines lately, I got in touch with Albet i Noya of DO Penedès (Catalonia, northeast Spain), one of the best-known producers of organic still wines and cavas.
Technical director Josep Maria Albet i Noya proved to be rather elusive initially, but I eventually tracked him down and found that yes, something of interest related to biodynamics is going on at this sizeable estate.
"Over the last three years we've been doing some experimental work comparing biodynamic with organic vineyard management," he told me. "We're using the nine basic biodynamic preparations, and we're also following the astral cycles for the most important work: pruning, harvesting, fertilizing, deleafing and cultivating the soil."
Josep Maria says that it's too early to come to any conclusions, but he expects the difference between the two methods to be minor when they make their final assessment. He adds: "The conversion period to an organic vineyard is at least three years and we think that it is the same or even longer from organic to biodynamic. We are not thinking of seeking any form of biodynamic certification in the future, that's not our aim."
Does any aspect of biodynamics seem

unappealing to him? The cost, for example? "You have to look at the financial cost and we believe that it's significantly more expensive (compared to organic), especially the time that it takes us to follow the process and monitor procedures. You could also view the more inflexible trend of some biodynamic followers as negative... The way that people have adopted the beliefs of Rudolf Steiner (What is biodynamics?, page 48) as set-in-stone rules that can't be questioned, transforming biodynamics into a way of life or dogma very similar to a sect or religion. I don't want anything to do with that kind of extreme view."

Albet i Noya believes that biodynamics has to be made more relevant to the world of today: "I think that biodynamics needs to be reinterpreted as theologians do with religion to adapt it to reality, current intellectual thinking and scientific knowledge."

Given that 80% of Albet i Noya's wines are sold abroad and in view of their valuable international status, it's not surprising that the producer is moving cautiously; a departure towards biodynamics could be perceived to be radical or complex by some, but watch this space.

Those operating on a smaller scale are often keen to incorporate biodynamics, convinced by the greater personality that it brings. At Bodegas Jiménez-Landi, a young but fast-rising star in DO Méntrida, José Benavides Jiménez-Landi and Daniel Gomez Jiménez-Landi give great importance to producing fine Garnacha-based wines made with respect for the environment and tradition.

This also increasingly means working along biodynamic lines: indeed four out of six of the wines made by this producer come from vineyards where biodynamic practices are used, including the excellent Piélago and El Reventón wines, which are made from old Garnacha vines. I learned this after I'd tasted the wines and decided that they were particularly impressive with their elegant fruit character, freshness and perfectly-balanced oak.

Winemaker Daniel Gomez Jiménez-Landi is clearly skillfully working with some good fruit, and the soils and altitude (700-850 m / 2,296-2,788 ft for the vineyards serving the two wines mentioned) must be positive influencing factors as well, but he's also convinced by biodynamics.

He says: "We started to work with biodynamics in a small area of vineyard in 2006. By 2007, most of the vineyards were worked this way and now we try to use biodynamics

WHAT IS BIODYNAMICS?

Biodynamic agriculture stems from the theories and teachings of the Austrian philosopher and scientist Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) and particularly the lectures that he gave in 1924 titled "Spiritual Foundations for the Renewal of Agriculture". However, Frenchman Nicolas Joly's role in promoting the biodynamic cause in viticulture and winemaking probably has far more relevance today. Indeed biodynamic thinking across the wine world is largely influenced by biodynamic producers in the well-known French regions.

Joly has practiced biodynamics at Coulée de Serrant (Savannières, Loire) since the early 1980s after he saw the negative impact of the use of chemical treatments at the estate and decided on a radical departure.

The wines from Coulée de Serrant are highly regarded, but Joly himself is also well known as an energetic and determined proponent of biodynamics throughout the world. In 2001 he founded *Renaissance des Appellations*, an association with 148 members in 13 countries, which aims to promote authentic wines that reflect their vineyard origin and respect the environment. Its members, including eight from Spain, are organic or biodynamic producers who share its philosophy (www.biodynamy.com).

Biodynamic producers tend to adapt biodynamic practices to their vineyard and according to their region and grapes. Not many go as far as burying the cow horn but other aspects are commonly used. They include the preparation and use of nine biodynamic treatments which are applied according to the biodynamic calendar and lunar cycles (the most notable difference between biodynamics and organics), managing vineyard work such as pruning and harvesting according to the same calendar and using natural yeasts in winemaking. Below are three of the most common biodynamic preparations:

- **Cow manure fermented in a cow horn**, diluted and sprayed on the soil. (known as number 500)

- **Flower heads of chamomile**, applied to compost. (known as number 503)

- **Tea prepared from Equisetum** (horsetail plant), diluted and used as a spray to counter fungal diseases. (known as number 508)

These preparations, among others, are used in place of herbicides and pesticides to correct imbalances in the vine, build up natural resistance and enhance the organic matter in the soil. (Copper and sulfur are used in biodynamics).

throughout our vineyards using all our own treatments. It's the best way to get a sense of terroir and great quality... a wine must reflect the vineyard that it comes from."

He sees a growing biodynamic movement in Spain: "Young people and smaller producers have a different point of view," he says.

Biodynamics in El Bierzo

The best known advocate of biodynamics in Spain is Ricardo Pérez Palacios, a younger member of the Palacios winemaking dynasty. Together with his uncle, Alvaro Palacios (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 62), he has played a major role in getting El Bierzo noticed for fine red wines made from the Mencia grape. Their joint venture, Descendientes de J. Palacios, in DO Bierzo (Castile-Leon, northern Spain), is one of the few Spanish bodegas to adopt biodyamics so wholeheartedly. Descendientes de J. Palacios is named after the father of Alvaro and

Moncerbal

grandfather of Ricardo–Pepe (J. Palacios)–who, as Ricardo explains, inspired in him a passion for nature at an early stage and triggered his "green tendency". This continued when he went to study oenology in Bordeaux, where he met many winemakers, including Bertrand Sourdais (now at Dominio de Atauta, DO Ribera del Duero, in Castile-Leon, northern Spain) who have followed the "alternative" viticulture route across the French regions.

Later Ricardo met Nicolas Joly and, although he does not describe him as his main influence, he highly respects the French champion of biodynamics, describing him as *un gran señor*.

Ricardo Peréz Palacios has translated Nicolas Joly's book, *Le vin du ciel à la terre*, into Spanish. The Spanish version is titled *El vino del cielo a la tierra* and the English translation is called *Wine from Sky to Earth*.

Returning to the El Bierzo estate, wines Villa de Corullón, San Martín, Fontelas, Moncerbal, Las Lamas and La Faraona are all biodynamic and they sell at the high end of the market (39-104 euros). The exception is Pétalos de Bierzo, which is produced from some grapes from the estate but mostly grapes bought from growers, the majority of them organic grape growers.

Ricardo is happy to explain how he works from the vineyard right through the vinification process and why he works how he does. Biodynamics helps him to work in a traditional way, a natural way.

Biodynamic practices have gradually been introduced at the 45-ha (111 acres) estate (30 ha / 74 acres of vineyards split into roughly 200 parcels of long-established vineyards)

since 1999. The steep sloping vineyards are worked with mules and horses and the landscape is dotted with fruit trees (fruit juices are also produced and sold locally) and there's a small vegetable garden.
But, he adds: "All this doesn't mean anything and it doesn't make the wine good without the heritage and tradition that we've found in the agricultural landscape of El Bierzo: old vines in a good location, good soils and the delicate Mencía grape. Biodynamics (alone) is not giving us good wine.... There are so many other elements, and one of the most important is to work the land in the traditional way."
Ricardo does not believe that biodynamics is well-understood in Spain or elsewhere. As he says: "Many people talk about biodynamics in a very relaxed manner. It's not just pruning with the moon." He also sees a lack of experience in the wine industry. "Some winemakers intervene too much and some not enough."
In the bodega he works with minimal intervention–no additives, no pumps or punching down and only natural gravity. The wines are also made similar to the traditional ways of the locals from Corullón, which includes fermenting whole bunches and stirring the juice daily.
"Steiner didn't say anything specific about making wine; in fact, he was abstemious, like nearly all his followers. In both the vineyard and the bodega I try to take the best from each school and adapt it to my estate... We try to do the best that we can without ignoring progress and modern science, but making them work with tradition, quality, health and well-being."
Over in neighboring DO Valdeorras (Galicia, northwest Spain), another member of the family, Rafael Palacios, is more hesitant about biodynamics–what seems to work well for the red wines of Mencía may not be ideal for white wines made from Godello (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 76) in this region, not yet at least.
Rafael says that he is introducing biodynamic methods but he expects the process to take at least another two years for the vines to recover their natural defenses.
He is clearly moving cautiously. Godello is particularly sensitive to oidium, which has to be factored in, and he's somewhat reluctant to associate his bodega closely with "new wave" biodynamic producers who, in his view, don't always offer good wines. With his reputation for wines As Sortes and Louro do Bolo steadily growing, this is understandable.

Tempranillo keeps a low profile

So far the Tempranillo grape hasn't really come under the spotlight as we explore the subject of biodynamics across Spain's regions. However, there are a few notable producers in DO Ribera del Duero who are practicing biodynamics; it seems strange that more haven't followed suit.
Winemaker Peter Sisseck has worked organically from the outset and "actively" with biodynamic practices since 2000 at Dominio de Pingus for his top wine, Pingus. The vineyards serving Flor de Pingus are now also under biodynamic viticulture.
"I believe that biodynamics favors our

wines very much," he says.
Until now Peter hasn't drawn attention to this aspect of his wines, but the bodega seems to be taking a more open approach, having joined the Renaissance des Appellations association (What is biodynamics?, page 48).
In 2001 another highly-regarded producer, Dominio de Atauta, adopted biodynamic practices following the arrival of Bordeaux-trained winemaker Bertrand Sourdais. Like Ricardo Pérez Palacios in El Bierzo, Bertrand sees biodynamics as a way to respect the environment and fully express the terroir of a vineyard without rejecting modernity. As he says: "For me, biodynamics is the way to strengthen the personality and identity of a wine, but it can never replace the skill of the winemaker to make great wines."
Perhaps surprisingly, given the stature of DOCa Rioja (northern Spain) in the wine world, biodynamic wine producers are as yet few and far between in the region and the price of vineyards can make it hard for the younger generation to gain a foothold here and do something that involves a different approach.
Olivier Rivière is a French winemaker who started his career in Burgundy working for estates including Domaine Leroy, which gave him experience in working with organic and biodynamic vineyards. After coming to Spain to work with Telmo Rodríguez (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 61), in 2006 he started his own consultancy business based in Rioja.
Olivier is convinced that biodynamics is "a tool to make a better wine". He believes that a vineyard responds differently after four or five years under biodynamic management and that the vines offer grapes with stronger character.
He adds: "You get real terroir and (biodynamic) wines have their own character even if they are not perfect. I taste a lot of perfect wine and it can be boring. There are too many uniform wines, especially modern Tempranillos. In Rioja people used to know which village a wine came from."
Olivier is heading to DO Arlanza (Castile-Leon, northern Spain) to pursue a biodynamic wine project, having acquired a vineyard there. Rioja proved problematic for what he wanted to do as growers there have yet to go down the biodynamic route in a way seen in other Spanish regions; there is more enthusiasm for organic viticulture in the region.
Meanwhile he's doing a fine job with wines for producers including Bodegas Lacus, a young DOCa Rioja producer at Aldeanueva de Ebro in the Rioja Baja, which produces wine with great

consideration for the environment. There is one winemaker of note who practices biodynamics in Rioja: Telmo Rodríguez. His Rioja vineyards are located in the Lanciego area of Rioja and he takes a similar approach to viticulture in many other regions of Spain.

Telmo's interest for biodynamics was sparked by what he saw and learned in France in the early 1990s, which included meeting Nicolas Joly. Back in Spain at his family's bodega, Remelluri, he saw a need to work closer with the vineyards; he felt that something had been lost. He embraced organics and finally biodynamics when he started to develop his own vineyards in 2000. Today he has 16 ha (39 acres) under biodynamic management serving his top Rioja wine, Altos de Lanzaga (100% biodynamic), and his second wine, Lanzaga, which is produced from around 60% of biodynamically-grown grapes. The Rioja plots feature old traditional bush vines, the style of vineyard that Telmo finds most interesting for his entire portfolio.

"My approach isn't very intellectual and the challenge wasn't to produce biodynamic wines. I believe that we need to be working as naturally as possible... Great viticulture for great wines. Biodyamics isn't complicated; I try to see it in a simple way."

Like many other prominent Spanish winemakers, Telmo doesn't use biodynamics (or organics) as a marketing angle and he's lukewarm about official stamps.

Are attitudes changing in Rioja? He believes that many of Rioja's growers are not very outward-looking in their mentality–a possible reason why biodynamics is slow to develop in the region. However, he also sees more wines coming from smaller growers and vineyards. "People with a few acres will produce the best wines in the future... Rioja is changing."

Biodynamics may not be the choice for a large number of Spanish producers, especially those working on a large scale. However, in the wider context of respecting the environment and using vineyard processes that are as close to nature as possible, it seems to be having a positive influence. And if biodynamics contributes to a wine's quality and personality, then that's a big bonus.

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MENU of the DAY

A Very Spanish Institution

In an effort to offer something more than sun, sea and sand to Spain's ever-increasing number of tourists, the Franco government of 1965 ordered every restaurant in the land to offer a *Menú Turístico*: three courses, something to drink, and coffee to finish, for a price a good deal less than if the dishes had been ordered individually, à la carte. The Menú Turístico was immediately as popular with the Spanish as it was with the tourists and quickly became known as the *Menú del Día*. And now, 45 years on and with a reported 63% of working Spaniards sitting down to it every weekday, it remains in favor and has become a very Spanish institution.


MENÚ DEL DÍA
GAZPACHO
ENSALADA MIXTA
CHULETAS DE CORDERO
9'50 €
VINO - PAN
POSTRE


CASA MANOLO
MENÚ
9'50

TEXT
ROHAN DAFT/©ICEX

ILLUSTRATION
ALFREDO

PHOTOS
FERNANDO MADARIAGA/©ICEX

On every day of the working week at around about twelve noon, a just-chalked blackboard will appear outside pretty much every old-style neighborhood *taberna*, strip-lit *comedor* (literally, dining room), *cafeteria*, and all but the very grandest of restaurants in Spain.

Each of them will announce four or five *primeros platos* (first courses): perhaps *pisto* (a type of ratatouille), *lentejas* (lentils stewed with off-cuts of ham, knob ends of cured sausage, stray bone–whatever's to hand), *salmorejo* (the famous bread-thickened Cordobese tomato soup), *ensalada mixta* (the typical Spanish salad with lettuce, onion, olives and often tuna), and *arroz negro* (rice made black with squid ink).

Then there will be about the same number of *segundos* (main courses): *fabada* (Asturian white beans with what the Asturians call *compango*: a selection of pork bits and cuts such as ear, tail, smoked ham and bacon), a steak and a fresh fish of the day cooked simply, *a la plancha* (on the flat griddle), and perhaps *bacalao* (salt cod), which in northwesterly Catalonia might typically be baked *a la llauna* ("on the tin") with tomato, onion, *pimentón* (a type of paprika from Spain) and white wine.

The bottom of the blackboard gives the price (9.50 euros was the more than reasonable national average as of October 2008) which, in addition to the primero and segundo, includes *pan, bebida, postre y cafe* (bread, a drink, dessert and coffee), being the time-honored norm. Dessert is always a simple, routine affair with yogurt, orange juice, fruit of the day and that great favorite, *flan* (caramel custard), often sufficing.

This, as the top of the blackboard boldly states, is the *Menu del Dia* (Menu of the Day), an authentic Spanish tradition.

Support your local market

The Menú del Día came into being on March 17th 1965. Spain was experiencing an industrial upsurge that, for a period, gave it one of the highest economic growth rates in the world. Contributing hugely to this was the construction industry, much of which was centered on the Mediterranean coast and aimed at attracting tourists and their all-important cash. As an extra incentive to the sun, sea and sand, Franco's Ministry of Information and Tourism, at that time under the direction of the now veteran senator for Galicia, Manuel Fraga, came up with the idea of the *Menu Turístico*. This consisted of a first course, a main course, dessert, something to drink and bread. Every restaurant in Spain, however humble or grand, was obliged to offer it and each dish included in it had to come from the restaurant's usual *à la carte* menu. The price was not to exceed 80% of what the dishes would have cost had they been ordered individually.

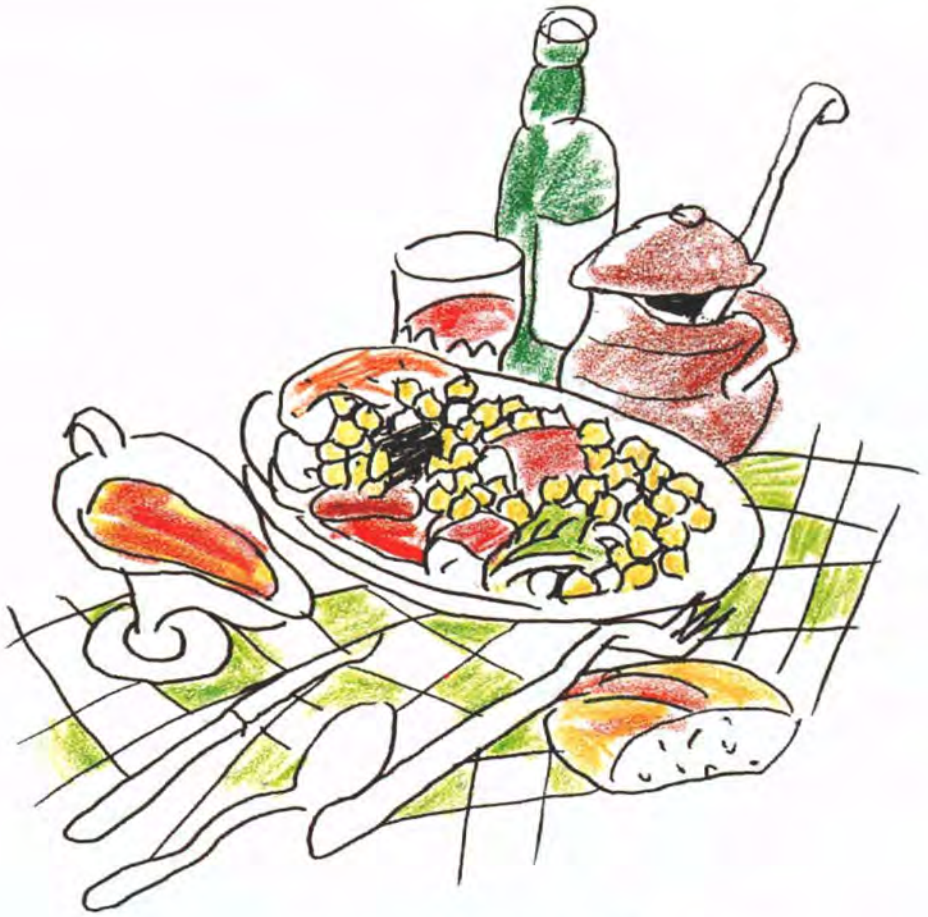
The original 1965 documents relating to the introduction of the Menú Turístico also implicitly suggest that restaurateurs make good use of Spain's daily food markets. At that time, and as they are now, many restaurants were family-owned and run, and what appeared on the Menú was what was fresh and available for a good price at the local market that morning. The Menú Turístico soon gained a reputation as the best option for good, local, seasonal produce and traditional dishes. And from the areas of Spain where tourists were yet to venture to the most inland and northwesterly parts of the country, the concept became hugely popular with the Spanish and commonly known as the Menú del Día.


