

# APART

THE GASTRONOMY OF TOMORROW

EDITION  
2022



GUEST EDITORS

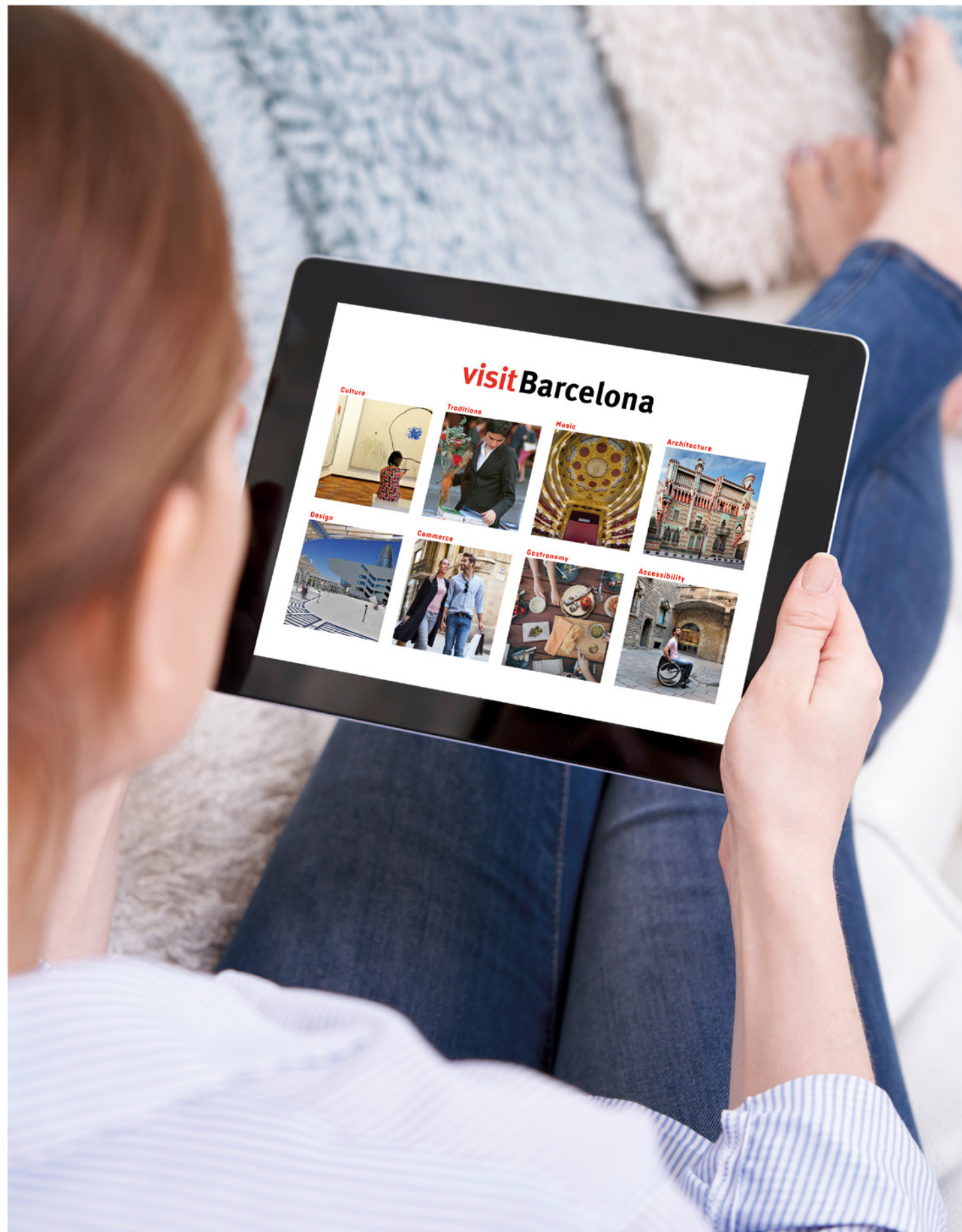
/// ROCA BROTHERS

# MICRO REVOLUTIONS

LOCAL EXPERIENCES  
THAT SHAKE THE  
CULINARY WORLD

BARCELONA / PERU / THE CRADLE OF WINE / COLOMBIA / TÜRKİYE / MEXICO / SCOTLAND / THE SOURCES OF CACAO





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Guest editors /// **Joan, Josep and Jordi Roca**

## EXPERIENCES TO SHARE THE FUTURE

The cuisine of El Celler de Can Roca, in Girona, sprang from roots steeped in the Mediterranean landscape. It is a combination of mixed cultures that arrived through this temperate sea that bathes us, which the world today somehow savours for having served as a crossroads between East and West. Our cuisine is a legacy that comes from afar and we feel that we pass it down. Old books, customs, traditions, seasons and memories of the physical and human landscape have deeply influenced our cuisine and us. And so has travel, because it broadens the palate and seasons our cuisine with new experiences and ingre-

dients. We are convinced that creation requires passion, motivation and adventure, as well as accepting what we don't know, like a Socratic premise in a positive dialogue that makes us feel indebted to the best trade: learning.

One of the most precious parts of life is its uncertainty. Ten years ago, we set ourselves challenges that today are experiences to be shared. What would our restaurant be like somewhere on the 60th parallel, in Scotland, changing the influences of a sea blown by the Greek god Aeolus for another under the imperious rule of Káry, the Viking god of the wind?

Travelling is movement, non-conformity and freedom. In our case, it was also a way to flee from the success of *the charts*, which lead to stagnation and stunt creativity. There is always so much room to improve. We wanted to start over, travel to confirm that there are many cuisines that could motivate us to learn and understand other palates.

We travelled for several years. In that sense, we are pioneers. We are excited to share the countries that we love, that connect us with an important part of our cuisine and with lovely people from hospitable lands. We wish you a tasty journey. **A**

“

**In our migrant neighbourhood, El Celler de Can Roca is the result of bringing different parts together. We embrace food cultures generously, like kin, combining our sweet, savoury and liquid worlds.**

”



14

42

64

84

106

126

146

166

# BARCELONA

*Culinary heritage A culinary revolution that started two decades ago is still under way due to the good work of a younger generation of chefs that keep Catalan cuisine at the top of the international scene.*

# PERU

*An impressive heritage In the Peruvian Andes, chefs and rural communities share the same vision: to innovate and promote the wealth of high-altitude products for a better future.*

# THE CRADLE OF WINE

*The natural revolution From Georgia, a movement has spread around winemaking in clay amphorae, an ancient method that has been rejuvenated to break the mould of the wine sector.*

# COLOMBIA

*Committed cuisine In post-conflict Colombia, we can see how cuisine can be an engine of social and economic transformation. Some of the most committed chefs in the country tell us about it.*

# TÜRKIYE

*The importance of roots We take the pulse of Istanbul, a crossroads of some of the richest culinary cultures in the world, with one of the most renowned Turkish chefs. A journey full of aromas and flavours.*

# MEXICO

*The culture of mole Through one of the most iconic dishes of Mexico, we follow the history of the country and discover how it can highlight the role and identity of women in the kitchen.*

# SCOTLAND

*In praise of austerity With the extraordinary natural pantry of Scotland, a group of chefs has created something amazing and simple, a small revolution in a country off the usual gourmet food path.*

# THE SOURCES OF CACAO

*From tree to bar The world of cacao is evolving, with a new commitment to enhance its quality while increasing what the farmers earn in Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela.*



*In 2014, the Roca brothers transferred the El Celler de Can Roca team to different countries around the world. It was the first of several international tours to inspire them with the cuisine and products of the countries they visited. In **APART** issue no. 2, we will discover some of the camaraderie cultivated during these and other trips in a journey passing through Peru, Georgia, Colombia, Türkiye, Mexico, Scotland and the sources of cacao (Colombia, Peru and Venezuela), enabling us to capture the small revolutions that will mark the cuisine to come.*

**by** Judith Càlix **///** **photos** Clara Campins, Joan Pujol-Creus, Gustavo Vivanco and Sergio Recabarren

# A NETWORK OF COOKS, FARMERS AND PRODUCERS TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Establishing alliances is essential in all areas. In Peru, Malena Martínez, the co-director of the Fundación Mater Iniciativa, reminds us of this in one of the articles of this very magazine. “If there are organisations that do exceptional work, why continue walking alone when we can find ways to come together?” she asked us.

Unity is strength: this is the common denominator of all the interesting stories collected in the second issue of **APART**. It is also the life and work philosophy of its guest editors, the Roca brothers. Few triumvirates have been as productive in Spain as that of Joan, Josep and Jordi at El Celler de Can Roca, who have spread knowledge of our culinary heritage everywhere.

**Project inception**  
When representatives of **APART**, a yearly publication sponsored by **CUINA**, the leading gourmet food magazine in Catalonia, presented the project to the Roca brothers, everything flowed from the start. In addition to agreeing to be the guest editors, the natives of Girona clearly explained the places through which they thought the future of

*The Roca brothers go to Can Roca, their parents' restaurant, where they started cooking. Below, the three brothers during one of their international tours.*







From left to right, Pía León and siblings Virgilio and Malena Martínez. On the right is Mayumi Ogata, who looks for quality cacao in Colombia and is featured in one of the articles.

cuisine would move at that first meeting. We have not strayed far from that first outline of the journey... And what do these seven places have in common? They have all shown that by working in a network, food—as well as cuisine—can be a very powerful lever for social and economic change that helps to preserve the environment and biodiversity, while rediscovering a country or valuing different cultures’ identity and traditions.

Today, all over the world we find movements in which cooks, farmers, fishermen, ranchers and small-scale artisans work together with the firm conviction that the food sector can only be transformed on a small scale over short distances. They are convinced that only in this

way can they take good care of the land and make it more prosperous and, in short help to build a better world.

#### Seven countries, seven inspirations

The journey on which the Roca brothers invite us begins in Peru. In that country, people feel proud of their culinary heritage that Gastón Acurio knew how to spread throughout the world. This time, we have travelled to the Peruvian Andes, near Cuzco, where Virgilio Martínez, Malena Martínez and María Pía León, from the restaurant MIL and their research laboratory, Mater Iniciativa, investigate native products and connect with Andean producers and artisans. They have found a way



to develop a significant haute cuisine product to leave as a legacy to future generations.

We then travel to Georgia, which is considered the cradle of wine-making. Since time immemorial, wine has been vinified in this country in *kvevris* or buried clay amphorae. Our collaborators Keiko and Maika will explain how the revival of amber wines in Georgia became a small revolutionary movement that has spread all over the world, from Türkiye to Italy, Armenia and Spain.