RAFELS
POMA
3,80

Tourism arrives in Spain

By 1960, drought had forced so many of the occupants of the pretty village of Mojácar in the province of Almeria on the Mediterranean coast to emigrate that the population had fallen from 8,000 at the turn of the century to 1,000. To go some way towards paying for their passage, the villagers had taken the fixtures and fittings of their houses with them–doors, window frames and wooden beams included–and the village was, quite literally, falling apart. Its charismatic mayor, Jacinto Alarcón, knew all too well about the national drive to attract tourists and outside investment in general and had the bright idea of giving away ruined houses and plots of land on the condition that they were redeveloped. He worked hard at attracting a remarkably eclectic group of people to the village–the renowned Colombian concert pianist Enrique Arias and Michael (later Lord) Adeane, the private secretary to Queen Elizabeth of England, amongst them–in the knowledge that they would bring friends and family and more investment with them.

And so it happened. Phillip Adeane, Michael's cousin, first visited Mojácar in 1961 to invest in land on behalf of the Costa Rica Railway Company, and has maintained a house in Almería ever since. "There weren't many places to eat then," he recalls. "There were wonderful fish and vegetables, but there was very little meat to buy except pork, and a lot of English people used to take bacon and sausages with them. The other thing I remember from then is that Franco made all the gas stations stay open 24 hours a day. The best restaurant was Rincón de Pepe, next to the cathedral in Almería. There were delicious beans and legs of lamb *al horno* (roast). The waiters were all republicans and they adored working in this excellent, old-fashioned restaurant. In Mojácar, one ate at Hotel Indalo." The *indalo* is a stick figure of a man holding an arc or, some say, a rainbow in his outstretched arms, which the women of Mojácar traditionally paint on their doors to keep away evil spirits. "The whole thing was rather strange. It was a bit like being in London at times: you'd see people you recognized."



The Menú del Día arrives in Mojácar

He also clearly remembers the advent of the Menú del Día at Hotel Indalo. "It was very good and cheap, 150 pesetas (less than 1 euro), I think. There was a salad, a couple of fish choices, meat, maybe *filete de cerdo* (pork fillet), and then peaches in syrup and fresh fruit: oranges, melon and bananas. Everyone had to have a Menú del Día in those days. In winter there was always a *plato de cuchara* (a hearty dish to be eaten with a spoon): lentils, chickpeas or beans with meat. In better restaurants, there was *huevos a la cubana* (Cuban-style fried eggs with rice, tomato sauce and a fried banana) and *huevos a la flamenca* (eggs, usually baked, with diced, cured ham or *chorizo*–a type of cured red sausage–and tomato sauce). And there's always *migas* (bread soaked and fried with pepper, chorizo and pork belly) on the Menú in Almería when it's raining."

And Mr. Adeane remains a big fan of the Menú to this day. "We're going today to Bar Santa Maria in Almería where we will have the Menú del Día: salad, ham and eggs, bread, melon and ice cream. It's about 9 euros. The Menú del Día has resisted inflation amazingly; it has gone up in price less than anything. I think it's largely because the restaurants buy local, seasonal produce."

Hotel Indalo is still in Mojácar, but in keeping with the requirements of the majority of package tourists, now it only offers a *buffet libre* (all you can eat); the law that obliged restaurants to offer a Menú del Día disappeared with Franco in 1975. But, as throughout Spain, you still don't have to go far to find one in Mojácar.

Spain's favorite traditional dishes

Homely, unfussy Rincón de Diego is owned by Ramon Gea. "Everyone likes the Menú del Día," he says. "It's a way to eat Spain's favorite traditional dishes. My customers, and I have 40 to 50 every day, are mainly Spanish, but I also get a lot of English people and a few French. The Menú is a complete, economical meal. What's really important is the relationship between quality and price. I buy my ingredients every morning from the market in nearby Garrucha. I go every day to see what's available."

Mr. Gea and his patrons are very lucky to have Garrucha as their local market town because it is a real, working fishing town and famous nationwide for its fish and shellfish, in particular its notably sweet prawns. The boats go out at dawn and return later the same day at 5 pm. Shortly after there's an auction on the quay. Eat fish for dinner in Garrucha and the chances are that it was caught and arrived just hours before.

The Menú del Día at Rincón de Diego the day this article was written (a Wednesday in late May) is classic: *gazpacho* (chilled vegetable soup), salmorejo, *macarrones* (macaroni with meat and tomato sauce), *sopa de marisco* (shellfish soup) and *sopa castellana* (garlic soup with chorizo or cured ham) to start. Then, a la plancha, there are the meat choices: *lomo* (pork fillet), *pollo* (chicken), bacon, *chuletas de cordero* (lamb cutlets), *bistec de ternera* (steak), *salchichas* (sausages) and *hamburguesa* (hamburger).

And then, fresh from Garrucha, and cooked either a la plancha or baked in the oven, there's the fish: *dorada* (sea bream), *bacaladillas* (blue whiting, a small fish from the cod family), *sepia* (cuttlefish), *calamares* (squid) and *boquerones* (fresh anchovies).

Postre (dessert) amounts to a roll call of Spain's finest. There's *mousse de chocolate* (chocolate mousse), *natillas* (custard), *helado* (ice cream), flan, and *pan de Calatrava* (flan with bread, a dish that was first produced by monks at the monastery at the village of Calatrava in the neighboring region of Murcia, in southeast Spain).

All of this is accompanied by a salad and wine, beer or a soft drink, and finished with coffee. The price is an incredible 9 euros.

Regional specialities

Visit any region of Spain and you will find a local speciality on the Menú del

Día. In Madrid it's *cocido*, and it appears on Tuesdays. Cocido is a slow-cooked, one-pot stew that originates from the Sephardic Jewish *adafina* (pot), the meal that was pre-prepared for the Sabbath; the name is the past perfect tense of the Spanish verb *cocer*, to cook, and simply means "cooked". When the Christian kings took control of Spain from the Muslim Moors in the 15th century, eating cocido, with the all-important addition of pork, became a way of identifying yourself as a Christian. Variants of the dish–the *pucheros* of the Valencian coast and Andalusia, the *escudellas* of Catalonia–make cocido Spain's national dish, as opposed to the very common but staunchly Valencian *paella*. Madrid's *cocido madrileno* is widely considered to be the classic of the order.

A good amount of chickpeas (I have a friend who uses one handful per person and one for the pot), which will be from Valseca (Segovia, in central Spain) if you want the best, is the principal ingredient. Then there are the meats and the vegetables, which must be cooked whole. Beef shank, beef and ham bones, *tocino* (a delicious, enriching fatty bacon), chicken, chorizo, and *morcilla* (blood sausage) will all normally appear, along with a carrot, a leek, a potato and a stalk of celery. There's no garlic and the only seasoning is salt. And there's also a way to enjoy cocido: as they do at the classic, old-style, polished oak and tiled floor Casa Manolo in Madrid's Salamanca district.

Cocido on Tuesdays

In the time-honored way, Casa Manolo's cocido appears on its 15 euro Menú del Día every Tuesday. No one knows exactly why it has always appeared on Tuesday's Menú, but a widespread assumption is that it was the perfect dish to shop for and prepare on fish-free Mondays (fish was not available on Mondays at the central market). As a primero, there will be *sopa de cocido* (cocido soup), which is the broth in which a few *fideos* (small, crooked pieces of spaghetti-like pasta) have been cooked. And then, as a segundo, there will be cocido, the meats and vegetables. The traditional accompaniment is a side dish of green cabbage, cooked, quite probably, with garlic, a touch of sherry vinegar and pimentón. "The Menú is a great tradition," says Casa Manolo's manager Antonio Borrado. "*Callos* (stew with veal tripe), calamares, and *rabo de toro* (oxtail stew) are very popular here as

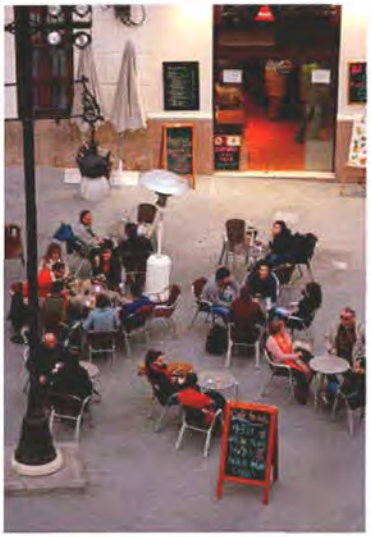
they are throughout Madrid. But if you want our cocido as part of the Menú del Día, you absolutely must make a reservation."

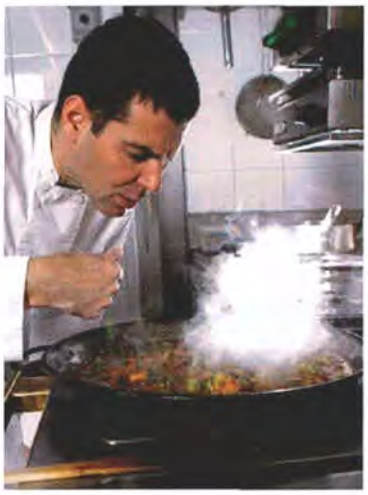
Other great regional dishes that I have had the pleasure to discover on Menús include the previously-mentioned bacalao a la llauna at the wonderful Bar Blanca in Barcelona's Mercat Sant Antoni, *fricandó* (Catalan-style braised shin of beef and mushrooms) and *espinacas a la Catalana* (spinach with raisins and pine nuts), also in Barcelona; *chocos con garbanzos* (chickpeas with cuttlefish) in the southerly capital of windsurfing, Tarifa, in Andalusia; *menestra Riojana* (spring vegetables with extra virgin olive oil) in La Rioja (northern Spain); *ensalada de tomate Murciana* (Murcian tomato salad: tomatoes in conserve, tuna, onions and black olives) in Murcia; *solomillo de cerdo adobado* (loin of pork with orange and honey) in the walled city of Lugo in Galicia (northwest Spain); *marmitako* (albacore tuna and potato stew) in Bilbao (Basque Country, northern Spain); and *torta de Santiago* (almond tart) in Santiago de Compostela, again in Galicia.

A sense of belonging

And then there are the people and their stories and the pride they take in producing these dishes. Not one restaurant owner, chef, waiter or waitress refused me help when I was traveling throughout Spain researching my book *Menú del Día: More than 100 Classic, Authentic Recipes from Across Spain*. In the hostal and restaurant La Palma in Vigo (northwest Spain) I was prepared the local *merluza al albariño* (hake with sweet onions, clams, and Albariño wine) by Marcelo Vidal and waited on by his father, José. Like many Galicians, José and his wife América emigrated to Argentina in the 1940s. He returned–and he remembers the day instinctively–on March 29th 1972 with two young sons, Marcelo and Roberto. Exile, José explained to me, made it clear to him where he really belonged.

At Taberna del Mono Loco (Tavern of the Crazy Monkey) in Zaragoza, the





capital of the inland, northwesterly region of Aragón, one local speciality that you might find on the Menú del Día is *ternasco asado* (roast lamb). The *lechazo* (two- or three-week old lamb) of Castile-Leon and the rest of central Spain is widely acclaimed, but Aragón also has a well-deserved reputation for its lamb. Its ternasco comes from a two-month old animal and is just a touch fuller-flavored than lechazo. Chef and owner Ernesto Galindo is from Aragón, but started his career in the Basque industrial town of Durango in the late '60s. He likes to experiment a little and incorporate what he calls the new cooking into his *Menú de Degustación* (sampler menu), but he also offers a Menú del Día. And, if you're lucky, ternasco asado. "It's a very popular dish," he says. "But lamb is expensive so we can't have it on the Menú del Día every day. I buy my lamb and the rest of my meat from friends in Huesca, and most of my fruit and vegetables come from Aragón. The Menú del Dia uses a lot of seasonal produce and it's where you find the traditional dishes." That means the menu includes the previously-mentioned cocido, lentejas, *merluza en salsa verde* (hake in a flour-thickened parsley and garlic sauce), *bacalao a la Vizcaina* (codfish fricassee), and rabo de toro. And soon, Taberna del Mono Loco will be offering an evening Menu del Dia. "It's a means of combating the crisis, the economic slump," says Mr. Galindo. "People associate the Menú with value."

Another restaurant where the Menú del Día recently returned to its roots and came to the aid of the workers is Morrysom in Barcelona. Here, in October 2008, owner Pedro Sausor offered an incredible 1 euro Menú. On its first day on offer, 500 sat down to a choice that included arroz negro, *estofado de ternera* (veal stew), *merluza a la plancha* (hake cooked on the flat griddle) and *patatas con chorizo* (potatoes with chorizo sausage). Should you be tempted, the price has now returned to the normal 8.50 euros.

¡Qué te aproveche! (Enjoy!)

Price aside, one of the very best Menú del Días I remember eating was at the simplest of restaurants just across the road from the main train station next

to the Plaza de Toros (bullfighting ring) in Valencia. The place was quite literally nameless and full of very happily co-existing office workers and paint and plaster-splattered construction workers. "*¡Que te aproveche!*" (Enjoy!) a plasterer said to me as I sat at the bar and was handed the menu. This traditional Spanish greeting–something you will hear more than once when sitting down to a Menú del Dia–is now sadly considered over-familiar and crass amongst some of Spain's middle class.

As everyone else seemed to be doing, I ordered the paella to start. It arrived quickly: a generous plateful of yellow rice dotted with a few small pieces of rabbit and with a large wedge of lemon on the side. I had previously been told that lemon was only used to disguise a poor paella, something I immediately disregarded as I began to eat. The paella was delicious, with the rice firm to bite, a clean, uncluttered smack of saffron and a strong hint of garlic.

Then came a couple of small, fried slip soles and a handful of fried potatoes. Finally I was served a big slice of richly-orange and perfectly-ripe local melon. With a beer and coffee included, I think it cost 7.50 euros.

Thursdays mean Paella

The day to find paella on the Menú del Día anywhere in Spain is Thursday. The general consensus is that this is so because Thursday was the day that rice was handed out during the days of food rationing. Others claim that because maids traditionally had Thursday off, they would prepare a *sofrito* (slow cooked onion, tomato and garlic, and the basis for many paellas) on Wednesday evenings so their masters could prepare a quick and easy paella the following day by just adding some meat or fish, rice and stock. And then there's the legend that Thursday is paella day because Franco hunted every Thursday morning and liked to eat paella, his favorite dish, when he finished. As he hunted throughout the country, it was best that every restaurant had a paella ready and prepared on Thursdays lest he appear and demand it.

The Spanish people take great, just pride in their delicacies, such as *jamon iberico de bellota* (ham from Ibérico acorn-fed pigs), *azafran de La Mancha* (saffron from La Mancha), *gambas* (prawns) and *cochinillo* (suckling pig). But they are equally proud of their chickpeas, lentils, black puddings, sausages, every-day *estofados* (stews) and arrozes, and meat and fish cooked simply on the griddle. As it was during some hard times past and the dark days of rationing, food is valued as much as it is enjoyed in Spain. People still like to eat locally and seasonally and get the best out of whatever is available. And the best way of properly appreciating that, as 63% of working Spaniards do every weekday, is to sit down to a Menú del Día.

***Rohan Daft** is the author of* Menú del Dia: More than 100 Classic, Authentic Recipes from Across Spain. *He is currently writing a book about rationing.*


ALBARILLO
RIOJA
ORIGEN

Tarragona. Sarcophagus, Pretorium

MEDITER

The wealth of Spanish World Heritage Sites, on which *Spain Gourmetour* has been reporting in its past two editions, would simply be unfathomable without one key factor: the Mediterranean. This sea "in the middle of lands" which unites three continents has, since ancient times, been a vital link not only in regard to exploration, trade and expansion, but also to

Ibiza. Ses Salines beach

RANEAN Treasures

a quintessential exchange of cultures and ideas. This is why in this last of three articles about Spain's UNESCO World Heritage Sites we travel to the Mediterranean shores and allow two emblematic places to speak to us of how it all came to pass. As primal witnesses, Ibiza and Tarragona have a lot to tell.

TEXT
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PHOTOS
FERNANDO MADARIAGA/©ICEX

The Phoenicians, one of the earliest people to cast their sea-trading net over all of the Mediterranean, first turned the island Ybshm (now Ibiza) into a commercial post in the 7th century BC, whereas from the 3rd century BC onward, mainland Tárraco (today's Tarragona) became a strategic Roman stronghold, primarily because of its suitable location in a direct line from northern Italy to transport in garrisons by sea while avoiding the unruly Gulf of Lion. To them, and to many others after them, the *Mare Nostrum* has been and continues to be an invaluable medium for transport, trade, fishery, marine life, culture and leisure activities.

The favorite island

Ibiza (Eivissa, in the local Catalan language) and tiny adjacent Formentera, together with the larger islands of Majorca and Menorca, constitute the Balearic Islands, located to the east of the Iberian Peninsula. Ibiza is in fact the southwesternmost island, less than 80 km (50 mi) removed from the mainland. This probably explains the early settlement of Phoenicians, who laid the first stone of the town of Ibiza (8th century BC), strategically located on a promontory close to the splendid natural harbor. The necropolis of Puig d'es Molins, with 3,500 underground burial chambers, attests to the relevance of their settlement. Throughout its history, the island has remained a much sought-after point of reference on navigation and trading routes. Thanks to trade and agriculture it thrived under the Carthaginians, was subsequently conquered by Romans, suffered the invasion of Vandals and Byzantines, was colonized by the Arabs, and was finally reconquered in 1235 by Jaime I (1208-1276). Under Felipe II (1527-1598) in the 16th century the confines of the inner city were enlarged and fully refortified. Remains of all these historic periods are still to varying degrees extant in and around the city. It seems only logical that, in 1999, Ibiza was selected for inclusion on the list of World Heritage Sites, for both its monumental and natural heritage. So what could be better than taking a selective tour and seeing for ourselves how past and present have melted together superbly?

The best place to start is at the foot of the Portal de Ses Taules, the spectacular main entrance to the historic walled-in compound, or Dalt Vila (upper town). From here, with a map in hand to ensure you don't miss anything, just stroll along the magnificent Renaissance wall and its imposing pentagonal bastions (all named after saints) which invariably offer breathtaking views, and then up and down its sinewy streets with little shops and restaurants. Mandatory places to see include: the cannon-lined Santa Lucia bastion and its powder magazine; the Dominican Convent which now houses Ibiza's municipal government; the cathedral and nearby Curia; the Madina Yabisha Museum, which focuses on the island's Arab period and still holds part of the early walls; the Archaeological Museum; the Es Soto Fosc tunnel with its provision casemates; the Bastion of St. Bernard, from where you can view the fashionable yacht harbor of Botafoch; and the impressive Castle and Almudaina (originally Moslem military quarters) at the town's summit. They are being fully refurbished to eventually house the future Parador (Spanish heritage hotel).

In fact, a new five-star hotel, El Mirador, just across from the municipal government building, has been ahead in the recovery and gentrification of Dalt Vila which, according to Lourdes Roig, Ibiza's dynamic chief of protocol, is part of a conscientious effort by the local authorities to enhance the value of its splendid heritage with a view to attracting a different type of culturally-motivated visitor and thereby combating the feared seasonality. Part of this effort is a year-round cultural program and also strict standards and regulations regarding noise control, opening hours and urban furniture, especially downtown in the bustling La Marina and Sa Penya districts around the harbor which abound with little

shops, bars and restaurants. No one can deny that Ibiza is first and foremost known for its around-the-clock nightlife, boats and beaches. In fact, every summer top DJs from all over the world visit the island, which has become a global testing ground for electronic music. If it works here, it'll work worldwide!

Ad libitum, the spirit of freedom

Indeed Ibiza's worldwide fame, as said, has much to do with its unfettered entertainment. It all started in the 1960s when a number of rather eclectic groups of jetsetters, artists and hippies from Europe and the US flocked to the island. "They put Ibiza on the map," says Karen Klapp, a longtime Ibiza resident and tour guide. What they all had in common was the need to at least temporarily live *ad libitum*, as they pleased. "Live and let live" is the reigning philosophy and indeed, as Joan Serra Mayans, Ibiza's councilor for business development and labor, points out, "the island welcomes everyone, but is a haven of discretion." Nobody sees you unless you want to be seen. This is the spirit which, in 1971, inspired the late Yugoslavian princess and indefatigable Ibiza promoter, Smilja Mihailovitch (1919-1994), to launch her Adlib fashion line, which seems to stem naturally from Ibiza's sun-drenched light, whitewashed architecture and traditional costumes, but also from the desire to break away from norms, to feel free of constraints. And that, says Luis Ferrer, is precisely how one feels in her softly-draped slightly-wrinkled all natural white cotton clothes. Ferrer

Ibiza. Dalt Vila

is not only one of the pioneers in designing and manufacturing the Adlib brand, he is also one of the promoters of the yearly Ibiza and Formentera Fashion Week.

While these quarters team with a wide variety of small restaurants serving local and international cuisine, there is one you shouldn't miss. The lively Bar San Juan (on Guillem de Montgri Street) is a *casa de comidas*, or eatery. It offers simple but superb genuine Ibiza fare, such as fried octopus with potatoes and peppers, braised rabbit, and *arroz de matanza*, a brothy rice with pork and chicken. But leave some space for dessert and try their *greixonera* (a delicious oven-baked pudding made of bread, eggs, milk, cinnamon and grated lemon peel). "For more than 60 years we have stayed true to my grandmother's recipes," emphasizes young Carlos Marin, who is the third generation to successfully run this charming place. And being a casa de comidas, any spare seat will be occupied if needed, so you may make some interesting acquaintances.

Around and about the Pitiusas

Because of its insularity and former relative squalor, Ibiza features a greatly subsistence-oriented traditional gastronomy. The island had to make the best out of what was available at any time of the year. On the other hand, this implied the need for preservation, and Ibiza features a number of succulent typical sausages. Although still existent, home manufacturing is waning, but there is one company which still makes the original products following the traditional *matanza* (pig slaughter) concepts. On the way to Santa Gertrudis, you will find the restaurant Can Caus which, under the brand name Companatge, produces *butifarrón negro* (black sausage) and *butifarrón blanco* (white sausage with a hint of cinnamon), *vientre relleno* (stuffed pig stomach, traditionally reserved for special occasions) and the popular *sobrasada* (the savory dark orange spiced sausage which is air-cured and made with *pimentón*, a type of paprika from Spain). With its pâté-like texture, it is often used as a spread, invariably conjuring up the wow factor when briefly broiled. It was in the 1980s when Juan Luis Ferrer, Can Caus's owner, committed himself to the recovery of these traditional delicacies, mostly using local products which, of course, are seasonally dictated. He also produces the surprisingly fresh and very flavorful typical goats' and sheeps' milk cheese (often with a spicy pimentón covered rind). While Can Caus caters to all of the island and beyond, the best place to savor their products is right at the contiguous Ibiza-style restaurant, where you should not miss the *sofrito payés*, a succulent peasant dish with chicken, lamb, butifarrón negro, sobrasada and potatoes.

Out here it will become obvious that the island is much more than its glamorous capital. In fact, as soon as you drive out into the countryside you are acutely reminded of why the Greek (who briefly used the island as a stopover) nicknamed Ibiza and Formentera the *Pitiusas*, or pine-covered islands. From here it is about a half hour drive through the typical (now greatly protected) rural landscape of knotty old fig trees, carob trees and of course vineyards, to the village of San Mateo where we find Sa Cova. On his small 12-ha (30 acres) estate, Juan Bonet, recently joined by his daughter and son-in-law, produces PGI Vino de la Tierra de Ibiza; in addition to the traditional Malvasia, Muscatel and Monastrell, he now also grows Syrah, Tempranillo and Merlot. "Wine always finds its own equilibrium," says Bonet. In these privileged surroundings, they also organize visits and tastings, including for groups from cruise ships regularly berthing in Ibiza.

Nature's heritage

And then there are of course the stunning UNESCO-protected *salinas* (saltworks, *Spain Gourmetour* No. 76) and *Posidonia* meadows (Biosphere Reserve). The latter are large expanses of marine flowering plants (not algae!) constituting an extraordinary underwater eco-system which stabilizes the sea floor, acting as a haven for numerous fish species which often reproduce here. It greatly contributes to biodiversity, is a relevant source of oxygen, and finally, washed ashore and dried out (especially its fruit, the "olive of the sea"), it helps prevent beach erosion.

According to José María Fernández, the local technical director of Salinera Española, which operates the salinas, in Ibiza the exploitation of salt was first documented in the 6th century BC by the Carthaginians, but the Phoenicians may have exploited them earlier. In fact, the remains of the island's first Phoenician establishment is right nearby in Sa Caleta, close to a picturesque small bay, lined with rather unusual old wooden fishermen's shacks. Subsequent dwellers kept exploitation going with certain ups and downs, and over time technical improvements were introduced which have allowed expansion and export. Today the company is producing some 40,000 tons (89,600,000 lb) of excellent quality salt. The splendid views of Ibiza's saltworks, flanked by densely pine-covered hills, will remain in your mind's eye for a long time. As

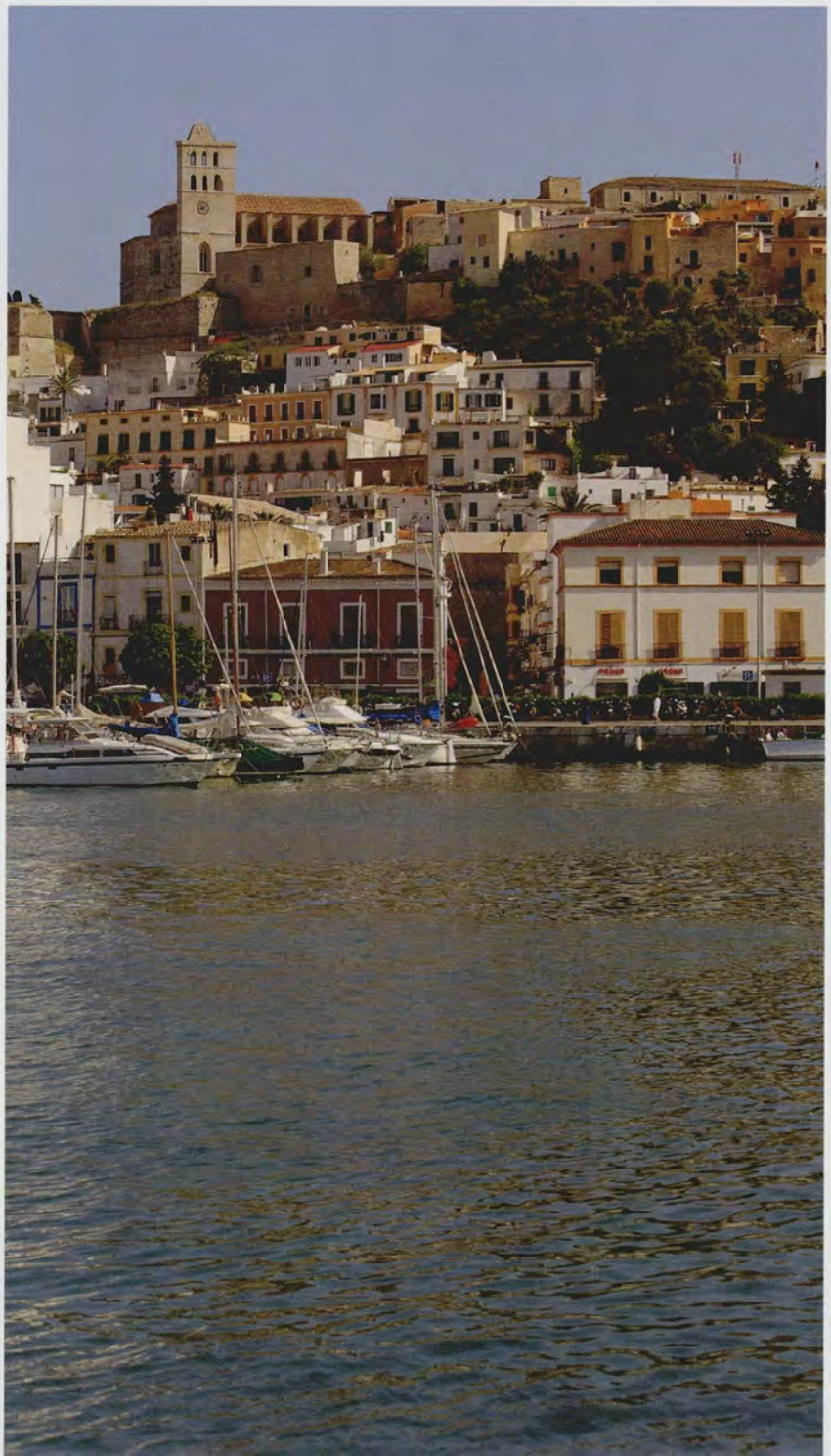
airport tarmacs run parallel, they welcome you upon arrival and bid your farewell upon leaving.

Nature here also produces the raw materials for some of the island's truly emblematic drinks. Just outside town in Puig d'en Valls, the distillery Marí Mayans has been producing famous Hierbas Ibicencas, Frigola and Palo since 1880, as well as other products. Thanks to the popularity of these drinks among tourists, the company exports widely and has distributors in several European countries and the US.

Now before leaving the island, treat yourself to lunch or dinner at Ca'n Alfredo, a local institution. This intimate restaurant on downtown Vara

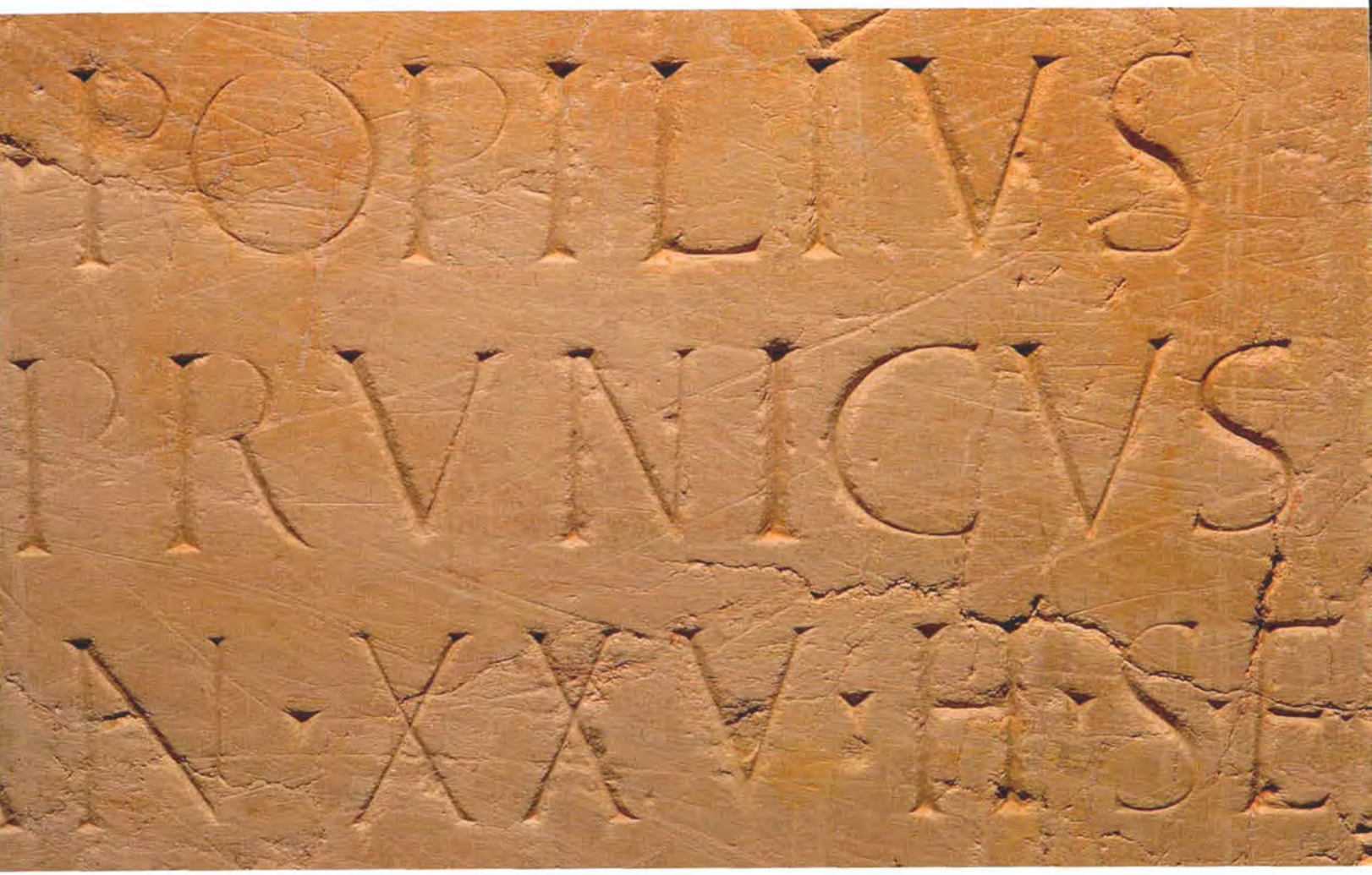
VERSATILE *ROMESCO*

In his book *El Romesco. Història, tècniques i receptes* (Romesco. History, Techniques and Recipes), David Solé mentions no less than 12 ways to make *romesco* and as many as 32 recipes based on the sauce. This should say enough about its relevance and versatility. According to Solé, romesco was first popularized by fishermen as a handy and succulent sauce in which to braise their fish while away from home, as none of its ingredients are readily perishable: garlic, onions and tomatoes (all roasted), dry red peppers or round *ñoras* (sweet peppers) and at times *bitxo* (a hot pepper) or *pimentón* (a type of paprika from Spain), toasted almonds and hazelnuts (traditionally a seamen's fare), fried stale bread, olive oil, vinegar, sugar, salt, and often wine, rancid wine or even brandy. It depends on each chef how many of these ingredients, in what proportion and for what purpose find their way into the *picada*, or ground mixture. The result is a tasty dark orange sauce being savored as it is, for example for dipping *calçots* (La Calçotada, page 77), or slightly stir-fried adding a bit of stock to gently braise the main ingredient, be it fish or meat, until it's done. Solé's book even refers to the many web pages on romesco on the internet. You may just become a scholar yourself. Your friends will love it!



del Rey Street has remained in the Riera family since 1941 and is now run by Joan and his wife Catalina, who took over for his mother in the kitchen. Personable Joan knows what his patrons expect: exquisite no-frills regional cuisine based on top-quality local products. "It's the traditional cuisine from Ibiza that we have prepared always, it is the cuisine we cherish and defend," says Joan. His menu includes *calamares a la Ibicenca* (tender pieces of squid in a sauce of green peppers, tomato, onion and bay leaf), *bullit de peix* (various fish cooked together with seasonal vegetables, such as green beans or artichokes, and served in a separate skillet; it comes with rice prepared with the stock and accompanied by a delicate saffron *alioli*, a sauce made with extra virgin olive oil and garlic) and *borrida de ratjada* (ray braised in a flavorful sauce of crushed almonds, fried breadcrumbs and hardboiled egg). He also serves an ample choice of succulent rice dishes, and of course also typical desserts such as *flaó* (a cheesecake with fresh goats' cheese from Can Caus, spearmint and eggs), greixonera, and the almond-based *crema de nadal*, a Christmas specialty. What a treat!

As small as it is, what makes the island of Ibiza unique and your trip memorable is not only its monumental and natural riches, but also its capacity to successfully blend in the old and the



Tarragona National Archaeological Museum (MNAT)

new, culture and entertainment, locals and visitors, glamour and nature, freedom and respect.

To Tárraco along the Via Augusta

Back on the mainland, some 100 km (62 mi) south of Barcelona, we find Tarragona, once the capital of Hispania and almost equal in importance to Rome; today it is a lively provincial capital. Even before reaching the city, we find the first five Roman vestiges (included in Tarragona's 2000 declaration as a World Heritage Site) along what once was the Via Augusta, in its heyday the longest Roman road in Hispania spanning over some 1,500 km (932 mi) from the Pyrenees to Cádiz. Inhabited by *Iberos* (Spain's autochthonous population), Tarragona didn't make history until the arrival of the Romans when, thanks to its proximity to the river Ebro, it became a stronghold against the Carthaginians settled south of the river, as Luis Balart, the knowledgeable director of Tarragona's Museum of History, explains. To get a clear idea of its magnitude during the height of the Roman Empire, he recommends first visting the splendid historic model of Imperial Tárraco on the pretty Plaza Pallol (Pallol Square). Here you can also begin the Archaeological Walk, a perfectly laid-out walkway along the still-extant 1.1 km (0.7 mi) long Roman wall.

Although today things have dramatically changed and its heritage is greatly protected and promoted, Tarragona is paradigmatic of how in the past pragmatism and the need for progress often prevailed over considerations of conservation. New buildings were raised over existing ones, only at times preserving part of the original, like the majestic Pretorium, which was turned into a Medieval palace and upheld ever since. As a result, not only are Roman and Medieval remains densely interwoven into the present urban structure, but so are a wealth of early 20th century Modernist architecture structures (Gaudí 1852-1926, the most influential Modernist architect was born in neighboring Reus), which makes visiting the city all the more interesting. At the outset it is important to know that Tarragona's declaration as a World Heritage Site only concerns its Roman remains. However, the city is far more than that, and the local tourist board has issued three separate brochures with routes along its Roman, Medieval and Modernist heritage sites.

Tàrraco viva

The best way to go about seeing the city is to first stroll the old quarter, or Part Alta (upper part), where you shouldn't miss Plaza de la Font, a lively square lined with terraces and presided over by Tarragona's town hall; Casa Castellarnau, a beautifully-renovated mansion housing Tarragona's Museum of History; Calle Mayor (Mayor Street), which is full of small shops; and the famous stairs leading up to the cathedral, with its peculiar façade, gorgeous cloister and Diocesan Museum.