In Colombia, a country broken by years of armed conflict, chefs like

## By working in a network, food can be a very powerful lever of change that can help to build a better world.

Leonor Espinosa (and today also her daughter, the sommelier Laura Hernández), Eduardo Martínez and Antonuela Ariza, from the Mini-mal restaurant in Bogotá, have discovered that in addition to being an engine of social and economic change, food can contribute to social peace. These chefs also demonstrate that cuisine that shows a country’s cultural diversity can be interconnected with social responsibility projects.

In Istanbul, a crossroads of cultures and culinary traditions, we meet one of the benchmarks of the new Turkish cuisine. Maksut Aşkar wants to rediscover the flavours of Anatolia, those of his childhood memories, through a modern cuisine that preserves traditions and guarantees the sustainability of the land and those who work it.

#### The cuisine is your territory

Returning to the Americas, we will see how *mole*, one of the most iconic dishes in Mexico, whose preparation is a ritual

transmitted from generation to generation, can also be used to highlight the social and historical importance of women in the kitchen and indigenous cultures, among other aspects.

Scotland and gourmet cuisine? The country has a special magnetism and light, but at first glance, it does not seem like a great culinary destination for the general public. However, the Roca brothers have revealed to us an incipient movement of chefs who make surprising and deliciously simple cuisine based on their impressive local products, a small revolution in a country that until recently was unaware of its culinary potential.

Finally, we travel to the sources of cacao, in Colombia, Peru and Venezuela, where chocolate has stopped being faithful to the past and is becoming subject to movements such as “bean to bar”. This change in production involves many women and quality prevails and increases farmers’ profits, turning chocolate towards the future for the first time. **A**



# 1 / BARCELONA CULINARY HERITAGE

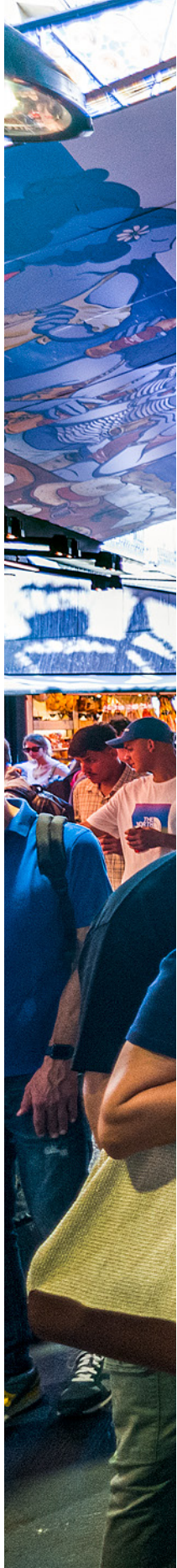
## The legacy of a revolution

Ferran Adrià, the Roca brothers and Carme Ruscalleda placed Catalan cuisine at the top of the international scene. They were some of the architects of the culinary revolution that is still under way due to the good work of a younger generation of professionals, such as chef Carlota Claver, from the restaurant La Gormanda.



Each day, the Barcelona fish market bustles with activity, selling the day's catch, such as these prawns.





*There is no better way to discover the food of any particular place than to turn to its roots. Chef Carlota Claver has worked in the kitchen of Barcelona restaurants since she was very young and knows the basics of traditional Catalan cuisine. There is nobody like her to show us such a thriving city. We begin our journey in the Eixample, the neighbourhood where her restaurant is located and whose urban fabric is one of the biggest hallmarks of the city.*

by Jordi Bes Lozano /// photos Enrique Marco

# A CITY WITH A CULINARY BACKGROUND

**When we fly to Barcelona, we have a good chance of enjoying a spectacular panoramic view before landing. If we are seated on the right side of the plane, the city is at our feet. We see it dominated by the characteristic pattern of the Eixample, with its parallel and perpendicular streets only broken by Avinguda Diagonal, an avenue that crosses the city from one end to the other. The city's peculiar geometric physiognomy is only altered by a few singular buildings looming above the rest, like the Sagrada Família church.**

The Eixample district is where Carlota Claver (Barcelona, 1980) grew up and lives. Claver is one of the best exponents of the new generation of

chefs who catapulted Catalan cuisine to the top of the world's gourmet food scene two decades ago, based in Barcelona. Claver invites us to seek out what is left of that revolution led by chefs like Ferran Adrià (El Bulli), Joan Roca (El Celler de Can Roca) and Carme Ruscalleda (Sant Pau).

Claver is in front of the restaurant La Gormanda, located where the Tordera grocery store used to stand, on the left side of the Eixample. The address is 160 Carrer d'Aribau and after opening the door to discover the chef's culinary virtues, the first thing that pleasantly catches my attention is the delicate fragrance of suckling pig floating in the air. Claver invites me into the kitchen and explains that they are cooking the suckling pig in



## BARCELONA



1,636,193  
inhabitants  
(2021)

24  
restaurants boasting  
a total of  
35 Michelin stars

1789  
The year that  
Can Culleretes opened,  
the oldest restaurant in  
the city

39  
fresh produce  
markets

38  
boats in the fishermen's  
association

3.5  
hectares of vineyards in  
the municipal area





Above, Carlota Claver choosing vegetables with Paula Rodríguez, from Soulblim Nature, in Baix Llobregat Agrarian Park. On the right, activity in the port of Barceloneta with the arrival of the fishing boats.



the oven with orange, herbs and spices and preparing a very spicy onion to accompany it while it cooks.

The restaurant opened on 28 February 2017 and her partner is her husband Ignasi Céspedes, the father of their two daughters. Claver is not new to the trade, since her parents, Carlos Claver and Aurora Álvarez, also work in the hospitality industry and Carlota got her start in the family business. She began at the now-defunct Alba París restaurant and later at Alba Granados, that continues its journey. “I helped with whatever was needed: peeling potatoes, serving tables, washing dishes”, she recalls.

## La Gormanda has two very cosy dining rooms, the first presided over by a large *trencadís* dish.

When she was 18, she was still not sure about what she would study and it was her father who gave her the ultimate support to become a cook. He invited her to dinner at Hofmann, a restaurant closely linked to the cooking school of the same name, which has a Michelin star and is one of the paradigmatic signs that Barcelona has a lot to offer in gourmet cuisine. “I walked in and thought... Wow, I love it! I want to be here!”, Claver says. By the time they finished dinner, she was already enrolled in a course. Thus, she began to train there as a cook and she studied to be a sommelier at the CETT-UB. She later cut her teeth in internships at various restaurants, such as Adrià’s El Bulli, which was a school of great brilliance.

### **Kitchen in an old grocery store**

La Gormanda came into being after the family received a heavy blow. The restaurant Alba Granados burned down almost completely in 2015 (surprisingly, only the kitchen escaped the flames) and Carlota Claver was left without a job for a while. However, even though it is still uncommon for a woman to lead an haute cuisine project, Ignasi’s support helped her to see how the situation gave them the opportunity to chart their own path in the old grocery store. “I was lucky that he was always there to tell me: ‘Go

ahead, you can do it!’”, Claver says, referring to her husband.

Alba Granados reopened in a new location where it could feed two hundred diners and had Mario, Carlota’s brother, and their parents as patrons. At La Gormanda, Carlota’s project, everything is smaller and concentrated in two very cosy dining rooms. The one facing the street is presided over by a large white dish made with *trencadís*: fragments of other plates and ceramic pieces. It reminds us that we are in the city where the Catalan Art Nouveau architect Antoni Gaudí left his mark.

This dining room gives access to the kitchen, with a grill included, which goes down a few steps so the process is fully visible to the diners. They can even eat at a round table right next to it. Watching the cooks work is almost hypnotic. Carlota likes the movement and she can be seen cleaning some vegetables, hard at work over the stove or finishing a dish, while Ignasi and the rest of the team dance to her rhythm. “I like rhythm, I like liveliness, which is what Barcelona has”, Claver says. The city’s pulse can be seen on the other side of the window overlooking the street in the bustle of traffic and pedestrians intrinsic to the Eixample. Even so, there is peace in La Gormanda and perhaps even more so in the upstairs dining room, which is part of the building that served as a





From left to right, Artur Martínez in front of the Aürt restaurant, with a Michelin star; one of the dishes on the menu of the restaurant Disfrutar, where we also see a part of the dining room; and Carlota Claver eating at Nairo, chef David Rustarazo's restaurant.

home for the owners of the grocery store that preceded the restaurant, with a window opening onto the interior of the block.

Hofmann was Claver's greatest school and her restaurant is imbued with details learned from that time. She especially remembers the teachings of Mariano Gonzalvo, who now has a restaurant in the Pyrenees (Lo Paller del Coc, in Surp, Catalonia). "Talking about him gets me excited", she says. "He gives me goosebumps whenever I say his name because he has taught me so much". At Hofmann, she learned the importance of bases in the kitchen, good stocks and broths for stews, optimal cooking times and the importance of presentation, meaning that everything is well ordered, that the dishes come out clean and that the staff have a good appearance with clothing that is always neat. All this has given her solid training and maturity to react to any development that may arise in the kitchen, where she is seen to be attentive to every detail, as is Ignasi.

While it was clear to her at Hofmann that she wanted to be a chef and learned the foundations on which her cuisine is based, her internship at El Bulli, which had its own R&D workshop in Barcelona at that time, was a revelation that made her think: "What a marvellous profession this is!" and realise that "cooking is a vast world that never ends". That experience was "like being in another world" for her, and she had plenty of reasons: "I saw so many products I didn't know, so many techniques... It was like spending the whole day with my mouth open". During that period she learned discipline, set high standards for herself and learned how to work under pressure. She also obviously learned more concrete things, like the possibilities of the low-temperature cooking machine, which she also incorporated into La Gormanda, and techniques of caramel, foams and airs. "The creative part that we all like is still with me, although I really appreciate traditional cuisine", she says.

## Legume and cod stews are also typical of Barcelonan cuisine.

### Restaurants that are benchmarks

Claver practices traditional Catalan cuisine, but with touches of innovation. You only have to see her surf and turf dishes, which are a mix of ingredients that come from fishing with others obtained from vegetable gardens or the field. An example of this is pig's trotters, which are served boneless as if they were a terrine, accompanied by large red shrimp caught in Barcelona, grilled and seasoned with part of its broth. This dish is completed with chard, pickled beetroot and a bit of beetroot cream, ingredients from the garden that help to lighten the palate.

Legume and cod stews are also typical of Barcelonan cuisine. On the menu at La Gormanda, we find a dish that combines cod tripe with beans from Santa Pau and, in winter, with *espigalls*, a variety of winter cabbage from the neighbouring county of Garraf. Another of Carlota's inspirations is Asian cuisine, in whose dishes she introduces some Catalan root ingredients and techniques.

"I really like those cultures and their techniques, the perfection with which they make the dishes, their resolve and orderliness. I am a tenacious person, a fighter, and I think I have this connection with them".