By now it is time to also become acquainted with Tarragona's cuisine. Beide the cathedral you will find AQ. Ana Ruiz and Quintin Quinsac have been a team for 20 years and for four they have been operating this privileged place, she in the kitchen, he in the front room. In an effort to veer away from high cuisine, they seek to "please rather than surprise," says Quintin. They succeed in both, as ingredients are simple and textures wonderfully harmonic, while the different flavors remain perfectly discernable. As to their menu, "We have no preconceived ideas, but we do of course address regional dishes and use regional ingredients," explains Quintin. Try Ana's delicate false ravioli: two layers of wafer-thin sliced *gambas de Tarragona* (local shrimp) stuffed with cooked garlic and drizzled with shrimp-head infused olive oil, or her succulent *coulant* of octopus, potato and butifarra. And in the meantime, let Quintin surprise you with his most

Tarragona. Gothic arches in the Medieval quarter

Tarragona. Local Forum

unusual but fascinating wine pairing proposals. If the Romans had known! They of course didn't, but chefs in Tarragona have built up quite some knowledge about Roman cuisine. For the last 12 years, close to 20 restaurants promote *Tàrraco a Taula* (Tàrraco at the Table), which consists of a tapas route, where a five ticket voucher entitles you to five Roman tapas and a drink. From then on, each restaurant offers its own version of a full Roman menu. "We try to remain as loyal as possible to the original recipes," says Quintin, today's president.

The initiative is now an intrinsic part of *Tàrraco Viva*, a yearly very well-attended festival during the last two weeks of May which, according to its passionate director, Magí Seritjol, is best described as an authentic, thoroughly research-based diffusion of Roman culture. Groups of experts (often archaeologists and historians) from all over Europe participate following the submission and subsequent approval of their projects. Over 200 of the most varied performances with off-site explanations take place in some 20 historic venues, ranging from reenactments of all facets of Roman life to workshops and conferences. In view of its success, Seritjol has ambitious European-wide projects

Tarragona. Mediterranean balcony

Tarragona. Amphitheater

and this just comes to show the depth of Tarragona's present level of identification with and commitment to its Roman past.

We now continue our walk along the Plaza del Forum (Forum Plaza), where Roman remains tower high over crowded terraces; the Archaeological Museum, which displays some unique works of art, such as the two magnificent Medusa and Fish mosaics; the Pretorium; and the telling remains of both the Circus and the Amphitheater.

A balcony on the Mediterranean

Inadvertently, our route has led us out of the old city and into the new area, and here the place to start is at its vantage point on the impressive Balcón del Mediterráneo, a wide oblong square with spectacular views over the sea down below. Its center opens up to Tarragona's main avenue, Rambla Nova, the spinal cord of the city, where you'll find some very fine examples of Modernist architecture, as well as the monument to the Castellers (originating in Valls, a town 20 km / 12 mi from Tarragona); the building of these hair-raising human towers (*castells*) has become an engrained regional tradition and a magnet for visitors. Some streets down to the left are the remains of the local Forum and two Modernist buildings: the stunning Mercado Central (Central Market) now being refurbished, and the local bullring.

Close by is Barquet, a charming restaurant with the cheerful look of an up-to-date fishermen's tavern, decorated by Fidel Solé who runs the front room, while his brother David (chef and food writer) delights their guests with fine local cuisine.

"Tarragona's cuisine is 99% fish-based," explains David, and his menu changes according to the daily catch. It prominently features seven or eight

THE *CALÇOTADA*

The *calçotada* is Tarragona's second biggest tourist activity (after going to the beach) explains Rafael Castells, the committed secretary of the chamber of commerce of Valls, who is directly involved with the quality designation PGI Calçot de Valls. Some 450,000 meals are served during the season (November to April), and the two most emblematic restaurants, Casa Felix and Masia Bou, serve some 1,500 guests each, often in two seatings. At the center of it all is the calçot, an oblong young onion which grows on normal white onions, left to dry for some weeks and returned to the soil where they will sprout. Once the sprouts have a certain height, they are covered *(calçat)* with soil and left to grow to become a tender calçot. The calçotada itself is a ritual that goes beyond the onion itself. Tables are adorned with *porrones* (carafes with spouts to drink from) with local red and white wine, slices of country bread, plates of dry-cured *butifarra* (Catalan sausage) and a bib for each person. Outside huge racks with layers of calçots are slowly charred over vine wood fires, sending in mouthwatering wafts. They are served on terracotta tiles, which are not only the perfect size but also preserve the heat. Now, with your left hand you firmly grab the bottom of the onion and pull from the stringy inner leaves to produce the tender calçot, which you proceed to dip into the pungent *romesco* sauce and put directly into your mouth. The rest of the meal consists of fresh grilled sausage with artichokes, white beans, or *escalivada* (a grilled vegetables medley with alioli), followed by grilled lamb chops, and always cava, an orange to freshen your palate, *crema catalana* (crème brulée), coffee and liqueurs. *¡Que aproveche!* Enjoy your meal!

different rice dishes (always using PGI Delta del Ebro *Bahia* rice), together with *romesco* (Versatile romesco, page 72), as well as an array of mouthwatering appetizers and sinful desserts.

Tarragona's port area features a number of large restaurants with pretty terraces, but if you are not adamant about harbor views and great comfort, you have the "second row", where the younger generation is offering excellent fresh daily fish at a good price. On your way back you can visit the large Paleo-Christian Necropolis and then relax on one of Tarragona's many terraces, have a red vermouth (very popular here as nearby Reus has a longstanding reputation of producing an exquisite natural vermouth) and just leisurely mingle among the locals.

Roaming the hinterland

Tárraco's last World Heritage Site lies in Constantí, just north of the city. The Villa Romana de Centcelles is a recently-restored rural villa featuring a magnificent partly-recovered mosaic dome. This is a great opportunity to roam Tarragona's fabulous hinterland. In the famous town of Valls you are in for a truly unique and surely unforgettable gastronomic experience, the *calçotada* (The Calçotada, page 77). From there it is a short drive to Medieval walled-in Montblanc and its beautifully-restored Alenyà Palace, which houses the Regulatory Council of DO Conca de Barberà. Worth mentioning here is the Trepat, an autochthonous minority variety producing excellent rosés, but lately also some good reds, as Carles Andreu, president of the council, explains. In short, the area will be a paradise for wine tourists with six catalogued Modernist cooperative buildings to visit. One of them is in Esplugas de Francolí, also famous for its traditional *carquinyolis*, all-natural biscotti-like cookies filled with Marcona almonds. A traditional manufacturer here is Especialitats Cobos and, being one of Spain's emblematic products, you can find their carquinyolis in all Spanish airports.

The area is also part of PDO Siurana, home to the internationally-awarded sweet, fruity, and somewhat nutty

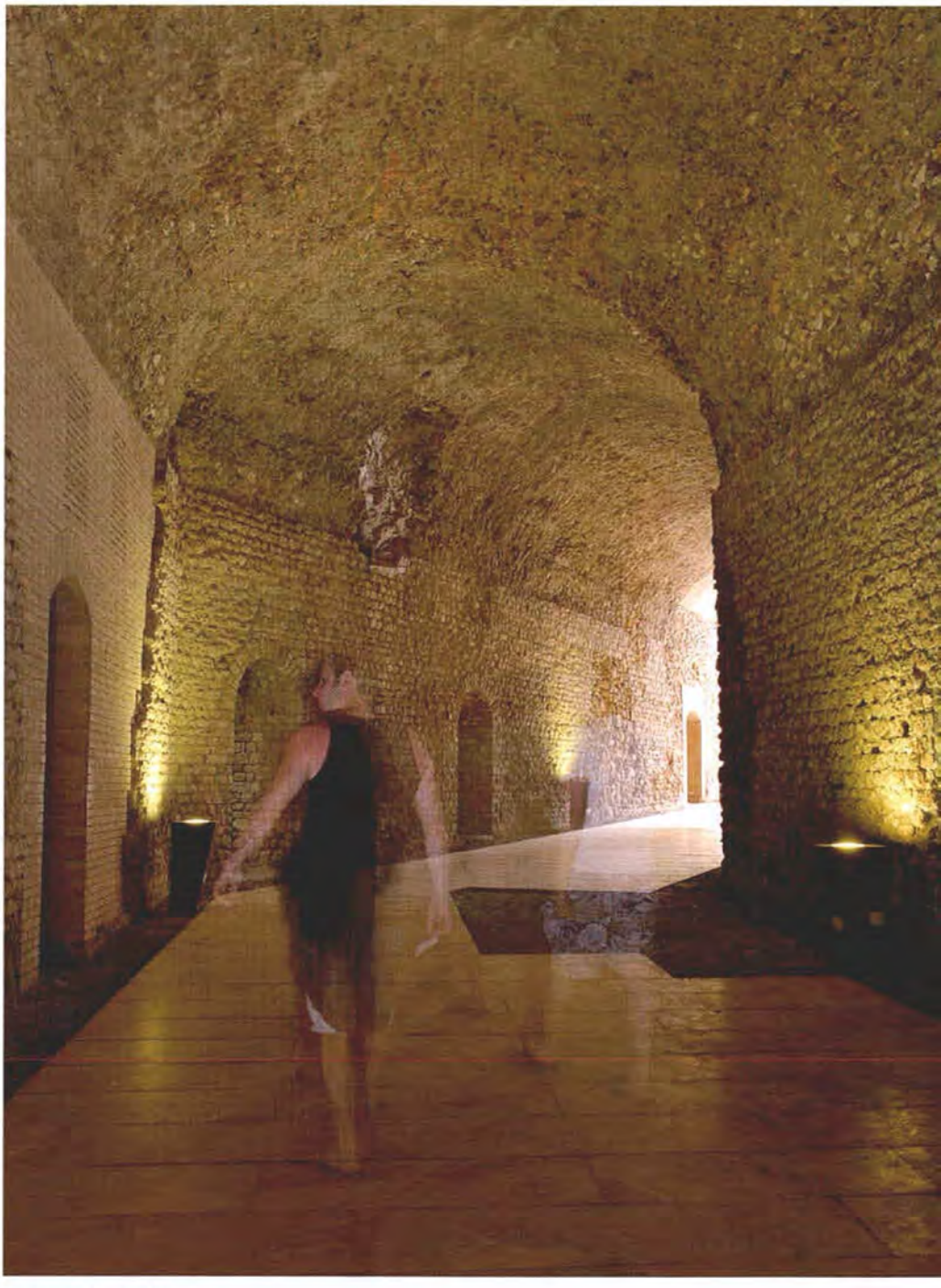
Tarragona historic quarter

San Cristóbal *de la Laguna*

Arbequina olive oil. According to jovial Josep Baiges, president of the regulatory council, about 15% of it is exported, mostly to Europe and the US where Alice Waters is its special ambassador (see *Chez Panisse Menu Cookbook*). And it is certainly useful to know that intermingled with all this is the Cistercian route linking the magnificent 12th-century monasteries of Santes Creus, Vallbona, and majestic Poblet, a separate World Heritage Site since 1991.

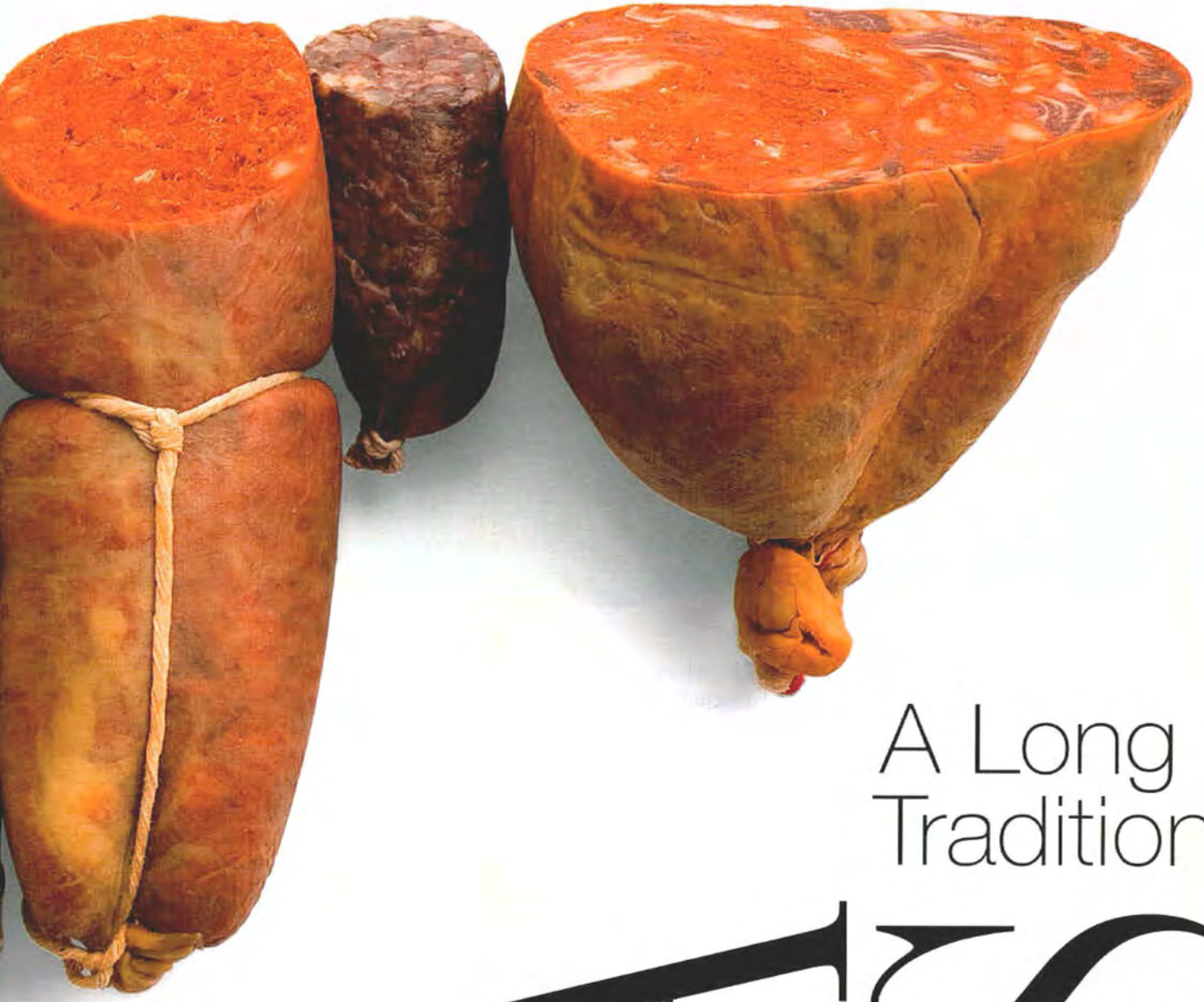
It all comes to show that whichever direction you travel, wherever your interests lie, whatever your age or background, Spain is a true treasure trove for visitors. Throughout its fascinating history, the country has accumulated an unequaled monumental and cultural heritage, clearly recognized as such by UNESCO. Yet as we have seen in this series of articles, at every step we also find breathtaking landscapes, a wide variety of sports and entertainment, lots of local color, charming people and last but by no means least, the fruits of its lands and its succulent gastronomy, which never ceases to surprise and has earned a well-deserved position among the world's greatest. Vibrant Spain awaits you!

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



Tarragona. Roman Circus

The whiff of sausage is one of the characteristic smells of Spain. From north to south and east to west of the Iberian Peninsula, including the Balearic and Canary Islands, the whole country is redolent of the *pimentón* (a type of paprika from Spain) and other spices that go into its charcuterie. Spanish sausages come hard and soft, cured and cooked, and go by names such as *butifarra* (a Catalan specialty) and *morcilla* (black pudding). Spain as a whole produces pork products galore, many with the distinguished Ibérico pedigree. Led by the countries of the EU, foreign markets are gradually getting to know the repertoire, not least because of new ways of presenting once unfamiliar sausages. Many are now sold sliced and vacuum-packed, a method that maintains all their qualities intact, makes them easier to serve and eat, and offers a guaranteed shelf life.



SAUSAGES

A Long Tradition

TEXT
RAQUEL CASTILLO/©ICEX

PHOTOS
JUAN MANUEL SANZ/©ICEX

TRANSLATION
HAWYS PRITCHARD/©ICEX

If asked to name an element common to all of Spain's diverse regional cuisines, pork would be the obvious answer. The Spanish always say that you can eat every bit of a pig, and prove the point with traditional recipes that use the lot, from prime cuts right down to blood, intestines and tail. Much of what is capitalized on in this way goes into sausages of one sort and another, of which there are countless varieties in the country as a whole. Every little subdivision of every region has its own specialties, some of them with surprising specific features: if catalogued, the total range would be highly competitive on a world scale (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 43). Sausages, in the broad sense of meat stuffed into a casing, are generically known in Spanish as *embutidos*, a term that covers *chorizo*, *lomo*, *salchichón* and the less well-known *morcón*, *sobrasada*, *morcilla*, *butifarra* and *botillo*. Embutidos come cured, cooked and smoked; in some of them the predominant aroma derives from *pimentón* (a type of paprika from Spain), and in others from spices and garlic. Some are flavor-packed and hearty, others subtle and delicate; some are spreadable, some for eating raw, others for frying; some are made from White pork, others from Ibérico... The range is interesting, appetizing, and deeply rooted in an ongoing tradition that is an identifying feature of Spanish food.

Magical cure

A considerable proportion of Spain's sausages are cured. Perhaps the best-known of these is the **chorizo** (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 36), a delicious combination of lean and fatty pork, chopped and marinated with salt and spices, and with pimentón–the ingredient that makes it so readily recognizable in color, aroma and flavor. In many parts of the Peninsula (particularly in the north), chorizo is smoked over wood fires, adding another layer to their already rich flavor. The mixture is usually stuffed into natural casings (pig's intestine), and the resultant sausages are given different names depending on size and shape: *ristra* ("string", which refers to little chorizos tied with a cord and linked together like a string of beads), *herradura* ("horseshoe", one single sausage with the two ends bent towards each other and tied together) and *vela* ("candle", a single sausage encased in intestine with the ends free). In addition to these, one of the most traditional presentations for a chorizo is in *cular gut*, obtained from the large intestine of the pig. They are all cured sausages. They may be slightly or thoroughly smoked, but all chorizo must be given time to mature and dry in cold, airy conditions. Each area's specific climatic conditions and the size of the sausage will determine how long the curing period should last.

The regional larders of Spain contain hundreds of different types of chorizo, each with its own identity. Space prevents our doing them justice here,

but there are some that stand out from the rest for popularity and prestige and therefore demand attention. An obvious one with which to start is chorizo de Cantimpalos, made in Segovia province. One of the best-known and most traditional sausages from Castile-Leon (the region that occupies much of the northern central part of the Iberian Peninsula), this chorizo has Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status. It is made with pork (in proportions of 70% lean to 30% fat) from pigs fed mostly barley, seasoned with salt, pimentón, garlic and oregano, and is left to cure for 20 to 30 days in cold, breezy conditions in the towns and villages of Segovia where it is made (Cantimpalos, the town from which this type takes its name, lies at an altitude of around 1,000 m / 3,290 ft). It is usually presented in rather rough strings with the skin completely covered in fungus and yeasts that give it a characteristic whitish appearance. When cut, however, it reveals pale red meat that is smooth, well-textured, gives off a delicious smell and is silky in the mouth.