Claver wants to take over from all those pioneers of the late 20th century and from so many other chefs whose work is based on a Catalan cuisine fully open to innovation and who have always considered Barcelona one of their assets. "I think Barcelona has a lot of potential. We have the sea and the mountains and I believe that there is a very good foundation of Catalan cuisine that we must take care of. I am passionate about the cuisines of the world and I use them, but we must defend our base and not lose it", she says.

For big occasions, paying homage, enjoying life or simply eating well, Claver



# DISHES ‘MADE IN’ BARCELONA

THE CULINARY HERITAGE OF THE CATALAN CAPITAL IS FULL OF EXAMPLES PROVING THAT YOU CAN FIND DISHES WITH A PEDIGREE, EVEN IN A METROPOLIS OF MORE THAN ONE AND A HALF MILLION INHABITANTS.

## ZARZUELA

*A seafood stew that is prepared with rock fish and shellfish cooked in a clay or iron casserole and where there is no shortage of two fundamental bases of Catalan cuisine: sofrito and picada.*



## COD, BARCELONA STYLE

*This traditional Lenten dish can be eaten all year round today. It is made with cod, garlic, spinach and pine nuts. Cod is so important to Catalan cuisine that there are cod shops in every market, where it is sold salted and desalted.*

## PARELLADA RICE

*This rice dish is the most emblematic at 7 Portes restaurant, which bears the name of its owner. This makes it very easy for diners, who do not have to deal with shells, bones or peeling prawns.*



## CANNELLONI, BARCELONA STYLE

*In Barcelona, cannelloni are prepared with a filling of minced meat mixed with chicken and lamb giblets, especially liver and brains. And they add a teaspoon of tomato to the bechamel, just like in Rossini cannelloni.*



## BOMBA DE LA BARCELONETA

*This tapa bears the name of the seaside neighbourhood of Barcelona. It is a seasoned breaded meatball with potato that is served with mayonnaise and tomato sauce and always has a certain degree of spiciness.*





### **A world-class culinary destination.**

Around 20 years ago, Catalan cuisine was uniquely and unrepeatably catapulted to the top of the international gourmet scene. Barcelona was one of the places that embodied the spirit of the movement the most. Since then, a new generation of chefs have turned their projects into top national and international restaurants.

recommends some of the restaurants that she personally likes the most. In fact, she asks her family to give her a cookbook or a meal at a good restaurant on certain dates because, when she can combine it with her own business, she likes to go out to eat. She remembers one birthday when she was gifted a meal at Alkimia, led by chef Jordi Vilà, which has a Michelin star.

That day left its mark. "I remember it as a magical experience". She especially remembers a delicious dish of fish and rice with ñora: "I was so moved by that rice". Recently, she had the chance to share that special experience with Vilà himself. This chef also bases his work on traditional Catalan cuisine, like many others, such as Artur Martínez from the Aürt restaurant. Martínez opened it in 2019 at the Hilton Diagonal Mar hotel after having closed Capritx, an old family bar on the outskirts of the city of Terrassa that he had successfully con-

verted into a small gourmet restaurant that was awarded a Michelin star.

Claver also identifies with chef Oriol Casals, from the gourmet tavern Teòric: "He is very sensitive and we have values in common, such as love for our work, discipline and service". Regarding the restaurants in Barcelona, Claver also advises us not to overlook Disfrutar, which has two Michelin stars and is considered one of the best in the world. She also mentions Cocina Hermanos Torres, which is the most recent addition to the select group with three Michelin stars. Disfrutar's owners (Oriol Castro, Eduard Xatruch and Mateu Casañas) met at El Bulli. Castro was her mentor there a few years later.

Claver considers it "a source of pride" that there are so many Michelin stars in Barcelona. There are 24 restaurants with at least one. Many were inherited from the creative path blazed by El Bulli or from establishments that came later, such as the



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**At El Bulli, I saw so many products that I didn't know and so many techniques... It was like spending the whole day with my mouth open. There I learned discipline and techniques that I still put into practice.**

**Carlota Claver.**

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## “It is a source of pride that there are so many Michelin stars in Barcelona, many of them inherited from the creative path blazed by El Bulli.”

now-defunct Tickets by Albert Adrià, who has now returned with Enigma.

Yet there are also other, more popular eateries, with an excellent relationship between quality and price, scattered throughout all the city's neighbourhoods. Two renowned options are La Pubilla, in Gràcia, which serves market cuisine, and the Montferry winery, in Sants, an ideal place for an *esmorzar de forquilla* ('fork breakfast'), which is also a speciality at La Pubilla, or a glass of vermouth that can be turned into a meal.

### **United stoves**

"I'm really family-oriented and need my family a lot", says Claver, who likes to spend time with her daughters and cook with them at home. For her, the concept of family also takes on a broader meaning that is not limited to her household, judging by the care given to the restaurateurs around her. If Barcelona is a first-class benchmark for cuisine, the Eixample is where there is a greater concentration of bars and restaurants that you cannot afford to miss.

A stone's throw from La Gormanda are Nairod, Palo Verde, Miguelitos and Deliri, to give a few examples. Eating there can help us to delve even deeper into the blend of tradition and innovation that is so typical of the Barcelona culinary scene.

In the bleak days of the coronavirus pandemic, they all gave each other great support to move forward and to face the changes brought about by the health emergency, which resulted in difficulties finding staff and a growing demand to improve work-life balance for hospitality workers, which has motivated many restaurants to reorganise shifts and schedules. "It is emotionally comforting to see that you are not alone and that others have to deal with these small problems", she says. The members of this hospitality-oriented family help each other in their everyday lives, because the most efficient way to get out of trouble is to go to a neighbour. Before Christmas, Claver's vacuum-sealing machine broke down and Nairod's chef, David Rustarazo, better known as Rusti, whom she describes as a "great professional", lent her a hand so that La Gormanda could continue with its work until a new one arrived.

In the end, all the details end up having an impact on the diner's experience. At La Gormanda, they try to seduce you with a mix of tradition and innovation, a typical Barcelona neighbourhood atmosphere, as well as local and seasonal products, which today is understood as sustainable cuisine. Furthermore, for Carlota and Ignasi, the restaurant is "like the annex to their house", which is really close to them, and

### **Heiress to the great names of Catalan cuisine.**

Meeting with producers and suppliers (in the top photo on the previous page, buying at the Perelló cod shop at El Ninot market), talking to them and establishing fluid communication is essential for Carlota Claver, who gives local and seasonal ingredients full prominence on La Gormanda's menu.



## Following the family heritage

Carlota Claver belongs to a family of restaurateurs. She grew up among casseroles and ended up opening her own restaurant with her husband, Ignasi Céspedes. La Gormanda, in the heart of Barcelona's Eixample, has turned its *gyozas de carn d'olla* ('meat dumplings') into an icon that explains her traditional but non-conformist style very well. Carlota Claver is a chef who loves comfort food, the kind that takes us back to family meals prepared with care by our grandmothers. Yet at the same time, she shows us that cooking can be fun if you have enough art and know how to mix the ingredients.



Discover Barcelona's gastronomic hotspots from your mobile phone or VR glasses on the video linked to this QR code or at [www.apartgastro.com](http://www.apartgastro.com)





# “Picades, sofritos, good broths... in Barcelona, we have a very good foundation all our own.”



Barcelona is a city that is experienced in the street and on its terraces, where vermouth is a part of weekend rituals. Above, to the left, the terrace of Bar Calders, in the Poble Sec neighbourhood. On the right, the Arc de Triomf. On the following page, the Boqueria market, on the Rambla, where you can also enjoy a snack.

this is why they treat their customers as if they were guests. It doesn't matter if they are Barcelonans or visitors: “When I travel, I like to find authentic places in the city that feel passion for what they do and that treat me well”. Claver likes to hear English around Barcelona and take care of tourists, an attitude she learned from her parents.

## **City of recipes and markets**

Barcelona has always been a crossroads of cultures with its culinary peculiarities. In Roman times, wine was made on the plain, where the city is located, and oysters were cultivated and eaten on its coastline. The challenge today is to establish exactly what the differences are between

the cuisine prepared in Barcelona and that of the rest of Catalonia, because many of the unique gourmet offerings of Catalonia come together in the capital.

Despite the innovation thriving in the city, Claver is convinced that traditional Barcelonan cuisine can be identified. “Picades, sofritos, good broths... we have a very good foundation all our own, from Barcelona”, she says. By the way, the city is the home to a particular tapa, the *Bomba de la Barceloneta*, a crunchy potato ball stuffed with spicy meat. Barceloneta is the old fishermen's quarter, which was formed from a spit of land reclaimed from the sea that has different establishments where you can eat rice dishes and







*Can Calopa, in Collserola Natural Park, is the only vineyard in the city of Barcelona. It is managed by L'Olivera, which produces red wines under the Vinyes de Barcelona brand.*



fish dishes such as monkfish *suquet* and prawn stew. Some stews are also very local to the city, such as rabbit with snails, which Claver adores, and veal fricassee with mushrooms.

Moreover, Barcelona's 39 markets are part of its most exceptional culinary heritage. Claver likes to go to El Ninot, which is the closest market to her restaurant. At the Bacalalo stall (also known as Lalo's stall, in reference to the owner), she buys salted cod and they bring it to her by bicycle if she cannot go herself. She also likes to buy olives and anchovies at El Ninot and stresses that the market is a well of culture and knowledge. "I have a great time there and it is a way to learn, to exchange experiences, recipes and tradition and to defend the territory", Claver says. "You learn a lot and it is very inspiring to go to the market". She says that you can find many local products there and it is not uncommon for an older person to tell you how they will cook a fish or some legumes while you queue. El Ninot was renovated in 2015 and, despite lying off the beaten tourist path, many stalls have a space reserved for relaxing with a drink.

Claver prefers to buy fresh fish at Peixos Frederic, a business run by the second and third generations of the same family. They have a store on Carrer d'Enric Granados, a stone's throw from the restaurant. Even though it is a big city, Barcelona maintains its fishing port and at Peixos Frederic they try to offer fresh fish from Barcelona and other Catalan markets every day. They bring it to La Gormanda in a wheelbarrow to prevent the production of polluting emissions. "You know that they will buy the freshest and best for you, and with fish we also work with what is in season", she explains. Like with vegetables, they prioritise putting seasonal produce on the table.

Likewise, the fruit and vegetables served at La Gormanda are grown locally. They are supplied by the company Soublim, based in Viladecans. They are the fifth generation of farmers from the



Torras family, who cultivate land in the Baix Llobregat Agrarian Park, the main orchard on the outskirts of Barcelona, right next to the airport. Claver has effusive praise for the products that they serve: "The pumpkins, the perona beans smell and taste so good... They are like velvet. And the tomatoes!"