Another famous version, chorizo riojano, is a classic product from La Rioja (in northern Spain) and also had PGI status. It is integral to the traditional dishes of that region, and is still made, as it always has been, with lean and fat pork to which sweet pimentón (and sometimes a touch of spice for extra zing), salt and garlic are added. Its rich, lasting flavor owes much to pimentón.

Salamanca, in western central Spain, is

one of the biggest charcuterie-producing regions and is known particularly for its chorizo cular, which takes its name from the part of the big intestine that serves as its casing. This is a large sausage containing little fat, and is matured for three to four months. Reddish in color and very smooth, it is presented in string formation, its skin covered in a fine whitish coating produced by molds and yeasts during the maturation process and affecting the outside only. The other star in this category is chorizo Ibérico, produced in those parts of the country where Ibérico pigs are reared (Salamanca, Extremadura and Andalusia, *Spain Gourmetour* No 68.) It is made with the same ingredients as the others, except that prime cuts (fillet, loin, tenderloin...) are used, and the pork is from an Ibérico pig fed on acorns, which gives it a characteristic marbling of fat and unbeatable flavor and aroma along with it. Ibérico chorizo is usually stuffed into a natural casing and cured for six months. This is a gourmet's sausage.

Beyond chorizo

These same regions are also home to **morcón**, an interesting sausage, similar to chorizo but with a personality all its own. The same name is used for the wide gut at the end of the intestine into which it is stuffed. Historically, morcón was made with the leftover bits of pig–a kind of ragbag. However, the boom in fine quality charcuterie has resulted in its transformation into a rather posh sausage containing lean pork cut up into biggish pieces marinated with the classic sweet pimentón, salt and garlic, but with no added fat or fatty pork. A morcón is a big sausage, weighing in at around a kg (2.2 lb), and therefore takes longer to cure (a minimum of 65 days). It is red both inside and out, with streaks of infiltrated fat that give it a marble-like appearance, and it has a very distinctive pronounced aroma and flavor.

The same parts of the country also produce **lomo**, one of the star products of the charcuterie industry.

Its name means "loin", and it is made with loin cuts from White or Ibérico pigs (acorn-fed in the latter case) marinated with pimentón, salt and garlic. The cut of meat–generally weighing between 800 g and 1 kg (1.7 to 2.2 lb)–is stuffed into a pork gut casing and left to cure slowly, usually for six months, in natural drying facilities where the local climatic conditions take their effect, curing the delicate meat with its marbling of fat, a particularly notable feature of Ibérico pork. The end result is justifiably considered a delicacy: there is a huge demand for lomo Ibérico from within Spain, and it is also a bestseller abroad.

One of the oldest and most idiosyncratic of Spain's sausages is **sobrasada** from Majorca (the biggest of the Balearic Islands, the Mediterranean archipelago to the east of the Peninsula), which has enjoyed PGI status as Sobrasada de Mallorca since 2004 (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 55). There are two types, one obtained from White pigs and the other from Majorcan Blacks (a native breed, free-range raised and fattened on barley, legumes and figs). The sausages also come in different shapes, depending on their casing, but all are made with minced lean and fatty pork, salt, pimentón and spices (pepper, rosemary and thyme). The idiosyncratic feature is that the meat, both lean and fat, is minced to a paste which is then mixed thoroughly with the remaining ingredients, stuffed into its casing and left to cure for several weeks.

The customary formats for sobrasada are *rizada* (in thick gut casing) and *semirrizada* (in medium gut casing), weighing 400 to 800 g (0.88 to 1.7 lb), though the more modern presentation is a 200 g (0.44 lb) vacuum-packed tub containing paste but no casing. (This is not to be confused with *crema de sobrasada*, which is a different, non-cured product). Pimentón gives sobrasada a rich dark orangey-red color on the inside and outside. The outer surface of a sobrasada sausage is smooth or slightly rough, with no signs of mold, and the soft, sticky, smooth paste inside is delicious eaten just as it is, spread on bread.

Cured sausages without pimentón

Spain's classic cured sausages are chorizo, lomo and **salchichón**. This last type constitutes a big family, differentiated by the fact that it is made without pimentón.

Salchichón is made with fresh pork, a small proportion of fat, salt and pepper (either whole grains, ground or a mixture of both) minced and stuffed into natural casings and left to cure. Salchichones are produced all over the country, but there is one that is generally regarded as a yardstick for quality: Salchichón de Vic (which comes from the town of Vic, not far from Barcelona, in Catalonia in the northeastern part of the Peninsula). It has PGI status, its area of provenance being the broad plain–*La Plana de Vic*–that lies between the Pyrenees (the mountain range that forms a natural border between Spain and France) and the coastal depression. This vast corridor is swept by cold mountain winds which endow meat products cured there with special properties.

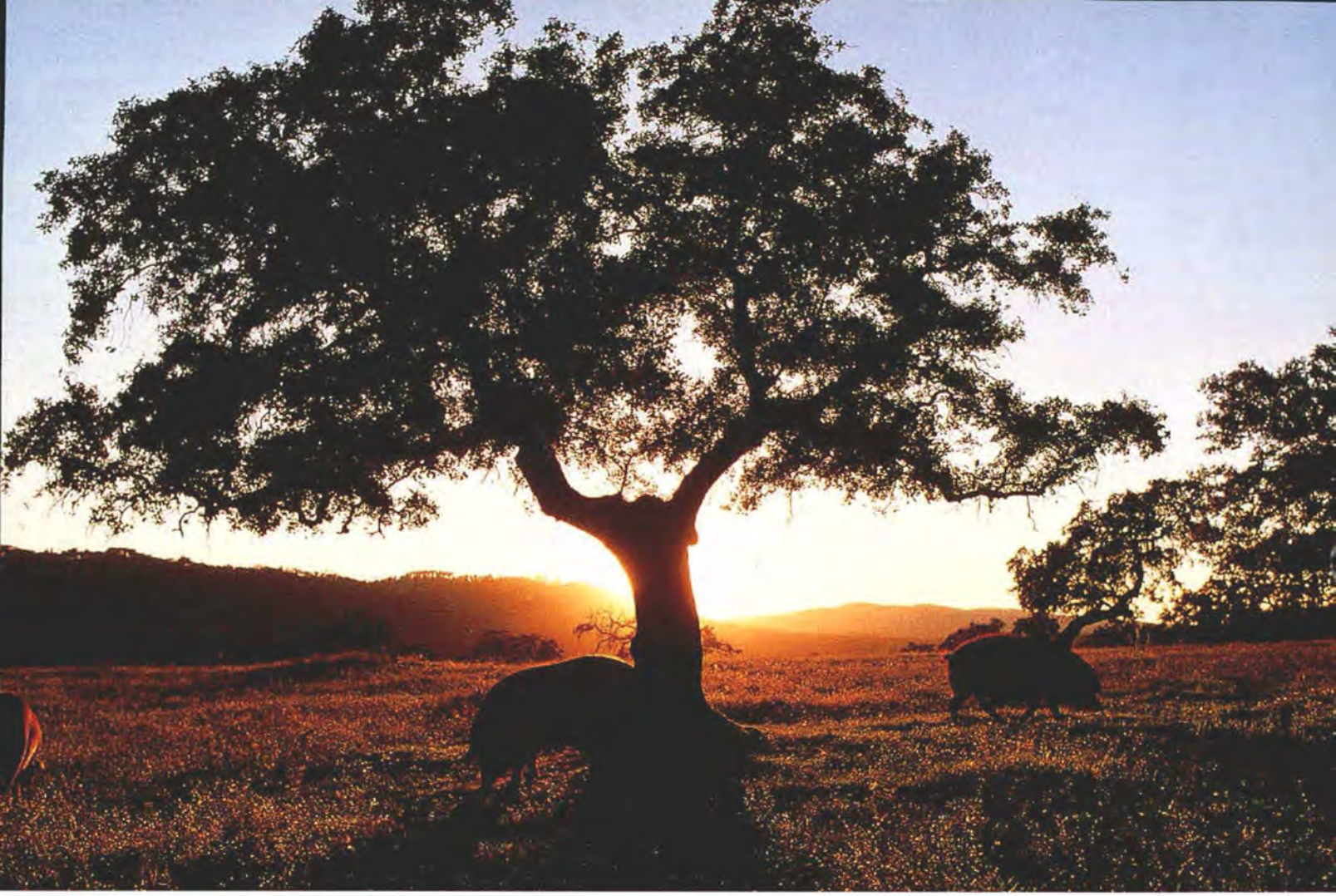
In terms of shape, a Salchichón de Vic is perfectly round. The sausages are

always marketed in a candle or stick shape, measuring 35-90 mm across and 20-90 cm long. Their weights vary accordingly, ranging from 300 g (0.66 lb) for the smallest to 2.5 kg (5.5 lb) for the biggest. All are unbeatably fragrant, smooth and flavor-packed. One variant on the salchichón is a much thinner version known as fuet (the name means whip in Catalan). Though the ingredients are identical, fuet cures much more quickly because it is smaller. An interesting variant is fuet dulce, a sweet sausage aromatized with sugar and lemon, made in Gerona.

As with chorizo and lomo, there is also an Ibérico salchichón, made from select cuts of Ibérico pork seasoned with pepper and salt. Like lomo, it is stuffed into cular gut and left to cure in natural drying facilities for six months.

Cooked sausages

Spain's sausage repertoire is by no means limited to the cured range. There is a whole category made from pork meat, pork fat and other ingredients, suitably seasoned, cooked and then stuffed into casings, for eating either as they are or in some sort of prepared form.
The Mediterranean arc area of Spain (Catalonia, the Balearics, the Valencia region and Murcia) is where most of its cooked sausages come from. Queen of them all is **butifarra**, particularly the Catalan version. Butifarra has been made since the 14th century, and consists of an intestine casing filled with chopped pork, pork fat and/or other ingredients (egg, rice, onion, pine nuts), salt, pepper and, sometimes, the occasional herb or spice. They come in



black (which means that they also contain pig's blood), or white (without blood). Variants, like butifarra del perol, include offal such as kidney, tongue, liver and/or head meat. These always need to be prepared by scalding or boiling, and can later be eaten just as they are, or cooked *a la brasa* (over open coals), fried or incorporated into stews. Butifarra features largely in local recipes: they can be cooked with *mongetes del ganxet* (delicate white beans), *arroz y setas* (rice and wild mushrooms), *habas y patatas* (broad beans and potatoes)... or simply roasted and served with bread and tomato, peas, or–interestingly–snails. They also provide a delicious stock for the soup known as *sopa catalana de butifarra*.

The other big subdivision of the cooked sausage family is made up of **morcilla**, a classic product all over Spain. Again there is one that stands out from all the rest: morcilla de Burgos (from the town in Castile-Leon, in northern central Spain) is the best known and most widely eaten. The recipe for morcilla de Burgos calls for onion of the local native Horcal variety, rice, lard, blood, salt and spices (which could be pimentón, cumin, clove, cinnamon, aniseed, oregano, thyme and pepper). All the raw ingredients are kneaded together and then the mixture is stuffed into a natural casing that gives the morcilla its shape. It is then boiled for an hour or two (depending on the consistency of the intestine casing), after which time it is ready for eating. Morcilla is a fresh product with a relatively short shelf life (20-25 days when vacuum-packed; around 45 days when pasteurized) and it can be eaten fried, cooked a la brasa or, again, incorporated into stews. Morcilla is always juicy, full of flavor and has a very characteristic oniony, spicy smell.

Experiments are being conducted into different ways of making the typical Burgos morcilla, albeit without abandoning traditional methods. At meat processing company Embutidos de Cardeña, they are working on what they call "designer morcilla", a new product developed in response to the suggestion of Basque superchef Martín Berasategui (of the three-Michelin-star restaurant that bears his name in Lasarte, on the Cantabrian coast in the Basque Country). The new sausage, which weighs about 1 kg (2.2 lb), is made with top-quality *arroz bomba* (a type of rice from the eastern coastal area of Spain that is very absorbent of flavors), and is boiled for four hours at 95°C (203°F), the process being interrupted periodically for the hot morcilla to be massaged by hand to ensure even distribution of its contents. The end result is an excellent product with the bonus of containing plenty of readily metabolized fiber, which makes it much easier to digest.

New formats in the marketplace

The food industry has always been a trailblazer in applying new technology to the production process. To a large

degree, spending on research and development is what gives companies an edge and enables them to offer the end consumer products that are innovative in the sense of being easier to eat and keep fresh, and that comply scrupulously with the increasingly strict health and safety requirements. Needless to say, sausage producing companies are no strangers to all this. Spain is known for the range and appeal of its traditional charcuterie. In the late 19th century, the ritual *matanza* (pig slaughter) carried out by each household to provide it with a long-lasting supply of meat in various forms began to make way for an emerging industry which, in the course of the 20th century, became established and transformed. By keeping pace with progress in general and industrial processes in particular, the modern companies that manufacture and market fresh and cured sausages today have adapted deftly to the demands of the national and international markets and to what consumers want. This is why, alongside traditional presentations, other formats have been made available and have been well-received at points of sale: sliced, vacuum-packed sausage, for example, offers the same fine quality product but is easier to eat, longer lasting and available in smaller quantities.
All cured embutidos (including *cecina*: see Cecina de León, meat with a smoky flavor, page 93) are sliceable, but the process requires proper equipment and premises (slicing and clean rooms). Clean rooms are protected environments where extreme food safety measures are enforced to the hilt. Structure, materials, machinery and environmental

OTHER QUALITY ARTISAN SAUSAGES

• **Embutidos de Requena.**

With PGI status pending, Requena, on Spain's Mediterranean coast, is a source of salchichón, chorizo, morcilla, sobrasada, and two very idiosyncratic sausages: güeña and perro. The first type comes in strung links and is made from pork meat and pork fat, with the addition of scraps. The latter is ball-shaped and contains pig's blood and skin, which are added to the pork meat and fat, and requires pre-boiling.

• **Other chorizos:**

Potes (Cantabria, in the north of the Peninsula), a smoked version; **Teror** (Gran Canaria in the Canary Islands, off the coast of Morocco), eaten as a spread; and wild boar and venison chorizo are also produced in areas of Spain where there is plenty of game (Jaén, Ciudad Real–both in central southern Spain–and León and Asturias in the north). The ingredients and production method are similar to other chorizo except that pork flavors are replaced by those of furred game.

• **Chosco de Tineo.**

This product from Tineo, Asturias (northern Spain) has PGI status. It is made from pork loin and tongue encased in the caecum portion of the pig's large intestine, and is smoked and cured.

• **Botillo del Bierzo.**

This sausage is made in El Bierzo (León) and also has PGI status. It contains ribs, tail, lean pork, tongue, cheek and other meats from various parts of the pig. It is encased in the large intestine, wood-smoked and cured. Flavor-packed and hearty, it is eaten in stews.

parameters (temperature, moisture, air flow and suspended particles, lighting) are all specifically designed so that the organoleptic properties of foodstuffs are retained. José Gomez, managing director of Joselito, has installed one of the most advanced clean rooms in Spain in his factory in Guijeulo (Salamanca), producing acorn-fed Ibérico cured ham and shoulder, salchichon, chorizo and lomo. "Slicing is down to a fine art nowadays," he remarks "because modern technology makes it possible for the entire process to be sterile and completely automated."

At Joselito, they began investing in slicing technology R&D five years ago, and now have a state-of-the-art clean room. "It's like an operating room. We work according to US regulations, which require temperatures of 5 to 6°C (41 to 32.8°F), whereas in Europe the regulations allow room temperatures to reach 10 to 12°C (50 to 53.6°F). The colder the better for slicing–you avoid the spread of bacteria that way," he explains.

The process that the sausages undergo is simple but highly technical. First they pass through a scanner and then through a cutting machine fitted with an enormous titanium blade (the fact that this does not get hot avoids adverse effects on the delicate fat in the Ibérico pork). The slices then move along automatically to a weighing device, from there onto trays and are then vacuum packed. This whole sequence is automated, albeit monitored by a food technologist.

At Joselito, like many other processors, they have opted for vacuum packing as the best preserving method, largely for reasons of image, since it makes the sliced product easier to see and more attractive. The same results can also be achieved with inert gas says Francisco Carrasco, commercial director of Carrasco Guijuelo, another company that also specializes in producing and marketing Ibérico products. He explains: "Inert gas creates a cushion of air between packaging and product which prevents the slices from sticking to the plastic packaging. The technology has been copied from the method used for cooked ham (such as York ham), and it has the added advantage of eliminating the need for plastic separators between the layers of slices."

Both systems are guaranteed to keep the product in perfect condition for a year as long as it is kept refrigerated, ideally at a temperature between 0 and 6°C (32 to 42.8°F). However, as a hedge against malpractice, the manufacturers suggest a six-month use-by date.

Vacuum packing is also used as a preserving method for whole chorizo, salchichon, butifarra, sobrasada (which is usually vacuum-packed in tubs, without casing) and morcilla–in fact for sausages of all kinds, both fresh and cured. Meanwhile, research is continuing into new methods to prolong and guarantee the shelf life of these products. With exports in mind, Embutidos de Cardeña is working on their morcilla de Burgos–a cooked sausage with a short shelf life (20-25 days when vacuum-packed, up to 45 when pasteurized), experimenting with a hyperbaric (high pressure) pasteurization method developed by another Burgos company. This method prolongs the shelf life of foodstuffs

without affecting its nutritional quality, flavor, aroma or texture. The results achieved by the company indicate that it should be possible to keep morcilla in perfect condition for up to 90 days.

Spanish sausages worldwide

According to data compiled by the Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade (ICEX), Spain sold over 31,000 tons (62,000,000 lb) of sausages to foreign markets in 2008. France, Portugal, Germany and Russia, in that order, accounted for over 50% of Spain's exports of cured and cooked meat products, followed at a distance by Italy, Greece, the UK, the Czech Republic, Belgium, the Netherlands, Andorra, Lebanon, Croatia, Denmark and the US. The total was just over 450 million euros.

Foreign sales in 2008 showed a significant increase, largely because of higher sales of cured ham and shoulder (up an impressive 33.2% compared with the previous year), still among the best known and avidly consumed of Spain's gourmet products abroad. They were by no means alone, however, since cured sausages also experienced an increase in international demand–a considerable 12.6%–over the same period.

According to a study conducted by Spanish magazine *Alimarket*, there are two clear leaders in this area of export activity: Campofrío Food Group (which changed its name recently when it absorbed leading European meat processor Groupe Smithfield Holdings to become the biggest processed meat company in Europe), and El Pozo. Both produce a wide range of products, including cured sausages, which they distribute both whole and, in large part, sliced and vacuum-packed throughout supermarkets and hypermarkets, both in Spain and abroad. The next big challenge is to gain access for these products to the gourmet distribution channel, an area whose potential is still largely untapped.

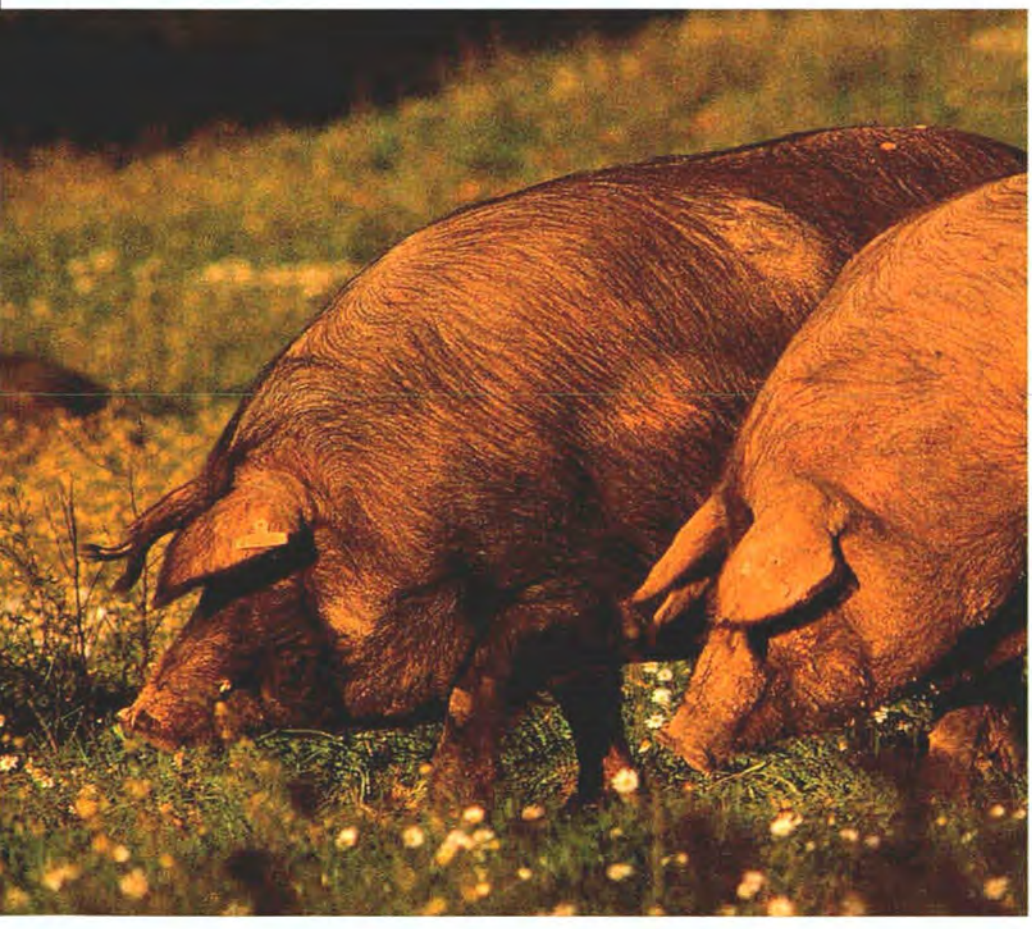
That said, many producers have been very successful over the years in placing their products in foreign markets. Casa Riera Ordeix, which produces salchichones de Vic (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 52), is a case in point: it exports 15% of its output to the UK, Germany, France, the Netherlands and, occasionally, the Dominican Republic and Venezuela. It is currently focusing its attention on Japan and the US. Its main outlets are delicatessens (Harrods and Fortnum & Mason in London and Galeries Lafayette in Paris) and specialist charcuterie shops rather than big chains.

Within the EU, Joselito emerges clearly as one of the best-known companies in the sector. Its star product is acorn-fed Ibérico ham (shoulder does well too), but it also exports cured lomo, chorizo and salchichón. Its products are well-placed in gourmet shops such as

Harrods (London), Peck (Milan), Isetan (Tokyo) and Kaspia (Paris), and some of the worlds' top chefs–not just the Spanish ones–serve them in their restaurants (including Joël Robuchon at L'Atelier in Paris, and Carlo Cracco, in his eponymous restaurant in Milan). The company's Ibérico products are also sold in Russia, where they can usually be found at Anatoli Komn and the Ararat Park Hyatt, both in Moscow. Other companies, such as the Andalusian Cooperative Cattle Raising Corporation of the Valley of the Pedroches (*Cooperativa Ganadera del Valle de los Pedroches*, COVAP, *Spain Gourmetour* No. 64) and Embutidos Fermín (Salamanca), which produce Ibérico ham, shoulder and other cured products, are keen exporters. Embutidos Fermín is exemplary in that its marketing policy is to concentrate on non-EU countries. Raúl Martín, the company's export manager, points out that not all products achieve the same degree of acceptance among consumers. He explains the finer points: "Morcón has only limited sales within Europe, perhaps because it is unfamiliar. There is a niche market for it–France, Germany and Portugal, countries that are interested in Ibérico products as a whole. In any case, it is always perceived as a gourmet product and restricted to specialist shops." In his opinion, cured lomo is much more commercial, and much better received: "Taking lomo, chorizo, ham and shoulder together, we export 25% of our production. We are the only company with a presence in Canada, the US and Singapore, and we also sell in Mexico, Austria, Korea and Japan, though our main market is the US. Actually, we'll start exporting lomo to Canada and the US later this year."

Huelva-based firm Sánchez Romero is another well-known manufacturer of Ibérico products. Ibérico ham is their strong seller, though they also have a fine reputation for cured sausage. They export morcón within Europe (France, Italy, Russia, Portugal, Scandinavia and the UK), albeit in small quantities. Nevertheless, between 6 and 8% of their Ibérico lomo production goes abroad, to the same countries as morcón plus Germany, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic. They sell through gourmet shops and charcuteries, which they supply with whole or partial pieces or ready-sliced products, all vacuum-packed.

For the moment, the problem of morcilla de Burgos's short shelf life is getting in the way of selling them outside the EU on a regular basis. Nevertheless, "...it's a very well-known product," according to Roberto da Silva, manager of Embutidos de Cardeña. Indeed, for the last 18 years the company has been selling it in the UK, where it is bracketed with Britain's own famous black pudding,



"...though we introduced it as a more gourmet-orientated product, a rice sausage," says da Silva. Along with the UK, other countries including Italy, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Mexico also enjoy this unique sausage, which sells primarily to the hospitality industry, with only token amounts being sold through specialist shops. In the near future and high-pressure technology (as described earlier) permitting, the Japanese market, which is always receptive to top-quality Spanish products, should be added to this list.

Raquel Castillo *is a journalist with a special interest in food and wine. She is head of the gastronomic section of the daily business newspaper* Cinco Días *and a regular contributor to such specialist magazines as* Vino y Gastronomía, Vivir el Vino, Vinoselección *and* Sobremesa. *She is also co-author of* El aceite de oliva de Castilla-La Mancha *and of the* Comer y beber en Madrid *eating out guide.*

CECINA DE LEÓN, MEAT WITH A SMOKY FLAVOR

Salt, that universal preserving agent used since the dawn of time, helps create a splendid delicacy that is eaten all over Spain: *cecina de León*. Cecina (*Spain Gourmetour* No. 47) is meat that is salted, smoked and then dried. It can only be made in areas where the climatological conditions are just right: it requires cold, dryish winters, hot summers, and long periods of frost. León province (northwesterly inland Spain) fits the bill perfectly and is the source of the best cecinas in Spain. They are covered by PGI status.

Cecina is made from meat obtained from various cuts of beef: center leg (the fleshy mass formed by the medial thigh muscles), round (made up of the topside and silverside, which form a triangular/cylindrical prism), stifle (an oval-shaped cut made up of the components of the square rump muscle) and sirloin (a triangular cut made up of the medium, accessory and deep gluteal muscle, and the twin rump muscles). Once the pieces have been selected and shaped, they are salted to promote dehydration and to preserve them. They are then washed and left to rest for 30-45 days, during which time their flavor, aroma and texture take on definition, and are then smoked in oak or holm-oak wood smoke for two to three weeks. The process is rounded off with a curing period in perfectly ventilated natural drying chambers. The cecina will be ready to eat seven months after salting at the earliest, and it will have turned a darkish brown on the outside which, when cut, will reveal a cherry-to-garnet red interior in which the color is more pronounced at the edges. The meat, with its slight marbling of fat, will present little evidence of salt or fiber. Its characteristic smoky aroma and clean, pronounced, pleasantly meaty flavor are particularly appealing features.

Given the size of the cuts from which it is made, cecina is generally sliced to order, though it also comes vacuum-packed.

Other León specialties include *cecina de chivo*, made (in the town of Vegacervera in the north of the province) in much the same way except that the raw material is goat's meat, and *cecina de caballo* is made (in Villarramiel, Palencia, in southeastern León) of either horse or mule meat. Cecina de caballo has a pleasant and very distinctive flavor, somewhat sweeter than the others because of the glycogen that horse meat contains.

WEBSITES

PGI Botillo del Bierzo
www.botillodelbierzo.es

PGI Cecina de León
www.cecinadeleon.org

PGI Chorizo de Cantimpalos
www.chorizodecantimpalos.org

PGI Chorizo Riojano
www.lariojacalidad.org/igp/chorizo_riojano/informacion/index.html

PGI Chosco de Tineo
www.asturex.org/agro/pdf/choscodetineo.pdf

PGI Embutido de Requena
www.embutidoderequena.es

PGI Salchichón de Vic
www.salchichonvic.com

PGI Sobrasada de Mallorca
www.sobrasadademallorca.org

Chorizo cular de Salamanca, lomo Ibérico, morcilla de Burgos and morcón Ibérico
www.patrimonio-gastronomico.com/embutido.shtml?idboletin=123

Gaig Restaurant

Introduction
Almudena Muyo/©ICEX

Translation
Jenny McDonald/©ICEX

Photos, recipes
Toya Legido/©ICEX

Photos, introduction
Tomás Zarza/©ICEX

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The simplicity of high-quality seasonal products and impeccable frying in extra virgin olive oil, two keys to the cuisine of Carles Gaig. The flavors, smells and aromas of the past but in new guises, reflecting the evolution of a family, his family, one that has been dedicated to the world of hospitality for over four generations. The small family-run hostel, where they started out at the beginning of the past century offering home cooking, has become one of Barcelona's landmark restaurants–Gaig Restaurant–and is now the proud holder of a Michelin star. Gaig's teachers were his great-grandmother and, in particular, his mother, but he also learned from reading the works of Spanish food writers and gastronomes, Josep Pla (1897-1981) and Néstor Luján (1922-1995). Then a trip to the Basque Country in 1975 allowed him to meet chefs Patxi Quintana and Juan Mari Arzak. Subsequent contact with Paul Bocuse and Freddy Girardot ended up revolutionizing his cuisine. His dishes are now wrapped in modern dress but the flavors take us back to his origins. Carles Gaig has also selected the wines to accompany these dishes.

5 RECIPES

Light Coca with Red Shrimp, Raf Tomato and Baby Zucchini

(Coca ligera de gamba roja con tomate raf y calabacín tierno)

This is a different way of eating red Palamós shrimp, with its full flavor brought out by cooking it in its natural medium. This is our new-look shellfish coca.

SERVES 4

16 red shrimp from Palamós; 400 g / 14 oz white bread; 50 g / 2 oz cream cheese; 20 g / 1 oz pomegranate; 2 Raf tomatoes; 1 baby zucchini; chives; balsamic vinegar; basic vinaigrette; seawater; baby mesclun; extra virgin olive oil; salt.

Cut the bread into wafer-thin slices then trim to form uniform shapes. Toast lightly with extra virgin olive oil on a chrome-plated griddle.
Peel and seed the tomatoes, then cut them. Cut the zucchini and blanch lightly in salted water. Just before serving, dress the tomato and zucchini.
Peel the shrimp, remove the heads and blanch in seawater for just 60 seconds.
Reduce the balsamic vinegar then leave to cool. Mix with the extra virgin olive oil.
Mix the cream cheese with chopped chives and dress.

To serve

Place the zucchini and tomato on a slice of bread, then top with another layer. Add the bodies of the red shrimp and some baby mesclun dressed with vinaigrette. Stick the heads into the top vertically. Finish the dish with some of the cheese and chive mixture, the oil with reduced vinegar and some pomegranate seeds.

Recommended wine

Gramona Sauvignon Blanc 2008 (DO Penedès), by the Gramona Winery. The characteristics of this wine blend perfectly with the shrimp–very subtle aromas with apple and peach plus passion fruit giving a tropical touch. In the mouth it is fresh and long.

Pear Tomato Soup and Kumato Tartar with Lobster

(Sopa de tomate pera y tartar de kumato con bogavante)

A refreshing recipe for a hot summer. The lobster makes this very simple dish special, though the protagonist is the tomato. We use the pear tomatoes for the soup, which gains in subtlety from the milkiness of the almonds, and the Kumato tomatoes for their personality, with their characteristic green color and fleshiness, ideal for making the tartar.

SERVES 4

4 Kumato tomatoes; 500 g / 1 lb 2 oz pear tomatoes; 85 g / 3 oz Marcona almonds; 1 large lobster; 2 cardamom seeds; 3 baby Marcona almonds; wild sprouts; chives; roast almond oil; extra virgin olive oil; salt.

Cook the lobster in salted water, shell and leave the best parts whole. Use the smaller pieces in the Kumato tartar. Dress the large pieces.
Peel, seed and dice the Kumato tomatoes. Add the lobster trimmings and dress with extra virgin olive oil, salt and chopped chives.
Meanwhile, peel the baby Marcona almonds. Crush the pear tomatoes with two cardamom seeds and the Marcona almonds. Strain, season with salt and make an emulsion with roast almond oil.

To serve

Place a mold on a plate and fill with Kumato tomato tartar. Press to shape. Remove the mold and add the dressed lobster pieces. Serve the soup separately so as to maintain the dish's aesthetic. Decorate with wild sprouts.

Preparation time

1 hour 15 minutes

Recommended drink

Inedit, by Damm Group. This beer, with an intense, complex aroma and touches of sweet spice and fruit is creamy in the mouth. The aftertaste is of coriander, licorice and orange peel, and its delicate sparkle, verve and freshness make it the perfect partner for this dish.

Greater Weever Fish, Fuet, Basil and Pan Tumaca

(Araña de mar, fuet, albahaca y pan tumaca)

The idea is to make a summer-style surf and turf, so we suggest a salad of greater weever fish (an unusual species in the kitchen, mostly used to make stock), *fuet* (a type of sausage) and two types of tomato: Montserrat, served practically as it comes, and *tomates de colgar* (hanging tomatoes), the typical tomatoes for *pan tumaca* (slices of toasted country bread, rubbed with garlic and ripe tomatoes, and crowned with a pinch of salt and extra virgin olive oil). The raspberries and basil give a lively touch to the dish.

SERVES 4

2 Montserrat tomatoes; 2 tomates de colgar; 100 g / 3 1/2 oz baguette bread; 12 fresh basil leaves; 200 g / 7 oz greater weever fish; 40 g / 1 1/2 oz fuet; 1 lollo rosso lettuce; 1 oak leaf lettuce; fleur de sel; 50 cc / 1.7 fl oz rice vinegar; 12 raspberries; extra virgin olive oil; salt, vinegar.

Cut the fuet into thin slices and dehydrate at 65°C / 149°F for 4 hours.
Drizzle a little extra virgin olive oil on the slices of baguette and bake at 185°C / 365°F for 6 minutes. Remove and carefully rub with tomato, then sprinkle with fleur de sel.
Peel the Montserrat tomato and cut into thin slices.
Remove any bones from the fish and sear lightly on the griddle. Submerge in rice vinegar for 40 minutes, then drain and place in extra virgin olive oil.
Wash and dress the lettuce with a basic vinaigrette just before serving. Finish the dish with raspberries and fresh basil leaves.

To serve

Arrange one or two slices of Montserrat tomato forming a base, then add the marinated fish, which should be served warm (at 50°C / 122°F), the dehydrated fuet, pan tumaca toast, lettuce leaves, raspberries and fresh basil leaves. The idea is that the dish should be as fresh and natural as possible.

Preparation time

4 hours to dehydrate the fuet and 1 hour for the rest.

Recommended wine

Oliver Conti Gewürztraminer and Sauvignon Blanc 2005 (DO Empordà), by Oliver Conti. This wine has a mineral, floral nose against a background of grapefruit, and is creamy in the mouth with plenty of ripe fruit and citric acidity. It is an excellent partner for the fish and the other ingredients in the dish.

Lightly Smoked Fillet of Cod with Samfaina and Black Butifarra

Maximum simplicity in a traditional dish of cod with *samfaina* (Catalan-style ratatouille). The reduced Modena vinegar, with its body and acidity, contrasts with the saltiness of the fish and the *butifarra* sausage.

SERVES 4

700 g / 1 1/2 lb cod fillet in 4 pieces; flour to coat; 2 tomatoes; 1 red pepper; 1 green pepper; 1 yellow pepper; 1 zucchini; 1 eggplant; 1 onion; 200 g / 7 oz black butifarra; herbs; green sprouts; balsamic vinegar; extra virgin olive oil; aniseed.

Season the cod with salt, dip in flour and, just before serving, fry in very hot oil.
Grill the eggplants and peppers over hot coals, then peel and cut into small pieces. Chop the onion and fry. When caramelized, add the chopped flesh of the two tomatoes and, finally, the zucchini. When cooked, add the other vegetables, season and add aniseed. This is the samfaina.
Place the butifarra sausage in a steamer to soften, then peel. Heat the flesh and crush, then form a roll using saran wrap, chill and cut into thin slices, heating again just before serving.
Reduce the balsamic vinegar.
When cold, mix with the extra virgin olive oil.

(Lomo de bacalao ligeramente ahumado con samfaina y butifarra negra)

To serve

Fry the cod just before serving so that the flour coating is crisp. Top with a quenelle of samfaina and sprinkle with a little reduced balsamic vinegar. Finish with green sprouts and the black butifarra sausage.

Preparation time

1 hour 30 minutes

Recommended wine

Geol 2006 (DO Costers del Segre), by Tomàs Cusiné. This is a rich, powerful wine with explosive aromas of forest fruit–blackberries, cranberries, etc.–in combination with toast and wood. Fresh and velvety with similar notes in the mouth, it makes an ideal partner for the cod and samfaina.

Asparagus and Cecina from León Ravioli *(Espárragos con cecina de León en ravioli)*

A typical food combination in León is asparagus with *cecina* (air-dried meat). This is the idea that inspired this dish, but here it comes in a very personal version–with the local white asparagus from Gavà, south of Barcelona.

SERVES 4

20 white asparagus spears from Gavà; 100 g / 3 1/2 oz cecina from León; 80 g / 3 oz milk; 50 g / 2 oz butter; 80 g / 3 oz chicken stock; 50 g / 2 oz extra virgin olive oil; 20 g / 1 oz flour; salt; sugar.

Cut the cecina into wafer-thin slices, then chop into squares and fry. Then place in extra virgin olive oil to make cecina crisp oil.

Cook the asparagus in boiling salted water with a little sugar. Separate the tips and stalks, the latter to be used to make the sauce and filling for the ravioli. Don't overboil the tips.

To make the sauce, crush the hardest part of the stems to extract the flavor, add chicken stock and butter and beat until thick. Then add more butter, sprinkle with flour and cook. Add the rest of the asparagus stems and the milk. Add some cecina squares, bring to a boil and let cool.