#### **Attractive wine tourism**

A good meal invites you to taste a quality wine and Barcelona is surrounded by wineries with designations of origin (DOs) where high-quality wines, *caves* and other sparkling wines are produced,

and whose facilities can delight lovers of wine tourism.

Some DOs are better known, such as DOC Priorat, DO Penedès and DO Cava, while others are little gems to discover, such as DO Alella, which is only a few kilometres from Barcelona. Wine with a social bent is even made within the city limits: the cooperative L'Olivera produces Vinyes de Barcelona (DO Catalunya) at the municipally owned Can Calopa de Dalt, located in Collserola, the mountain range that rises behind the plain of the city and separates it from some neighbouring municipalities. This project has been able to regain an ancient wine tradition and promote the inclusion of young people with functional disabilities.

These wines with a story behind them are among those that can be found in La Gormanda. "Any wine on our menu could be drunk at our house", Ignasi says. Carlota stresses the importance that she places on knowing who makes them and on ensuring that they have real esteem for the land. In other words, they are wines that excite them, such as the Coma Bruna red wine from the Espelt winery, 100% Carinyena from DO Empordà, which reminds them of her daughter Bruna. One more shared secret. ④

## **Boosting urban agriculture.**

Though the cultivated land in Barcelona is symbolic, the remaining agricultural areas, like Can Calopa, Can Carlets and La Ponderosa, have received a boost. For example, the Can Calopa de Dalt farmhouse has been managed by the social integration cooperative L'Olivera since 2010.

# **“Shopping at the market is about exchanging experiences and defending the territory.”**





*Miguel Torres*

*Miria Torres*

MIGUEL AND MIRIA TORRES MACZASSER, 5TH GENERATION IN CASTELL DE LA BLEDA (PENEDÈS)



A FAMILY BEYOND SUSTAINABILITY

## PRESERVING HISTORY, PROTECTING THE EARTH

OVER THIRTY YEARS AGO, WE STARTED A PROFOUNDLY INSPIRING PROJECT: THE RECOVERY OF ANCESTRAL VARIETIES ON THE VERGE OF EXTINCTION. A WAY TO PAY HOMAGE TO CATALONIA'S WINE HERITAGE WHILST ALSO ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE AT THE SAME TIME. TODAY, THE RESULT OF ALL THIS WORK IS CLOS ANCESTRAL. AN UNPRECEDENTED, ECOLOGICAL WINE THAT INCORPORATES THE "MONEU" GRAPE IN ITS BLEND; A VINE RESCUED AND THEN PLANTED IN CASTELL DE LA BLEDA, THE PENEDÈS ESTATE WITH MORE THAN 2,500 YEARS OF HISTORY. A COMMITMENT TO OUR PAST, BUT ALSO TO OUR FUTURE.



INTERNATIONAL  
WINERIES FOR  
CLIMATE ACTION



DISCOVER MORE ABOUT  
TORRES & EARTH PROJECT



WINE, ONLY APPRECIATED IN MODERATION





*The regenerative model of agriculture, which promotes a simple way of life, is DO Penedès' commitment on its path to a fully ecological wine, one of the main objectives of the strategic plan of the most important designation of origin of Catalonia, which covers a piece of land where there is evidence of vine cultivation and winemaking dating back over 2,700 years.*

**photos** Maria Rosa Ferré ///

# DO PENEDEÈS, THE VINEYARD REVOLUTION

**Vines have been cultivated and wine has been made in the Penedès area for 2,700 years and DO Penedès is the benchmark for wine production in Catalonia. Grown in over 700 hectares, the xarel·lo is the most cultivated variety in DO Penedès and the DO Penedès 2021-2030 Strategic Plan focuses on sustainability.**

Though territory and tradition have always been hallmarks of the quality of its

wines, today DO Penedès aims to go further with an ambitious goal: to achieve the ecological seal for all its production by 2025.

It should be clarified that the ecological process had already been implemented in the Penedès for years. It is common practice in DO wineries to avoid chemical treatments and apply only preventive and superficial products so the plant does not absorb any residue and yields

## COLLABORATING PLANTS



To achieve the best-quality grape production and a suitable degree of alcohol, it is sometimes (and only in some areas) necessary to make the vine suffer, meaning to stress it. The vine is a hardy plant adapted to difficult drought conditions and poor soils. When it suffers, it accumulates sugars as a defence mechanism so its fruit can ripen quickly and it can get rid of it. Thus, the seed falls earlier and this promotes reproduction. In years when it rains a lot in the Penedès, cultivators need to sow legumes and/or herbs in between the rows so they absorb part of the water that the vine would have consumed and thereby manage to stress it. Once they are harvested, they are mixed with the earth and used as organic matter and fertiliser.





### Sheep: the best partners

One of the first tasks performed in the Penedès when summer starts is pruning or trimming. There are different ways to go about it, but one of the most curious and natural methods is used in the Penedès: the grazing of sheep. Once per year, a flock of sheep passes through the vineyard to eat the leaves and air out the area. The sheep are trained to move at a constant pace, especially so they don't eat the grapes.

healthy and natural fruit. The use of organic fertilisers, the minimal use of sulphites and the non-use of synthetic plant protection products, as stipulated by organic production regulations, are already well-established practices in vineyards in the Penedès.

Continuing down this path, a further step has been taken and the vineyards are now being worked on with new criteria: regenerative agricultural techniques.

#### The innovative model of DO Penedès

The wines of DO Penedès are made with a guarantee of respect for agriculture integrated into the environment, using traditional farming methods and fully ecological techniques. These make DO Penedès the top-ranked designation of origin in organic production in Catalonia and Spain in terms of both quantity and quality.

And the fact is that today, the overproduction of food, making sure that the su-

permarket is stocked with everything at any time of year, comes at a great cost to the environment: intensive agriculture, deforestation and continued overgrazing are three human activities responsible for the deterioration of the soil and the climate crisis.

Faced with this, regenerative agriculture becomes revolutionary because it can restore the health of the soil by regenerating, stimulating and maintaining the fertility and biodiversity of the land. Ultimately, it promotes the return of life to the land.

And how do the wineries of DO Penedès put this all into practice? It is not about going back to the past, because it is an innovative model. In fact, new scientific knowledge has taught us how the soil works and how the vines are nourished. Thus, we can apply agricultural techniques that feed them naturally and protect the soil from action that can interfere with biological processes.

## In DO Penedès, regenerative agriculture becomes revolutionary because it can restore the health of the soil by maintaining the fertility and biodiversity of the land.

Eliminating ploughing and the use of heavy machinery, because they break the structure of the soil; maintaining the plant cover, so as not to leave the earth bare and prevent erosion; and combining agriculture and livestock, using grazing animals to fertilise the land, are just some of the actions promoted by regenerative agriculture.

#### Natural balance in the vineyard

A minimal impact on the earth, working side by side with nature, and the productive integration of living soil, plants and animals in an effort that benefits everyone will result in the best-quality organic wines. In regenerative agriculture, vines coexist with other plants and animals to promote more diverse ecosystems.

At the same time, minimal intervention enhances soil balance and increases its capacity to fix atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, a key factor in the fight against climate change. This is about reducing the cultivation of the earth as much as possible to increase the amount of organic matter and prevent the release of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. This is DO Penedès' contribution to be able to toast with the best wines in a better world. **A**



*In regenerative agriculture, the vines coexist with other plants and animals, which makes it possible to promote more diverse ecosystems and achieve organic wines of the highest quality.*



# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

## Sustainability

Preservation of the environment in viticulture and production issues, as a feature present throughout the value chain.

## Ecology

Reach the goal of 100% organic wine by the 2025 vintage. Native varieties: promote our wine heritage and varieties with good adaptability to climate change. Creation of the "100x100 Xarel·lo" stamp to highlight this autochthonous variety.

## Territory

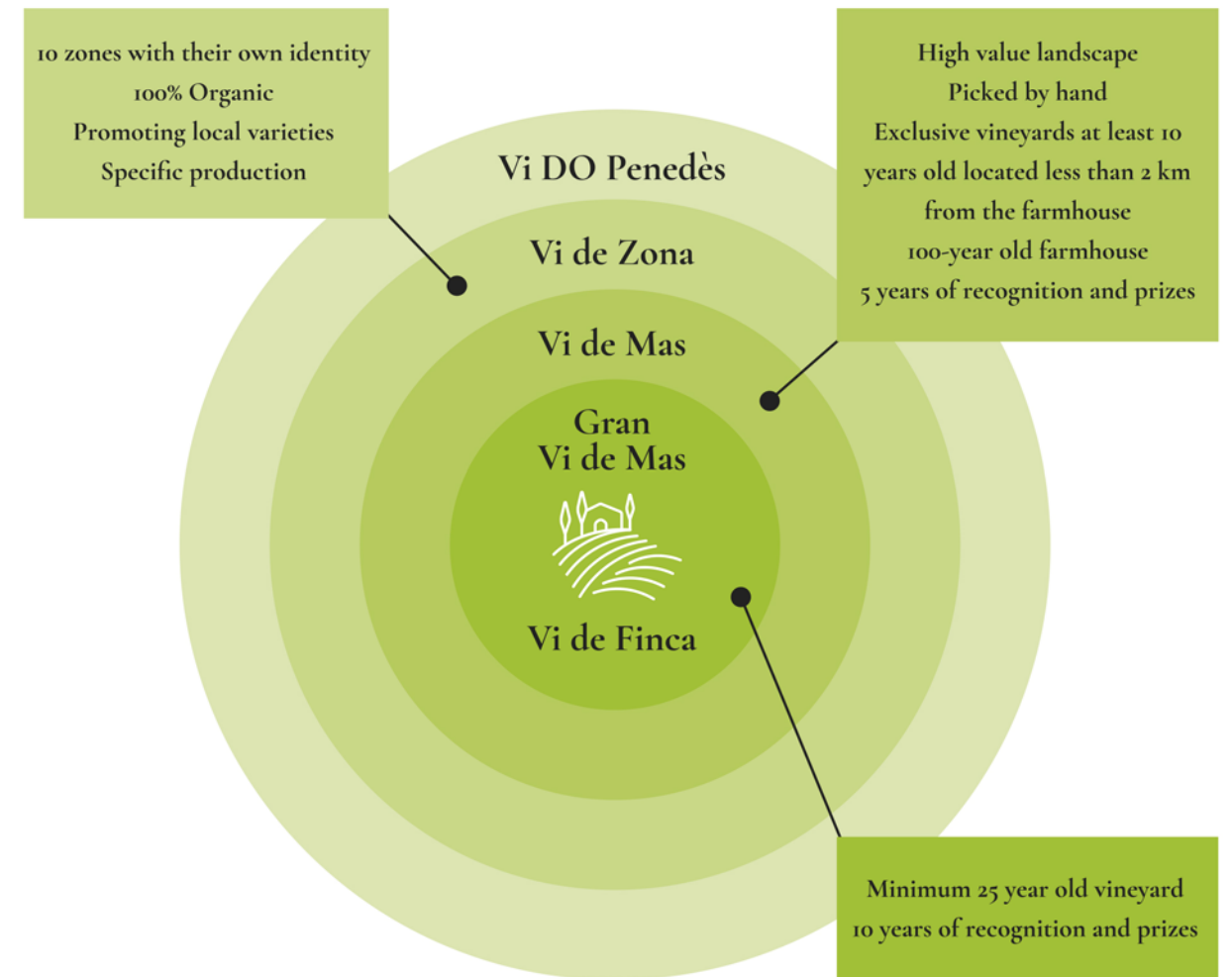
10 territorial zones are established to publicize the territorial diversity of the DO Penedès and emphasize its personality.

## Categorization

Creation of the Vi de Mas and the Gran Vi de Mas to promote tradition and the wine potential of the Penedès through the estates and farmhouses where great wines have historically been produced.



# DO PENEDÈS CATEGORIES



The new categorization of DO Penedès wines allows us to better explain the identity, history, territory and quality of Penedès wines.



# 2 / PERU AN IMPOSING HERITAGE

## What unites a land

A farmer from the Cuzco region and a multi-award-winning chef understood that they shared the same vision: to innovate through research and promote the richness of high-altitude products. It was the first of many partnerships.



*Around 800 different varieties of potatoes and other tubers are cultivated in the Cuzco region, many of them native.*





## PERU



3.8 M  
agricultural  
workers

4,300  
varieties of potatoes  
farmed

5.7 M  
tonnes of potatoes  
produced

71,986  
km<sup>2</sup> = surface area of  
the Cuzco region

6,385  
metres = height of  
Ausangate, the highest  
peak in the region

AGRICULTURE CONTINUES TO BE THE BASE OF THE ECONOMY OF CUZCO.

34° 11' 08.2" S

59° 22' 25.9" W

*At over three thousand metres above sea level, in front of the Moray ruins, in the Cuzco region, is one of the most peculiar restaurants in the world. There, it's not just about going to eat. At MIL, they offer products cultivated at that altitude and work hand in hand with the surrounding communities to turn their interdisciplinary research into something enriching and enduring.*

by Catherine Contreras /// photos Gustavo Vivanco

# SKY-HIGH INGREDIENTS

**In Huatata, in the Cuzco region, the fields explode in colours under an intense blue sky. At 3,740 metres above sea level, with the Verónica, Chicón and Pitusiray mountains as a backdrop, the eight hectares of land cultivated by the Choque Bravo family are nearly ready for harvesting, which takes place every year between May and June.**

Purple, pink and white potato flowers, yellow *oca* flowers and orangish *mashua* blooms, among green crops of barley and fodder oats, make for a beautifully painted canvas. At the end of the rainy season, between February and March, this is how the high Andean landscape welcomes us in this sector of Chinchero, halfway between the city of Cuzco and Urubamba, the sacred valley.

This is the first time we see Manuel Choque after the outbreak of the pandemic 24 months before, and we tour this field with him that provides tonnes of Andean tubers that are a true luxury: ocas, mashuas and native potatoes that

come in surprising colours, flavours and textures that are rarely seen on the table.

At 34 years old, Manuel is an agronomist and works the land in the same way that his ancestors did. But there is something that sets him apart from the rest, and that is his ability to innovate. In 2015, Manuel began to experiment by exposing black and yellow *ocas* to the sun for 30 days to naturally increase their sweetness. The idea was to transform the sugar in *Oxalis tuberosa* into alcohol with the help of yeast. Thus, in 2017, he launched Miskyoca, a semi-sweet wine in two versions, white and rosé, which the following year were part of the pairing at MIL, the restaurant that Virgilio Martínez, one of the most influential chefs in South America, runs in nearby Moray.

Choque's venture took off in the countryside and very humbly caught the attention of the chef from Lima when he tried his native potatoes and tasted his fermented beverages for the first time five years ago. However, there was certainly something else that captivated the chef of Central in





*Chilca* is a native plant used in the production of *chicha*, which the members of the community drink and which is also used to dye sheep's wool green. On the right page, Efrain Yucra Caballero, one of the guides accompanying the visitors to MIL.





“

**Our friend Gastón Acurio got it started, giving rise to an impressive cuisine with reliable resources. It's as if Mother Earth had the beginnings here of the endemic cultivation of ancient products that saturate the entire culinary world today.**

**Joan Roca.**

”

Lima during his meeting with that particular farmer: the knowledge inherited by Choque, who one day decided to promote the nutritional and antioxidant properties of his native potatoes and produce new and improved varieties through cross-pollination. Choque had heard of Mater Iniciativa and decided to strengthen ties with the project since it shared the same vision: to innovate through research and promote the richness of organic products.

The best outcome of this partnership forged from curiosity is an *oca* wine called O-Tuber that Choque created and served exclusively at MIL, the restaurant that Virgilio Martínez and Pía León opened in 2018 in the Andean town of Moray and that has resumed receiving diners from Peru and all over the world, as it did before the start of the pandemic.

#### **Mater, the origin**

In early 2013, nearly four years after opening Central in the Miraflores district

of Lima, Virgilio Martínez (Lima, 1977) told us about a project based on personal experience that had been changing how he thought about cooking: an interdisciplinary space to share information related to endemic products, but from different perspectives.

Criticised at first for being so frequently absent from the restaurant so he could take exploratory trips, the chef of Central (now ranked second in the world and voted number one in Latin America in the lists of The World's 50 Best Restaurants) agreed to create a gourmet restaurant in one of the most exclusive hotels in the Andean city of Cuzco, at 3,400 metres above sea level, in 2012.

For years, Martínez had already been exploring this and other regions of Peru. Experimenting with raw materials that revealed flavours, textures, aromas and colours very different from those in Lima was a challenge for his senses, which awakened in him the need not only to

#### **Moray: ceremonial centre or agricultural laboratory?**

MIL is located next to Moray, an archaeological site from the Inca period made up of several circular terraces at different heights. There are several hypotheses about its origin and uses, but it is believed that they could have been experimenting with cultivation in different microclimates.



From left to right, Pía León and the siblings Virgilio and Malena Martínez.



# The way the restaurant team and the farmers come together results in both sides learning from each other.

learn more about the countryside and to identify high-altitude products already on his menu, according to the season, but also to establish direct relationships with the producers, dig into their customs and culinary uses and discover how the communities and ethnic groups of the mountains and jungle relate to food.

Mater Iniciativa was created with a team of professionals tasked with opening the windows of gourmet cuisine towards deeper study.

## A different perspective

The first story that Mater shared on its website was about *cushuro*, an edible cyanobacterium with a watery texture and a bluish-green colour. Collected in lagoons over 3,600 metres above sea level, this ingredient with the scientific name *Nostoc commune* has been served at Central for over a decade (popularly known as “murmunta” and “llullucha”, it is part of the cuisine of the Ancash region, in the Peruvian Andes).

The second study that Mater shared was related to the team’s experience in the jungle of Madre de Dios, in Bahuaja Sonene Park, the natural habitat of chestnut trees, whose organic fruit forms the livelihood of communities that maintain the customs of their *esa eja* ancestors, associated with the balance and sustainability of the natural environment. The product clearly also ended up on the investigative chef’s menu.

In this way, a culinary philosophy was being threaded together that we would not call one hundred per cent innovative or foundational of contemporary cuisine in Peru—three decades before, a group of Peruvian gourmets had come up

with a table full of national ingredients of great value, which was then relegated for years—but which brought a more comprehensive perspective encompassing the natural and social sciences and even the arts.

Curiosity began running like an engine ready to drive them towards many different interdisciplinary approaches. As Malena Martínez, the chef’s sister explained, Mater was created as an experimental, unrestricted and dynamic laboratory, motivated by a youthful curiosity and a sense of adventure and exploration.

“We were eager to act”, says Malena, a professional researcher and medical doctor and the co-director of Mater Iniciativa. They had many projects to carry out, a big team, many enthusiastic people coming from abroad “and we clearly had more funds”, she notes, so they could channel more actions. But after the outbreak of the pandemic, they had to become more selective. The effort that the gourmet laboratory had expended was paying off: in recent years they had not only held talks with experts on different topics (which they called Café Mater), but they also brought together specialists from various disciplines and specialised press in events that they called “Momento”, a kind of “intellectual retreat” held in the Urubamba Valley and in the Tambopata Reserve, Madre de Dios, where they not only shared information on science, anthropology, art and other subjects that intersect with gourmet cuisine, but also gave participants access to little-known studies and helped them to establish a valuable network of contacts.

MIL, the restaurant in Moray where Mater’s R&D efforts can be seen most



Mater has projects all over the country. On this page, one of its actions in the Tambopata National Reserve, in the Amazon. On the left, a cacao fruit, one of the products shown by Mater forest engineer Jan Brack (below).







Mesa Mater presents the palette of raw ingredients and tones of this Amazon region. Top left, cacao bean. Right, infusion of fresh goffe flowers, a medicinal plant that grows at extreme altitudes.

## Mater Iniciativa connects Central, Kjolle, Mayo and MIL, Pía León and Virgilio Martínez's restaurants in Peru.

clearly, also took on more and more projects. Before the pandemic, they had coordinated the arrival of two scientists who were going to conduct genomic studies and identify the microorganisms involved in the creation of *chicha*, a typical fermented drink from the Andes. A space for residences that would allow for experimentation in the kitchen, in partnership with the Gustu restaurant (La Paz) and with the Basque Culinary Centre (Basque Country), had to be postponed. The creation of new utilitarian pieces worked on by women from the Cacllaracay community also had to be put off.

But once the confinement due to SARS-CoV-2 had ended, Mater Iniciativa decided to resume direct contact with the most valuable thing that they had achieved. "Because we no longer had the funds we used to channel to Mater, we decided to work on the farm". Malena Martínez refers to the close bond of mutual collaboration that had already been made with the communities through agriculture: in Peruvian culture, the land unites and the coming together of members of the Mullak'as-Mismi-nay and Cacllaracay communities and the MIL / Mater team resulted in both sides learning from each other by sharing three sowing and harvest seasons.

March 2020 marked a milestone in world history. What we were before

would never be the same after. The same happened with Mater Iniciativa. How did it change? The motto is the same: "There is more out there", and so is the interdisciplinary approach that distinguishes its work. But now establishing partnerships is essential. As Malena Martínez explains, "If there are organisations that do exceptional work, why continue walking alone when we can find ways to come together?"