Finely slice the asparagus tips (leaving some whole to decorate the plate) and cook in the same way as the stems. Once cooked, form a lattice, making square-shaped ravioli, fill with the cooled mixture and close. Heat in a natural coal oven.

To serve

Layer the plate with sauce, top with the ravioli and decorate with asparagus tips. Finish with the León cecina crisp oil.

Preparation time

2 hours

Recommended wine

Pago de Carraovejas 2005 (DO Ribera de Duero), by Bodegas Pago de Carraovejas. This wine with an impressive nose against a balsamic background with ripe fruit and vanilla is flavorsome in the mouth with intense fruitiness, medium structure and creaminess. It is a fine foil to the asparagus and cecina from León ravioli.

On the Move

Conde de Valdemar takes off with American Airlines

The export market has been one of Bodegas Valdemar's prime targets since it was founded in 1983: it began its international career that same year with sales to the UK. Today its wines are sold in nearly 60 countries, with a particularly strong presence in Germany, the US, the UK, Sweden and Switzerland. The firm aims to expand still further and, with that in mind, is honing its reputation for "innovation and quality in the hospitality industry and specialist markets, both of which are sectors that offer better continuity in the medium and long term," according to marketing director Ana Martínez Bujanda.

This approach has paid dividends. One of its wines has become a high flyer–33,000 ft high, to be precise. Since last summer, bottles of cask-fermented Conde de Valdemar white wine have been available to passengers traveling First and Business Class on American Airlines flights. At Valdemar, they are "proud that such a prestigious airline contacted us with a view to sampling our product, and that its wine consultant, Ken Chase, selected our wine for its menus. Of course, it also serves as an ideal showcase for us, giving people of many nationalities the chance to discover our wines."

Meanwhile, this Rioja Alavesa winery has other plans up its sleeve, including marketing its Inspiración Valdemar collection, "a range of highly original wines, all with very different personalities," to quote Martínez Bujanda. The collection has provided a special niche to native and minority varieties since it was launched in 2007, and is part of Bodegas Valdemar's onward and upward strategy, aimed primarily at extending their distribution network and consolidating their brand's reputation for quality within the Rioja Qualified Designation of Origin category.

Date of foundation: 1983
Workforce: 46
Export quota: 55%
www.valdemar.es

Aguas de Mondariz for Ireland

Fitz Crystal Mineral Water Company is to be the exclusive distributor of Aguas de Mondariz's products in Ireland. The contract covers the two big mineral water market areas (the food and hospitality sectors), and gives the Galician company full coverage of the distribution map of the British Isles (it has been represented in the UK by Taylor Sales & Distribution since April 2008).

The agreement is the latest in a series that, in the first half of this year, has enabled Aguas de Mondariz, a Vichy Catalan Group company, to export its water to Cyprus, Gambia and Malta. Aguas de Mondariz products are currently sold in 27 countries, a figure that is set to rise further in the near future as it enters new markets

TEXT
SANTIAGO SÁNCHEZ SEGURA/@ICEX

TRANSLATION
HAWYS PRITCHARD/©ICEX

ILLUSTRATION
AVI

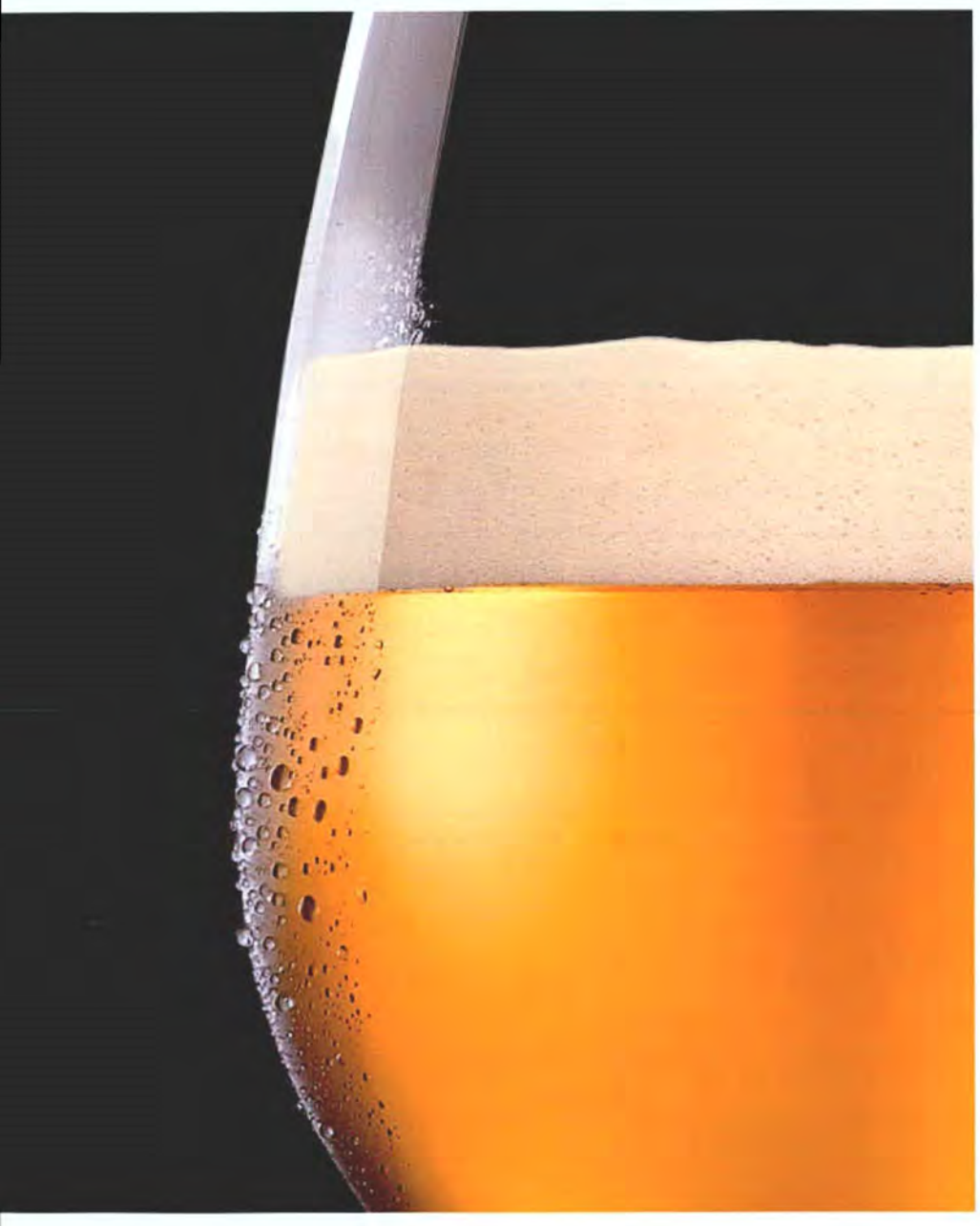
such as Morocco, China, Russia, Poland, Cuba, South Africa and several Middle Eastern states.
In the course of this expansion abroad, the company has won recognition from the International Taste and Quality Institute (iTQi) in recent months. In this Brussels-based organization's Superior Taste Awards 2009, the top qualification, "exceptional" (three stars), went to Mondariz's still mineral water, Elite, the premium (or *gran reserva*) brand of natural mineral water that Aguas de Mondariz supplies to top restaurants. Meanwhile, its sparkling water was awarded the "outstanding" (two stars) qualification by a jury comprised of chefs and sommeliers from leading European culinary associations. Mondariz also started exporting its Fuente del Val water recently. General manager Javier R. Losada explains that it is intended as a distinctive food sector product, "specifically recommended for people on a low sodium diet."
Date of foundation: 1873
Activity: Bottling and marketing mineral waters
Turnover for 2008: 20 million euros
Workforce: 112 employees
Export quota: 10%
www.aguasdemondariz.com

Lizarran launches in China

Since June of this year, the Times Square shopping mall in the city of Suzhou, 80 km (49 mi) from Shanghai, has had its own Lizarran tapas bar, the first in China. The taberna's opening is the first result of an agreement between Comess Group, Lizarran's parent company, and a group of Chinese businessmen residing in Spain, entitling them to use the Spanish brand under license in China for the next 20 years via the Mundiver Europa company. Suzhou is just the start: plans to develop the franchise in China are focused next on Shanghai as the prime target, with the cities of Hangzhou, Wenzhou and Qingtian (all in the eastern part of the country) lined up as possible candidates for the very near future.
Lizarran has designed an introductory menu for this new market that accommodates Chinese tastes while remaining faithful to its essential Spanish tapas theme. "Both our chef and our head of operations in China are Spaniards who already had some experience in China under their belts before starting on this project," explains Joan Manel Gili, Comess Group's marketing director. "As far as we were concerned, that was absolutely essential to our goal of balancing the realities of this market with the traditional Spanish food that we supply." Lizarran's Suzhou menu therefore avoids foods of little relevance to Chinese eating habits (such as bread and dairy products), while presenting a choice of over 100 pinchos and tapas with their traditional flavors very much intact: they include Serrano cured ham, Spanish omelet, Russian salad, *chistorra* (thin Navarre sausage flavored with *pimentón*, a type of paprika from Spain) and *boquerones* (anchovies) in vinegar. The aim of the exercise is to ascertain which dishes and pinchos go down best with the local clientele while serving food that is 100% Spanish.
Date of foundation: 1988
Activity: Pinchos and tapas restaurants
Number of establishments: 190
Turnover for 2008: 105 million euros
www.grupolizarran.com

DAMM GROUP

Mediterranean Edge



When the Damm Group, founded in Barcelona in 1876, launched its new international strategy, it looked to the Catalan capital for the keystone of the campaign. Millions of foreign visitors to the city who have enjoyed Estrella Damm, the company's classic beer *in situ* will now be able to do so back home, along with two new products: Inedit, a beer created under the guidance of Ferran Adrià expressly for drinking with posh food, and Daura, a gluten-free beer suitable for celiac sufferers.

TEXT
SANTIAGO SÁNCHEZ SEGURA/©ICEX

TRANSLATION
HAWYS PRITCHARD/©ICEX

PHOTOS
GRUPO DAMM

From the minute he enters the room to begin our interview, I notice that there is something out-of-the-ordinary about Carlos Cervantes; he is certainly not your average businessman. Much of this special quality resides in an astonishing and sincere passion for his job. "I grew up in a household where the air filled with a beery smell when my father got home from work in the brewery, and I feel fortunate to have been part of the company for the past 35 years, like many generations of my family before me," he declares with patent sincerity. His business card describes him as a member of the company's external relations team, but a brief tour of the Damm factory on the outskirts of Barcelona with him as guide makes it clear that he is a lot more than just that.

I am swept along by his eloquent enthusiasm as we make our way round the plant. Always alert and entertaining (as members of his Facebook fan club will confirm), Carlos displays a prodigious command of facts and figures: "Within these 120,000 sq m (129,166 sq ft) we produce 3 million bottles, 1 million cans and 15 thousand barrels every day." He goes into his beer's organoleptic properties: "The hops we use in our classic recipe, originally from Leon province (Castile-Leon, in the northern half of the Peninsula), distinguish us from beers that use different, stronger ones

because they give Estrella freshness and make it a less bitter, more 'quaffable' long drink." He also explains the finer points of brewing: "We still source our yeast stocks–which are what gives all brands of beer their added value–from the German bank from which the company's founder, August Kuentzmann Damm, obtained the originals when he set up the business in Barcelona." (Like many thousands of Alsatians, Damm emigrated after his native region came under the dominion of the Second Reich in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871). He also tells me how some of the factory's cutting-edge technology works: "This new machine can fill 90 thousand cans an hour"; and he still finds time to take a proud interest in his employees' careers: "Two of our master brewers have come out at the top of their year on specialist brewing courses at Madrid Polytechnic University and at the Versuchs-und Lehranstalt für Brauerei in Berlin." Carlos's own professional career, his memory and even his house (he is an avid collector of all things beer-related) are steeped in Damm's 133-year history. It is the only brewery in Spain to remain active for so long, and the wealth of experience that this long pedigree implies has stood it in good stead as it tackles a decisive facet of its present phase: its international strategy.

From local to global

The city of Barcelona, its people and their Mediterranean lifestyle are attributes that give Damm an advantageous edge in a field as closely associated with free time and leisure activities as the alcoholic beverage sector. "It's quite common practice for beers to base their image on their place of origin, and it's a stroke of luck for us that Barcelona and Spain in general are associated very positively with gastronomy and quality of life," declares Guillem Castellà, the group's export director. The company heads had this very

much in mind when they decided on a complete reorientation of their export policy three years ago. "We'd always taken a reactive rather than a proactive approach to exports, fulfilling orders that came in from abroad but no more than that. Then, in 2006, we started thinking about designing and implementing a specific export strategy."

Castellà sums up the plan's three essential elements. Firstly, the firm's export activity is limited to just three products–Estrella Damm, Inedit and Daura–as opposed to the wider range it sells in Spain, where it markets many more beers, including some bought from various local breweries (Keler and Victoria, for example), and where it has diversified its activities in the last ten years, buying up two brands of mineral water and setting up a company called Alfil Logistics. Secondly, the US and the UK have been pinpointed as priority markets, though the group has also succeeded in striking significant deals in continental Europe and kept options open as regards other countries. Finally, the group has chosen to work with importers and distributors that offer marketing capacity as well as logistical services: these associates include companies with an impressive track record: Anheuser-Busch in the UK, United States Beverage in the US and Radeberger Gruppe in Germany.

As for the promotional aspects of the strategy, the image-enhancing Barcelona connection is highlighted in explicit advertising slogans, such as "The Beer of Barcelona" and "Estrella Exports the Flavor of Barcelona All Over the World", and by adapting bottles, cans and packs heading abroad to feature the word "Barcelona" on their labels. Damm also has a long record of visibly supporting major Barcelona events, starting with the Universal Exposition held there way back in 1929. More recently, Estrella Damm sponsored the Spanish World Cup in 1982, the Olympic Games in 1992 and the Barcelona World Race in 2007 (a yachting event), and it also sponsors some of the city's big annual musical functions, like Primavera Sound Festival and the International Festival of Advanced Music and Multimedia Art of Barcelona (Sónar).

The group has also established links with internationally-known Catalan groups and celebrities, ranging from Barcelona Football Club (of which it is an official sponsor) to fashion designer Custo Dalmau (who designed the bottles for a limited edition of Estrella) to top chef Ferran Adrià (who played a key role in the creation of Estrella Damm Inedit).

A beer for foodies

Ferran Adrià, Juli Soler and elBulli's team of sommeliers worked closely with Damm's master brewers on the Inedit project for the best part of two years before the designer beer was launched in March 2007. "As soon as we started thinking seriously about the project, we knew that we wanted Adrià to direct it. He was the ideal person: a Catalan chef with star status in Spain and well beyond," explains Castellà when asked how the relationship between his company and the 5-time nominee for best cook in the world first came about.

The end result of the collaboration is a beer which, in his role as taster, Carlos Cervantes describes as possessing a broad spectrum of subtle aromas despite not being a highly fermented beer: "You don't often find so much flavor in a beer with low alcohol content (4.8°). There is a mildness to it that puts it into the long drink category, it is thirst quenching and

moreish, yet doesn't muscle in on what one's eating when it's served with food." And that is an important point: Adrià has declared on several occasions that Inedit was designed "because there was a need for a beer that complemented the eating experience", and has gone so far as to predict that "...there'll be more beers like it in the next five years, because the big brewers will want to have an equivalent of their own." "It's a beer designed to fit into the gastronomic environment and accentuate the flavors of food," Cervantes agrees. "Adrià's involvement has given it that individual touch. He and his team came up with an intriguing combination of bitterness and acidity, fine-tuned by interesting nuances–a hint of coriander, orange peel aromas, a liquorice aftertaste–that even make it a beer that can accompany dessert." All in all, Inedit offers a convincing alternative to wine, particularly for drinking with foods for which it is hard to find a good wine match for reasons of texture (salmon, asparagus), acidity (vinegar-dressed salads, citrus fruits) or bitterness of flavor (artichokes, rocket). To enjoy its culinary attributes to the fullest, Inedit should be kept in an ice bucket during the meal and served in white wine glasses, pouring just under half a glassful at a time.

Starting with its chic bottles and packaging, Damm has aimed Inedit at a gastronomically aware public, who seem to have responded favorably during its first few months on the market. To take, as an example, the US market (where its official launch last May was attended by Adrià himself),

Inedit can now be found on the shelves of Whole Foods, one of the leading organic product and delicatessen chains in the US, and on the menu since last year at restaurants such as Eleven Madison Park and Casa Mono, in New York; Amanda, Spanish chef José Garcés's restaurant in Philadelphia; and The Bazaar by José Andrés, the cook's west coast showcase for his cuisine.

Present, future and past

While Inedit represents the link between Damm and avant-garde cuisine, the third label in the Catalan company's foreign market strategy, Daura, has turned out to be something of a trailblazing beer for celiac sufferers. "Special beers of this type are generally made from cereals like maize or fermented rice, whereas the raw material in Daura is barley. We've been able to do this because we've discovered how to break down its gluten protein. That's why we believe it to be the first genuine beer suitable for people with celiac disease: the fact that it is made with barley malt helps keep the traditional beer taste," explains Castellà. Its suitability has been tested by the CSIC (Spain's leading state research institution), which certified that its gluten levels are below 6 parts

per million, while the guidelines issued by the Codex Alimentarius (the food standards commission set up by the WHO and the FAO) set the maximum limit for gluten in foods for celiac sufferers at 20 parts per million. In exemplary export manager fashion, Castellà quotes a specific market among whose celiac population the product has been well-received: "With its traditional pizza- and pasta-rich diet, celiac disease is a condition of which there is a particular awareness in Italy, so the fact that distribution of Daura there almost matches Spain's is quite significant."

To cater for these new market trends and challenges, the Damm Group is carrying out an ambitious expansion scheme at its Barcelona factory, the company's base, to whose existing premises six more production and bottling plants for beer, water and soft drinks are being added, while its own malthouse is also currently undergoing renovation. Construction at the El Prat factory, whose enormous Estrella Damm logo greets passengers as they land at Barcelona Airport nearby, are expected to cost 241 million euros and, when finished, will have increased the plant's production capacity from 2.5 to 5 million hectoliters (2.1 to 4.2 million barrels). The remodeling project represents a commitment to innovation as a way of guaranteeing that the company develops sustainably, in line with one of its basic principles: respect for the environment. In real terms, this translates into the factory having its own electrical co-generator, while the overall renovation scheme includes installing solar panels, reducing water and electricity consumption, reducing steam emissions produced by the boiling process, using natural gas-fuelled fork lift trucks and harnessing biogas for industrial use via a water treatment system.

While El Prat represents the modern face of Damm, its La Bohemia factory right in the heart of Barcelona is where its long pedigree shows. The site where Damm first started brewing in 1905 now serves as the group headquarters and is a repository of company history. In several of its component units, the brewing technology of nearly 90 years ago can still be seen; indeed, one of them has been turned into a museum (open to professional visitors only, and by prior appointment) housing a vast and fascinating collection of objects, photographs and advertising material tracing the evolution of a company that has become a Barcelona institution. Suitably, I round off my visit with a glass of Estrella Damm, drunk within sight of another cherished local landmark–La Sagrada Familia, Antoni Gaudí's Modernist cathedral–just a ten minute walk away.