### Benefits for the environment

And that is what happened. In this new stage of Mater Iniciativa, some things have been reconsidered. Field research indicates they should be more selective: on the farm, for example, they no longer strive to produce many different varieties of native potatoes, like someone trying to break a record to astound the world, but instead focus on naturally and carefully cultivating those with the best properties that are most beneficial to the environment. "We want to have spectacular potatoes", the doctor says.

This selectivity is also aimed at carefully choosing the actions in which Mater would be involved, according to the philosophy they uphold. These include initiatives like Katahua, an NGO that does something phenomenal: it retrieves, or as they say "fishes" tree branches and roots that fall naturally into the Manu river (Madre de Dios).

This is considered waste wood in the Amazon, but they see it as raw material with which entrepreneurs from the communities of Loreto, Ucayali, San Martín and others develop utilitarian pieces. Materials ranging from trays to teaspoons used in Central come from this initiative.

Another similar relationship was established with Bioamaz, whose project Bee Queen Coin aims to preserve native stingless bees—of the *Melipona eburnea* species, responsible for conserving ecosystems—promoting the development of beekeeping culture among Amazonian families and generating income for women who are in charge of craft honeycombs. The long-term plan is to generate a demand for honey in small batches with variable characteristics, such as those that Central currently serves on its menu.

### Art and culture

The reflections facilitated by the confinement also led the team to achieve a better relationship between science and daily life. It was pointless to carry out specific and theoretical studies if they were not applied to the daily life of places such as Central, Kjolle and Mayo, in Lima, or MIL and its social environment, in Cuzco. This is why culture and art, fields related to gourmet food, were strengthened quite organically.



# THE ANDEAN PANTRY

THE ANDES RUN THROUGH SEVEN COUNTRIES IN SOUTH AMERICA: PERU, BOLIVIA, ECUADOR, ARGENTINA, CHILE, COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA. IN THE PERUVIAN PART ALONE, THERE ARE ELEVEN ANDEAN REGIONS WITH THEIR OWN IDIOSYNCRASIES. THIS IS THE PANTRY OF THE CUZCO AREA.



## SWEET CORN

Even though the giant corn of Cuzco and purple corn are the best known, Peru is the country with the greatest diversity of this crop due to its different shapes, colours, sizes and grain textures. Chullpi, piscoronto, kculli, paraqay and pukuto are just a few varieties.



## MUÑA

Andean mint has many uses: medicinal, culinary and even as a pest repellent on stored potatoes. *Minthostachys mollis* is high in calcium and phosphorus and rich in essential oils.



## MASHUA

A tuber similar to the oca, it is cone-shaped and its colours range from white to yellow, red and purple. *Tropaeolum tuberosum* is recommended for kidney ailments and regulates the libido (it is said that the Inca armies ate it to mitigate their sexual desire).



## OCA

*Oxalis tuberosa* is a sweet long tuber that is rich in vitamin C. There are over 800 varieties studied in Peru, whose flesh ranges from white to greyish purple in colour.



## TARWI

Also known as "chocho", *Lupinus mutabilis* is a legume that is considered a superfood due to its amino acids and essential fatty acids that help the central nervous system.



## CHUNCHO CACAO

*Theobroma*, native to La Convención (Cuzco) is called "chuncho", a name that derives from the Quechua-Aymara *ch'unch'u*, which in the colony was associated with the inhabitants of the ethnic groups of the jungle.

## NATIVE POTATOES

*Solanum tuberosum* was domesticated in the highlands 10,000 years ago. Native potatoes grow above 3,000 metres. They are seasonal, organic and have different shapes and pigmentations that reveal their antioxidant content.



## CHUÑO

Potato naturally dehydrated after exposure to extreme temperatures: freezing on frosty nights and sun exposure during the day.



## MORAYA OR WHITE CHUÑO

Dehydrated potato that is pressed with the feet after frost falls and placed in the current of a river for several days, after which it is peeled and dried in the sun.



## MARAS SALT

It comes from the natural salt mines of Maras, in the province of Urubamba, Cuzco, at 3,380 metres above sea level. It has a soft pink hue due to the presence of magnesium, potassium and calcium.

## CUSHURO

This edible cyanobacteria with the scientific name *Nostoc commune* is small and circular, with a watery texture and a bluish-green colour due to its high chlorophyll content. It grows in high Andean lagoons and is also known as "murmunta".



## QUINOA

A global alternative to face the food health problem. Its varieties, ranging from white to black, are rich in protein and minerals, such as *Chenopodium quinoa*, kiwicha and kañiwa.





## Each herb, root, flower and berry has several uses, confirming that everything communicates in this ecosystem.



In the heights of Moray, for example, there is a venture promoted by the nutritionist Verónica Tabja, Mater's director of art and cultural projects. It is called *Warmi* ('woman', in Quechua), a group made of female members of the Cacllaracay community, who today have resumed weaving practices that they had neglected over the years. Ceferina Pillco Gutiérrez is one of them and it was her meeting with Italian designer Giulia Pompilj that led to the creation of an experimental workshop for dyeing sheep and alpaca wool with leaves, flowers and roots that the women collect.

Verónica Tabja recognises that a bit of this philosophy travels abroad, thanks to the artists that Mater hosts. She succeeded with Giulia Pompilj, who not only based her mastery on this project, but also exhibited her research at Milan Design Week, and with Peruvian designer Cindy Valdez, a resident of Berlin who identified different types of clay and put together a catalogue of the area. "She worked with members of the Mullak'as-Misminay community, who knew how to make adobe. She identified the places where yellow, red and white clay can be made and that served as a basis for the next potter who

*The Cacllaracay women of the Warmi workshop have recovered traditional weaving methods. For example, the cheqche, a sweet berry, is used to dye the wool threads purple. In MIL's kitchen, it is used to make a red sauce. On the right, Ceferina Atau Gutiérrez and Virginia Meza Chalco, members of this group.*







## Dialogue with the environment

Forest engineer Jan Brack and mixologist Manuel Contreras guide the experience of immersion in the world of MIL. Discovering the imposing Inca terraces that make up Moray (in the photo) will be the first step; then it will be time to learn the preparation of chicha de jora and tour the fields to identify crops. The third stage will be the ethnobotanical route through the hills of Apu Wañin, an adventure that combines science and tradition: Cleto Cusipáucar, a member of the Cacllaracay community, shares his knowledge in the ancestral use of some wild plants; Jan Brack complements him by enhancing its botanical characteristics and adaptability in the area. The immersion experience culminates with the eight-course menu, a culinary and cultural mirror of this high-altitude ecosystem.



# “Why walk alone when we can find ways to come together?”



Cleto Cusipáucar, a great connoisseur of the ancestral use of wild plants, works one of the fields surrounding MIL. On the page to the right, one of the varieties of native potatoes.



arrived”, Tabja says, referring to Valeria Figueroa, the sculptor who created the T’uru Maki (“clay hands”, in Quechua) workshop to create handmade tableware.

## New biological station

The *kjolle* plants that surround the road leading to MIL are enormous. The structure of the restaurant is already camouflaged by the Moray ecosystem, the famous Inca archaeological complex made up of four circular terraces (set of terraces on mountain slopes) that extend downwards.

An investigation carried out by the Amsterdam-based Spanish archaeologist and chef Marc Cárdenas during his internship at MIL in 2019 analysed the studies carried out by Kenneth Wright, who maintains that Moray was a ritual archaeological complex, and those of university professor John Earls, which argue that the system of platforms was holistic and allowed the inhabitants to experiment with variations in temperature, humidity and soil.

Considering the few studies conducted in the area, Cárdenas concludes that in Moray “the agricultural economic production of the place co-exists with ritual”. He explains: “According to research, the production level would not be very high, so the most effective way to take advantage of Moray would be to allocate it for seed cultivation. The seeds would be classified according to their growth conditions and would be transferred to different parts of the territory. This transfer would be carried out within a religious-economic context that crystallised in the pilgrimage (...). A priestly caste would direct the experiments and notify the officials of the Inca Empire of the results to manage and maintain production through agricultural policies and the livelihood of the population”.

The work that Manuel Acurio does in the fields surrounding MIL coincides with this perspective on Moray. The Cuzco-born agronomist calls this area a “natural laboratory” because his team



develops regenerative agriculture by recovering seeds together with peasants from the Cacllaracay and Mullak’as-Misminay communities. They already have 109 types of *ollucos* in colours ranging from white to purple, 39 *oca* varieties, five *mashua* varieties and 286 varieties of native potatoes. Since the work with the communities is collaborative, 50% of the harvest is for them: they will use a little for their consumption and the same amount will be used for seeds for their own home gardens. Mater’s other 50% will be used in the same way.

## Future projects

That interaction with communities is also something that attracts the attention of Jan Brack. The forest engineer swapped the Amazon (where he worked in recent years) for the Andes and was hired by MIL to undertake new projects. He looks around Moray and points to the eucalyptus trees. “We must restore the native forest species: queñuales, quishuares like *kjolle*, *chachacomos* and high-altitude cedars. See the cradles of the hills, the forests because there may be native species there”, he says. It is a job that he will do

with members of the neighbouring communities to help them to be self-sustaining and build a better legacy. “Interaction between people and nature is what gives richness to this area and cuisine is the platform for showcasing new resources”.

“I always thought... that we were planning something very different, that we were reformulating what cuisine was like”, says Malena Martínez. Now it is for certain, because starting from haute cuisine they are developing something significant.

Is Mater building a method, a philosophy? Yes, both, in fact. And for Virgilio Martínez, they apply to his way of working and living. “If we come to a place, we do so with respect; we try to understand the ecosystem; what interests us interests local people as well and it is a magnet for people with passion. That is the best thing that can happen to us, because it enriches us”, the chef says. A holistic perspective, establishing partnerships, knowing the place it occupies and the role it plays; what is needed, what is missing and what has yet to be discovered. This is the innovation that Virgilio Martínez’s team is making sustainable and sharing with Peru, with Mater Iniciativa at the helm. **A**

**The native potatoes of Cuzco were one of the first ingredients that surprised Virgilio Martínez when he came up with Mater in 2013.**

Around this product, there is a story that reveals how Mater works in an interdisciplinary way with professionals and communities; there is a transmission of knowledge and science, but also a lot of curiosity, contemplation, ancestral tradition and experimentation. The restaurant is surrounded by land where new varieties are recovered and experimented with. They call them “experimental farms” and it is where they also have a *huatia* (ancient cooking method where freshly harvested potatoes are baked in an oven made with plots of farmland).





TORRONS  
*Vicens*  
des de 1775

ÁNGEL VELASCO

— AGRAMUNT —  
NOUGAT MASTER

*The artisanal nougat maintains  
the essence, the passion about the  
origins, and it allows to discover  
flavours result of our  
imagination.*

*Angel Velasco*



# 3 / THE CRADLE OF WINE THE NATURAL REVOLUTION

## Clay fever

Clay and grapes have been linked for centuries.

An ancient Georgian vinification tradition in *kvevri* or amphorae was the impetus for spreading curiosity about natural wines touched by clay all over the world.



*In an old winery and restaurant called País das Uvas in Vila de Frades (Alentejo, Portugal), the wine is made in talhas or amphorae that also decorate the premises.*



*In Georgia, which along with Türkiye is considered the cradle of grapes and wine, there has been a revolutionary movement around natural wines made by hand in clay amphorae called kvevri. Soliko Tsaishvili and Iago Bitarishvili, together with other winemakers in the country, have led this wine trend that has spread throughout the world from Bordeaux to El Penedès, Chile, Italy and other countries.*

text and photos by Keiko Kato and Maika Masuko

# JOURNEY TO THE ROOTS OF WINE

**We travelled to Georgia for the first time in September 2011. One night, in Bakurtsikhe, in the eastern region of Kakheti, marvelling at the recital of polyphonies sung by amateurs, we felt completely relaxed in an informal atmosphere, without luxury or opulence.**

Suddenly, when drinking from our glass, we were overcome with a sublime and delicate feeling: “We had never felt so close to a wine!” From that moment on, our perception of wine changed. Without hesitating, the men energetically raised their simple glasses filled with amber-hued wine while wishing each other the best with “*Gaumarjos!*” (“To your health!”). Soon, *chacha*, a traditional Georgian brandy, took its place, as red wine was hardly

part of the party. Several traditional dishes, a sample of the people’s hospitality, were brought almost in unison to the table to add touches of colour, rather than for pairing, giving us the strong feeling of being in Asia. The atmosphere was pleasant and authentic, without being diluted by globalisation. We were delighted. It was perfect. Even today, that night seems to have been just a dream.

The Republic of Georgia sits where East meets West on the eastern shore of the Black Sea. It borders Russia to the north, Azerbaijan and Armenia to the southeast and Türkiye to the south, a strategic crossroads that has allowed it to absorb the best of various ancient civilisations, but which has managed to preserve a very rich



GEORGIA



3,688,647

inhabitants

1992

is the year when it won independence from the Soviet Union

19

million bottles of wine are exported (2021)

500

varieties of native wine, approximately

8,000

year-old wine residue found in ceramic vessels in the country





Above, vineyards of the Gelveri winery in Güzelçay (Türkiye). Below, a supra, a traditional Georgian festive meal.

## Georgia sits at a crossroads that has allowed it to absorb the best of various civilisations, but it has also preserved a very rich cultural identity.

cultural identity despite suffering under Soviet policies until 1991.

Dating back to the eighth century, the striking polyphonic songs sung that night figure prominently in Georgian identity and are linked to all areas of daily life, from festivals like Christmas to vineyard cultivation. Wine is also inseparable from daily life, especially in family celebrations and religious rituals.

### Searching for origins

That night, they held a *supra*, a banquet feast to celebrate the harvest of Our Wine, one of the most prestigious biodynamic wineries in the country, located in the Alazani River Valley, in the fertile Kakheti region, long known for its winemaking tradition. We had the honour of being invited, or rather sent by Luca Gargano, from Velier, a leading natural wine import company in Genoa. Fortunately, this Genoese wine genius had chosen that ex-Soviet republic in the Caucasus as a new market and landed in 2004, accompanied by Nicola Joy, the French founder of the

Renaissance des Appellations, an association that brings together 230 biodynamic viticulturists from 13 countries.

As soon as Gargano met Soliko Tsaishvili, one of the owners of Our Wine, he became a partner, along with his brother, Paolo. They began to import his natural wines and those of other winemakers, particularly those of Iago Bitarishvili, from Iago's Wine, a winery with vineyards in the town of Mtskheta. To our surprise, Iago, who took the reins of the family winery after graduating from the university, did not even have a single *kvevri* at the time. However, after Iago received Bio Caucasert certification for organic products, the first recognised certification issued in Georgia, he foresaw the bright future of natural wines. Enlightened by Luca, whom he considers the messiah of Georgian wines, he hurried to acquire amphorae to make wine. That was the gem of the natural wine revolution and the first step in the expansion of this movement in Europe. In 2008, thanks also to Luca's support, Slow Food awarded the Presidium to Kvevri Ghvino. In 2013, UNESCO added winemaking in *kvevri* to its list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Following Soliko and Iago's success, a group of Georgian winemakers led by US-born Georgian painter John H.

Wurdeman V, tried to follow in their footsteps. With the collaboration of the National Wine Agency of Georgia, they participated in a series of tastings in Italy, France and the United Kingdom. Wurdeman was the main promoter of Georgian wines abroad, while bringing foreign journalists, sommeliers and winemakers to the Qvevri Symposium of Georgia. So, this raises a question: is it "qvevri" or "kvevri"? The Georgian language has two k sounds: Ⴑ one that sounds like k in English and another Ⴑ that is glottal. "Kvevri" (in Georgian, კვევრი) is written with the k that we know. However, since *qvevri* was used for many years in promoting it abroad, this is the most widely-used term, even in official publication issued by institutions like UNESCO.

In April 2014, we went to Türkiye to visit one of Soliko's great friends (and ours), Udo Hirsch, an archaeologist, writer, photographer, grape researcher, oenologist and founder of the winery Gelveri, in the historical region of Cappadocia. We wanted to finish polishing our work on the origins of wine that we had started in Georgia. However, this German superhero removed the wool from our eyes.





*Amphorae outside the Ikalto monastery in the Georgian region of Kahetia. On the following page, emptying the qvevri after cleaning it at the Archil Guniava winery, a small family business in the Imereti region.*





“

It is not only the cradle of wine. It is also a heritage of a colossal culinary culture. Their cuisine is as spectacular as the sounds of their polyphonic singing. The *kvevri* winemaking process is an inspiration for us all.

Josep Roca.

”



The cellar of the Gelveri winery, in Türkiye, where küps of various shapes and capacities can be seen.

In the town of Güzelyurt, in the province of Aksaray, Udo lives in an old Greek house known as Taş Mahal (“stony place”), which he restored with the help of his Turkish partner Hacer Özkaya and where the winery is also located. By the way, before settling in Türkiye, he worked in Georgia for the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) for many years and later founded an export company for Caucasian natural products there. He also helped Josko Gravner, the forerunner of amphora wine in Italy, in search of *kvevris*. When he moved to Türkiye, Udo gradually discovered the enormous potential of Turkish viticulture, hidden by religion, but still flowing in the blood of rural communities until, when he was 65, he decided to create his ideal natural wine in a *küp*.

The magnificent winery is located in Taş Mahal’s cellar. A place like this, filled with ancient Byzantine, Ottoman and Roman amphorae from thousands of years ago, stretches the limits of the imagination. Resting on the ground, these beautiful vessels collected and restored

by Udo, the oldest clay vessels still in use today, produce fantastic natural wines. After the harvest, the containers are filled with crushed, destemmed grapes (though sometimes the stems are included), left to ferment spontaneously and kept in gestation during a long maceration period lasting between three and six months. After separating the sediments from the wines, some are returned to the *küp* for further ageing. This is well-adopted, old-fashioned winemaking, just like in Georgia but on a human scale. With a mischievous smile, Udo tells us that there are methods for which you do not need a logical explanation: “My father used to do it this way, so I did too”. Fabulous!

The varieties of grapes that he cultivates (*keten gömlek*, *hasan dede*, *kızıl üzüm*, *tas üzüm*, *it üzüm*, *koku üzüm*, *kalecik karasi* and others) are among 1,435 varieties of Turkish grapes. His vineyards also grow next to the Hasan Dag volcano (3,200 m), at 1,500 m above sea level, without phylloxera, thanks to the sandy soil, and aged between 80 and 200 years—or for all we

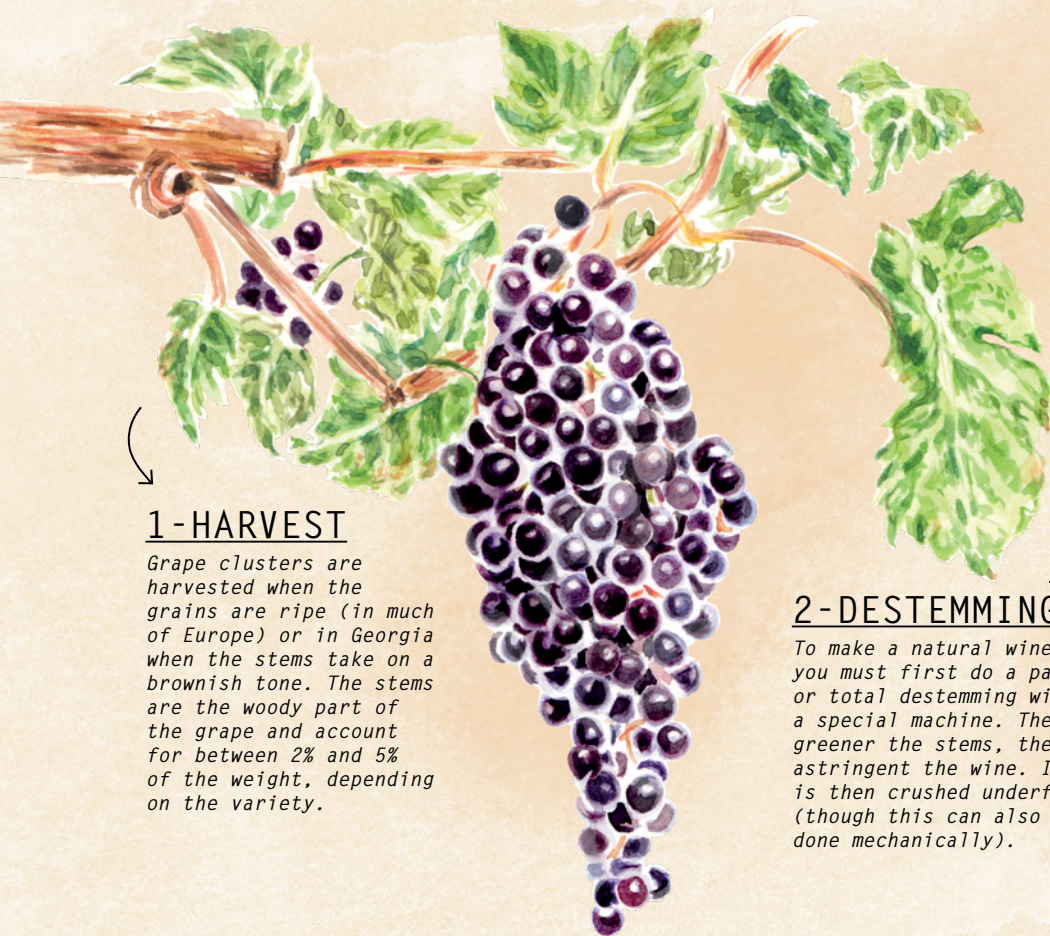
**The first clay vessels where wine has been shown to have been produced date from the Neolithic period.**

The knowledge of how to transform clay into ceramics made relatively strong, impermeable, transportable and storable amphorae one of the most commonly used winemaking methods since viticulture began.