Santiago Sánchez Segura *has worked as a trainee journalist for* Radiotelevisión del Principado de Asturias *and in the Economic and Commercial Office of the Spanish Embassy in Miami. He is currently on a placement at* Spain Gourmetour.

DAMM GROUP

Year of foundation: 1876
Activity: Manufacturing, bottling and canning beverages
Turnover for 2008: 755 million euros
Main export markets: Australia, France, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.
Sectors and brands: Beers (A.K. Damm, BockDamm, Damm Lemon, Daura, Estrella del Sur, Estrella Damm, Estrella Levante, Free Damm, Inedit, Keler, Saaz, Skol, Victoria, Voll-Damm and Xibeca) and mineral waters (Fuente Liviana and Veri).
Workforce: 2,223 employees
Head office: Calle Rosselló 515 08025 Barcelona
Tel. +34 932 90 92 11
Fax +34 932 90 93 37
www.damm.es

Still Life with GAME, Vegetables and Fruit

Juan Sánchez Cotán (1560-1627)

Juan Sánchez Cotán was born in 1560 in Orgaz, Toledo (central Spain) and studied in the province of Toledo with one of the precursors of Spanish still life painters, Blas de Ledesma. After entering the Carthusian monastery El Paular (Madrid) in 1603 and then moving to Granada in 1612, he focused on religious subjects but without making any particular impact. He is known above all for his previous still lifes, being considered the most important Spanish still life artist of the Baroque period and exerting an influence on many other specialists who followed in his wake. Here we can see one of his most outstanding works in which the cardoon plays a major role, given its prominence in the composition. Sánchez Cotán produced austere works, generally featuring humble, everyday objects. In this case, there are also some pheasants but, by his skilled use of light and shadow, the painter gives pride of place to the cardoon, the simple vegetables around the base and the hanging fruit at the top. The composition is almost geometrical, a hallmark of his still lifes. Another is the importance given to the simple cardoon, a subject that reappears in several of his works. This painting was produced by Sánchez Cotán just one year before he withdrew from secular life.

COLOPHON

Photo © Prado National Museum, Spain
Translation: Jenny McDonald/©ICEX

Still Life with Game, Vegetables and Fruit / 1602
Oil on canvas, 68 x 89 cm
© Prado National Museum, Spain

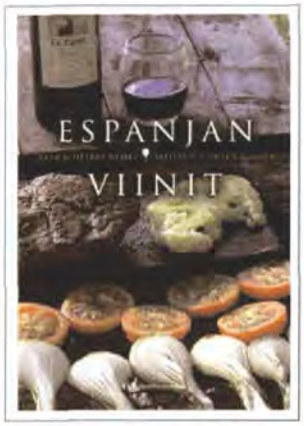
LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Text
Samara Kamenecka/
©ICEX

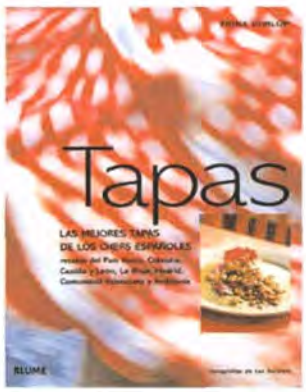
A Day at elBulli: An Insight into the Ideas, Methods and Creativity of Ferran Adrià by Albert Adrià, Ferran Adrià and Juli Soler. English, Spanish.
Which restaurant receives 2,000,000 requests for reservations per year for only 8,000 places? Where has the eating experience been described as "magical"? Where is the food art? At only one place in the world: elBulli. And the wizard behind it all? Ferran Adrià.
This book offers a peek behind the curtain, an exclusive look at what goes on behind the scenes: the menu at elBulli, the kitchens, Adrià's early years, the reservation system, the electronic wine list, the restaurant's history, and shopping in Roses. Read about the passion and commitment of the team and their devotion to creativity. The restaurant is compared to a workshop, the aim being "to create dishes that engage guests' sensory, emotional and intellectual faculties to the full, surprising them."
Through over 1,000 color photographs, the book shows a detailed picture story of how the day evolves, from dawn 'til dusk, how each ingredient is treated and each dish prepared, the many techniques and the ongoing breaking of barriers, the kitchen at full throttle and the dining room packed.
Unsurprisingly, the selection of recipes are ahead of their time: monkfish liver fondue with ponzu and white sesame-flavored kumquat, fresh liquorice infusion jelly lasagna, and carrot-LYO foam with hazelnut foam-air and Córdoba spices are but a few.
Perhaps the *Times* review put it best when it said: "To describe elBulli as 'a restaurant' is like describing Shakespeare as 'a writer'". (*Phaidon, www.phaidon.com*)

Joan Roca. Diez menús para un concierto. La cocina de la música (Joan Roca. Ten Menus for a Concert. Musical Cuisine) by Jaume Cabré, Salvador Garcia-Arbós and Jordi Maluquer. Spanish.
Gastronomy meets music in this book by Joan Roca (El Celler de Can Roca, Gerona, 2 Michelin stars). Here he offers ten menus (40 recipes in total) inspired by musical selections from composers including Puccini, Toldrà and Verdi.
Mozart's Don Giovanni (1787) is served with smoked baby octopus and pheasant cannelloni, while Symphony No. 6 in F Major Op. 68 (1808) by Beethoven readies the taste buds for rice, black sausage and sea urchin and cod brandade crisp.
The text comes with a 70-minute CD in which pianist Antoni Besses improvises 10 pieces based on Roca's dishes. Music to the ears, and the stomach. (*Galerada, Serveis d'Edició I Traducció, www.galerada.cat*)

El Jabugo. V Congreso Mundial del Jamón (Jabugo Ham. 5th World Congress of Dry-Cured Ham). Spanish. This book, which celebrates Ibérico ham, was published as part of the 5th World Congress of Dry-Cured Ham, held in Huelva, and attended by leading industry representatives, renowned scientists, academics and international research centers. The product's unique characteristics have peaked the interest of experts in many fields, ranging from veterinary science to nutrition to R&D. Huelva is in the spotlight because of the key role ham has played in its history and development, and this text offers insight into topics including pigs and their natural habitat, different types of Ibérico pigs, traditional industrial production of Ibérico ham, the various cuts, nutritional properties and PDO Jamón de Huelva. A 240-page homage to the region, and its star. (*Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Agricultura y Pesca, www.juntadeandalucia.es/agriculturaypesca*)



Espanjan Viinit (Spanish Wines) by Eva and Heikki Remes. Finnish. It comes as no surprise to hear that fever for Spanish wines has spread across the globe, and Scandinavia is certainly no exception. Well-known Finnish authors Eva and Heikki Remes are Spanish gastronomy enthusiasts, and their book offers an extensive selection of traditional Finnish recipes, complete with suggestions on the perfect accompaniment: Spanish wines, all of which are available at Finland's Alko, the national alcoholic beverage retailing monopoly.
The project was funded in part by ICEX and its Wines from Spain program. This is a top-notch guide for those interested in gastronomy and with a penchant for good food and great wine, a segment in Finland that's growing in leaps and bounds. (*Multikustannus; www.multikustannus.fi*)



New Tapas: Today's Best Bar Food from Spain by Fiona Dunlop. English, Spanish. Tapas, a Spanish hallmark, are changing with the times. This book highlights some of the country's most creative cooks and a selection of their old school recipes, side-by-side with singular suggestions. Some fuse Spanish and international influences into works of art, others are more traditional–but they all celebrate exciting textures and flavors.
Sections are organized by region and include the chef's profile and bar/restaurant, photos and a selection of simple recipes. Try the lamb meatballs with mint or the tuna belly confit with ginger cream rice. Complete with a restaurant guide and a glossary, if you're looking for the 411 on the new tapas scene, here's your book. (*Blume, www.blume.net*)

El aceite de oliva, alma del Mediterráneo (Olive Oil, Soul of the Mediterranean) by Francisco Javier Barbancho Cisneros and José Mataix Verdú. Spanish. This in-depth encyclopedia-like book traces the fascinating journey of olives and olive oil throughout civilizations, from Ancient Greece to today.
The authors maintain that the tree and its fruit are the Mediterranean's most distinguishing features, the most important source of lipids since time immemorial, a vital economic resource, a crucial ingredient in countless dishes, symbolic in sacred texts and religious rituals, present in art, the focus of literature, referenced in history, a miracle therapeutic ointment, an essential part of a healthy diet, and well on their way to becoming part of our cultural heritage. (*Instituto de Estudios Giennenes, Diputación Provincial de Jaén, www.dipujaen.com*)

Firo Vázquez y la Cocina de El Olivar de Moratalla. (Firo Vázquez and Cuisine from El Olivar in Moratalla). Chema Barroso, Firo Martínez Vázquez de Parga, Luis de Pazos, Matías Pérez Llera. Spanish. Vázquez's restaurant, El Olivar de Moratalla, in northeastern Murcia, boasts countless local and international distinctions; one look at this book and you'll understand why. In addition to details on the region's leading raw materials, from oil to wine, the genius chef includes sets of recipes for each season based on the four classical elements: air, water, fire and land, together with a fifth element. Lamb curry with saffron couscous and mint sorbet; rabbit terrine with pine nuts, thistle mushrooms and chestnuts; and Moratalla marzipan with cold pistachio soup are just a few of his ideas. The photos are magnificent and the instructions as detailed as they come. (*Aceites de Moratalla, S.L. +34 968 72 40 54*)

Tradiciones, alimentos y recetas de la cocina extremeña (Tradition, Food and Recipes from Extremadura) by María Inés Chamorro Fernández. Spanish. If ever there was a place where the intersection of cultures left its mark, Extremadura, in southwest Spain, is it. Romans, Arabs and Jews, together with Cantabrian and Asturian influences, among others, have all played a role in building Extremadura's culinary backbone. This book looks at their impact on the region's cuisine and the implications in terms of culture, history and ethnology.
The author also provides more than 200 recipes in detail that go beyond preparation to include literary, musical and lexical references. Lizard in almond sauce and neroli water are just two of the fantastic dishes, all of which will provide you with an authentic taste of Extremadura. (*Ediciones Trea, www.trea.es*)

Mastering the Fine Art of Slicing Spanish Ham by Pilar Esteban Ordorica, translation by Janet Mendel. English, Spanish. Cutting ham was once the job of the butcher, the waiter or the chef in the restaurant; now, however, it is a profession, and one that requires talent, extensive knowledge, practice and a steady hand. This text discusses different types of ham (Ibérico and Serrano, among others) and offers information on slicing, safety, aesthetics, preparation, utensils and important vocabulary.
On today's gastronomic scene, skilled slicing is considered an art form; it can often determine aroma, texture and taste. If you're looking to learn the ins and outs of the trade, this book is without a doubt a cut above the rest. (*www.spanishhamnews.com*)

Cocina tradicional: País Vasco (Traditional Cuisine: the Basque Country) by Garbiñe Badiola and Jesús Llona Larrauri. Spanish.
Cocina tradicional: Cataluña (Traditional Cuisine: Catalonia) by Ana María Calera. Spanish. Here are two cookbooks in a series that takes readers on a gastronomic journey around Spain's regions to discover their many mouth-watering emblematic dishes. Each text merges time-honored and cutting-edge suggestions, organized alphabetically and complete with beautiful photos and detailed information on ingredients. Learn step-by-step how to prepare Basque favorites such as *intxaursalsa* (a nut-based dessert), *marmitako* (a fish stew) and turbot in txacoli (a white Basque wine). Journey to Catalonia by feasting on Catalan-style tripe, grilled cuttlefish or partridge with prunes. Travel Spain, region by region, and savor its innumerable rich flavors from the comfort of your own kitchen. (*Editorial Everest, www.everest.es*)

RIBERA DEL GUADIANA
Denominación de Origen

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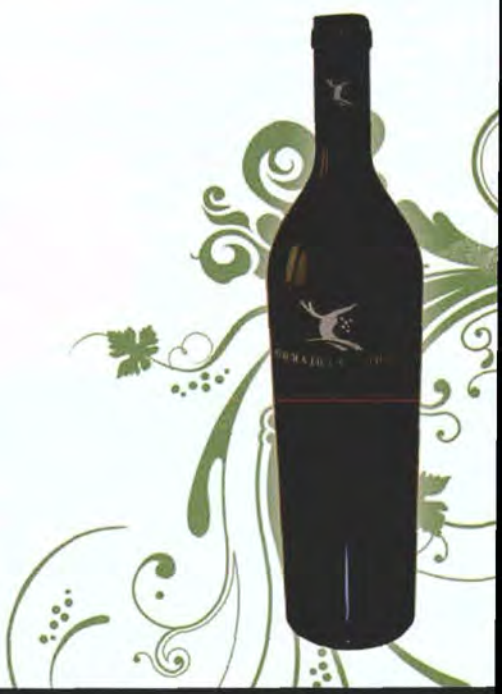
Getting to know the past so as to gain a vision of the future. Respecting our wines' traditions so as to find the cutting edge. Searching for balance so as to come into harmony with the Earth.



Alimentos de Extremadura
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www.comercioextremadura.org

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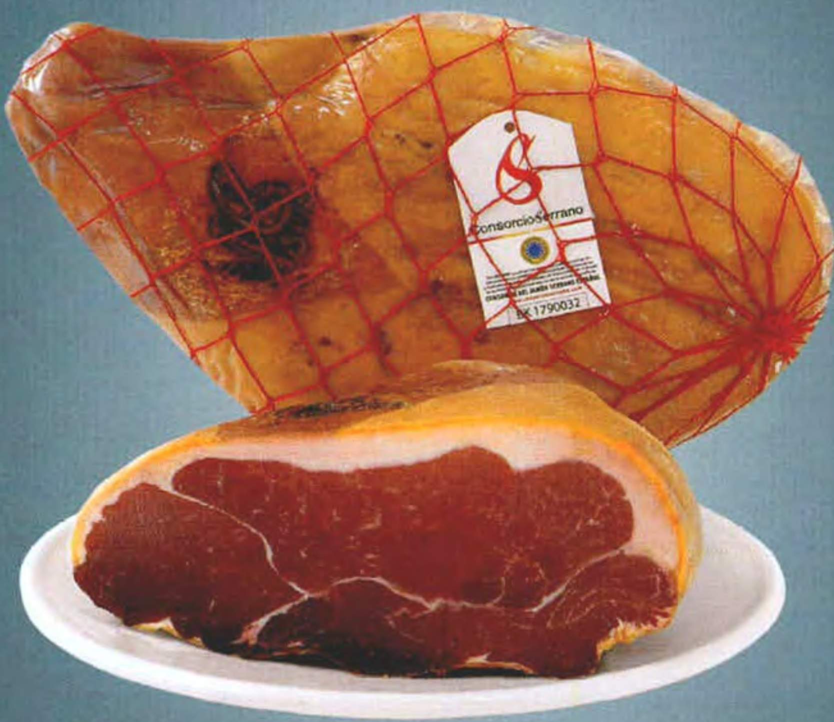

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Paternina

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Rioja From The Heart

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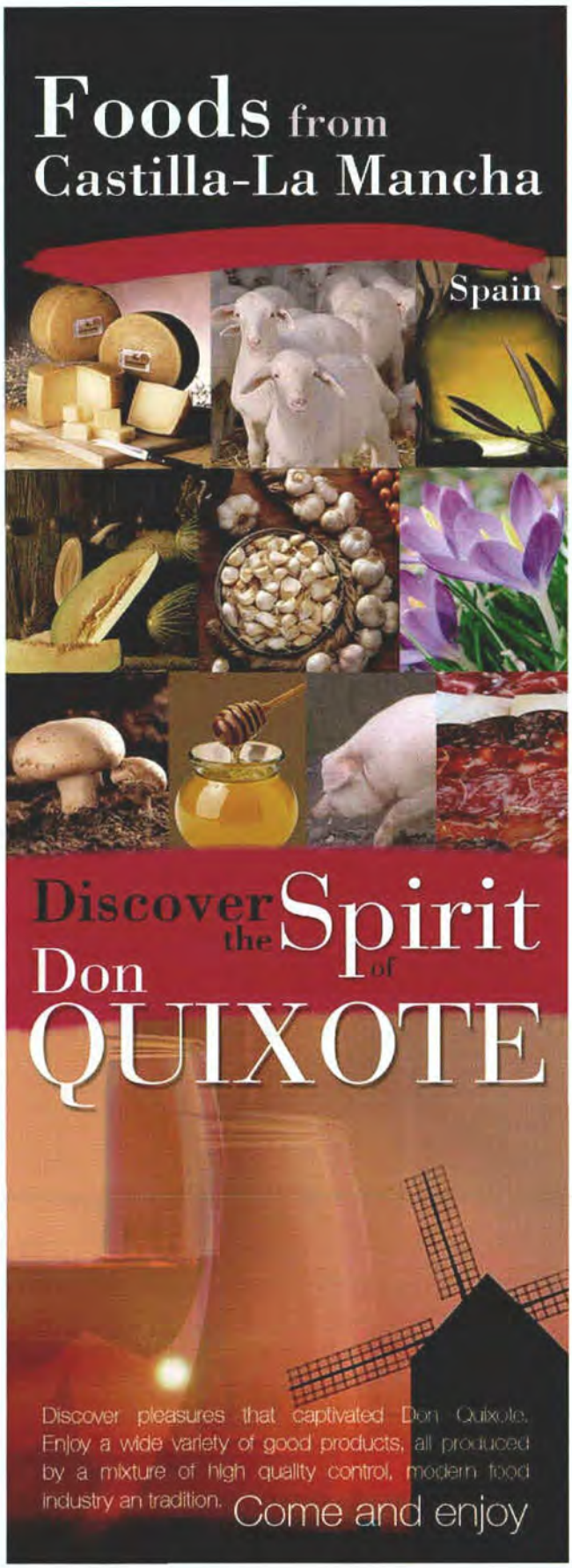

EXPORTERS

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

Food Products

Sausages

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Botillo del Bierzo
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Fax: (+34) 987 414 214
info@botillodelbierzo.es
www.botillodelbierzo.es

Consejo Regulador IGP
Cecina de León
Tel.: (+34) 987 615 275
Fax: (+34) 987 617 587
consejo@cecinadeleon.org
www.cecinadeleon.org

Consejo Regulador IGP
Chorizo de Cantimpalos
Tel.: (+34) 921 432 001
Fax: (+34) 921 440 718
igp@chorizodecantimpalos.org
www.chorizodecantimpalos.org

Consejo Regulador IGP
Chorizo Riojano
Tel.: (+34) 941 512 571
Fax: (+34) 941 512 583
info@lariojacalidad.org
www.larioja.org

Consejo Regulador IGP
Chosco de Tineo
Tel.: (+34) 985 800 174
Fax: (+34) 985 800 674
www.asturex.org/agro/pdf/choscodetineo.pdf

Consejo Regulador IGP
Embutido de Requena
Tel.: (+34) 962 302 550
Fax: (+34) 962 302 758
info@embutidoderequena.es
www.embutidoderequena.es

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www.salchichonvic.com

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Fax: (+34) 971 256 134
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www.sobrasadademallorca.org

Tomatoes

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