# THE TRADITIONAL AMPHORA WINEMAKING PROCESS

GEORGIANS CLAIM THAT IT IS BETTER TO BURY THE AMPHORAE SO THE MUST FERMENTS AT A CONSTANT TEMPERATURE, EVEN THOUGH IN MOST COUNTRIES THEY REST ON THE GROUND. THE MAIN DISADVANTAGE OF BURYING THEM, APART FROM HIDING MANUFACTURING DEFECTS, IS THE APPEARANCE OF A CORKY TASTE. HOWEVER, CLAY VESSELS MANUFACTURED IN SPAIN AND ITALY DO NOT HAVE THESE PROBLEMS: THEY ARE SOLID AND MANAGEABLE AND DO NOT NEED TO BE COATED WITH WAX ON THE INSIDE, AS IS DONE IN GEORGIA.



## 1-HARVEST

Grape clusters are harvested when the grains are ripe (in much of Europe) or in Georgia when the stems take on a brownish tone. The stems are the woody part of the grape and account for between 2% and 5% of the weight, depending on the variety.

## 2-DESTEMMING

To make a natural wine, you must first do a partial or total destemming with a special machine. The greener the stems, the more astringent the wine. It is then crushed underfoot (though this can also be done mechanically).



## 3-IN THE CLAY VESSEL

The grapes are placed in the amphorae with or without the stems (or with some of them), but with the skin and seeds. These are excellent natural purifiers that facilitate the emission of polyphenols. In Georgia, mature stems have traditionally been used.



## 4-FERMENTATION

During the next 15 or 20 days, the natural or spontaneous fermentation of the must takes place with the help of native yeasts that lead to the appearance of alcohol, among other aspects.



## 5-MACERATION

After fermentation, the clay vessels are sealed for maceration (for at least six months). The skins, seeds and stems rise to the top and form a layer that protects the liquid. Under this layer, the wine circulates naturally due to the container's spinning top shape. Vessels that come in other shapes, like cylindrical ones, provide less wine circulation.



## 6-FILTRATION

A few months after the amphora is sealed, a natural filtration process begins: the sediments fall to the bottom of the vessel. The seeds fall first, followed by the skins and stems. Thus, two different layers are formed, which means that the wine does not come into contact with the seeds.

## 7-AGEING

After the natural filtration, the wine is returned to the amphora and the remaining volume of liquid is filled to start the ageing process. In Europe, the sediments are usually pressed and the resulting juice is added, while in Georgia they are distilled to obtain the traditional chacha.







# Georgia's neighbour Armenia, which calls amphorae *karas*, is also considered a cradle of wine.

know, 300 or 400! Since all the trunks are underground to compensate for the cold rigours of winter, it is impossible to know that the temperature can drop to  $-25^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The vineyards are covered with sand and uncovered in spring to remove superfluous new roots in a procedure called *gös açmak*, which means “open your eyes!” According to Udo, the oldest *Vitis vinifera* grapes have been found at Tell Abu Hureyra (13,000-9,500 BC) in Syria and in Amata (11,000-8,000 BC), near the French city of Nice, next to our own country. Back home and towards the future! We are firmly convinced that using a *kvevri* is not the only or best way to make wine. Each region has its own clay vessel: the Turkish *küp*, the Greek and Cypriot *pitho*, the Italian *dolium*, the Spanish *tinaja*, the Portuguese *talha*...

Freed from all kinds of preconceived ideas about the history of wine, Keiko and I turned the page to set out on our *Voyage en Amphore* —a journey that would later become a book— through 20 countries (most of them in Europe) to meet 147 producers who use clay vessels. We have already met nearly 400 so far.

## The oldest winery in the world

Georgia's neighbour, Armenia, is also considered a cradle of wine and traditionally

uses *karas*. This is the location of the oldest winery in the world, the 6,100-year-old Areni-1 cave in the Arpa River Valley, in the province of Vayots' Dzor. A thought came to us after the visit: did cannibalism take place in this ritual location?

In Lebanon, the *anfoura* is used to age an aniseed distillate called *arak*. In Cyprus, traces of *pithari* winemaking are almost exclusively preserved in museums: one producer still uses this traditional method, but only for red wines (whites are used in confectionery). In Greece, each region or island can have different styles of *pithari*, from Sifnos, Crete, Patras, etc., but they are not as rich as we would like to imagine.

Italy has brilliantly revalued and modernised this natural winemaking system, incorporating other forms, materials and a new pool of manufacturers. Josko Gravner introduced them for the first time in 1999 with the help of Udo and Svetozar Raspopović. Josko offered Raspopović, a native of Croatia nicknamed “Papa” three clay vessels in thanks, with which he has also made wine since 1999 in Slovenia. At the same time, COS debuted in Vittoria, in Sicily. In 2000, a year later, Frank Cornelissen appeared in Castello di Lospida, also equipped with Spanish clay vessels. Later came Giardino (with a

Strains with grapes in the vineyards of the Gelveri winery, in central Turkish Anatolia. On the left, Svetozar Raspopovic, the “Papa” of Slovenian natural wine. On the following page, Armenian winemaker Zhirayr Miqayelyn in his winery with karas, unburied Armenian amphorae.





# Winemaking in vats is a culture of subtraction: reaching the essence of the grape by eliminating what is left over.



Ester Nin and Carlez Ortiz in their winery in Porrera (Priorat). On the following page, from top to bottom, Ricardo and Raúl Pérez try wines from the tinajas in Bierzo and Italian potter Massimo Carbone moulds an Etruscan-style amphora.

handmade amphora made with clay from his vineyards), Crosato (amphora), Vodopivec (*kvevri*), Paraschos (*pithari*), Vinicola Savese (with vitrified vessels) and particularly Elisabetta Foradori (*tinaja*), who, intoxicated by the magic of amphorae, has managed to gather over 230.

## The essence of the grape

The more conservative French like stone-ware and concrete. For example, the amphorae of the Château Pontet Canet, in Bordeaux, are in the style of Rome in the

2nd century, but they are made of refined concrete. Without going into a discussion about the materials, we think that terracotta is the most authentic due to its lively character, which facilitates the micro-oxidation and polymerisation of the wine. This phenomenon occurs in the ground through terrestrial energy. Chrystelle Varelle and Paul Esteve think the same as we do. At their Domaine des Miquettes, in Cheminas, in the Rhône Valley, they use 100% amphorae buried in the Georgian marani style. Another fascinating person is Agnès Henry, from Domaine de la Tour du Bon, in Le Castellet, in Provence, to whom we owe the beautiful title *Voyage en Amphore*. The viticulturist says that "winemaking is a culture of subtraction, since we get closer to the essence of the grape by eliminating everything that is left over. On the contrary, the barrel is part of a culture of addition, as it covers the wine like makeup. Wines that are made in clay vessels are generally more rustic and do more to mark the variety of the grape. What is essential is guessed at!"

Winemaking has been done in clay vessels for a long time in Spain and even more regularly than in Georgia. Large *tinajas* of between six and seven thousand litres that are no longer manufactured can be found in La Mancha, in Valdepeñas. Near Valencia, Celler del Roure uses some of the hundreds of *tinajas* holding 1,000 litres found buried in the old Moixent winery and collaborated with Sara Pérez's winery Mas Martinet in El Priorat, equipped with Miravet *tinajas*. Meanwhile, a new generation has arrived with very clear ideas about the natural wines they want to make, such as Escoda Sanahuja, in Montblanc; Laureano Serres Montagut, in El Pinell de Brai and Esencia Rural, in Quero, which have recovered the vessels holding between 2,000 and 4,500 litres unearthed in Tomelloso to give them a new lease on life.

In Portugal, the custom of making wine in amphorae is traditionally preserved:





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## A matter of shape

“Amphora” is currently the generic term used to describe any earthenware vessel, whether it holds one litre or seven thousand. “Dolium” (“dolia” in the plural) refers to one with a rounded shape and a fairly wide flat bottom. Then each country uses its own term: *küp* in Türkiye, *karas* in Armenia, *tinaja* in Spain, etc. It is true that the Georgians almost exclusively use the term *kvevri*, though it’s not the only one: *tschuri* is used in the western part of the country, but they are distinguished by region and size: *dergi*, *lagvani*, *kvibari*, *lachuti*, *kotso*, *tschassavali* and more. The classic amphorae that we have in mind, like the ones in the photo, from the Crosato winery, in Cividale del Friuli, with a long neck and two handles, were created to be transported. Dolia, on the other hand, were meant to be used in one place, although some have been found used in naval transport due to their greater capacity and stability.





# The crucial element for good wine is still the *terroir*, which Georgians rarely talk about.



Ramaz Nikoladze shows us the wine he refines in kvevri buried in his winery in Nakhshirgele (Georgia). Below, crushing grapes in a wooden satsnakheri. On the following page, women making puri, traditional Georgian bread made in terracotta tonis or ovens.



in restaurants or bars, wine is made in a *talha* to drink on Saint Martin's Day (11 November). Though belatedly, some growers are taking this method seriously. In the Czech Republic, original ceramic containers are used, while in other countries winegrowers tend to buy containers made in Italy or Spain. Even stoneware pots made in China are prominent in the European market.

## Different materials

In inverse proportion to the growing popularity of Georgian natural wines throughout the world, we are seeing a loss in their overall quality. Traditionally, making one's own wine to drink with family and friends was part of the country's ancestral culture, but now this beautiful custom has been devalued to an extent by money. Soliko Tsaishvili shifted from making wine for pleasure in the 1980s to becoming a serious professional 20 years later. Ten years ago, we met fifteen producers, and today, according to the Natural Wine Association, there are over one hundred, including artists, computer engineers, doctors, bankers and policemen (since 2015, the number of wine producers has grown from 200 to 1,600). Many want to become producers, not to follow tradition, but as a form of business. Given this scenario, we remember what Mevlud Tsintsadze, the former manager of the Iberiali vineyards, in Guria, in western Georgia, told us:



"You can only make wine if you like it, not if you only like money".

Fortunately, amphora wines rooted in Europe have improved remarkably. Initially struck by the quality of the wines made in *kvevri*, as well as the simplicity of the process, they now know that the amphora is just a tool. The indispensable element in winemaking is still the *terroir*, which the Georgians rarely talk about. In fact, the European winemakers we met in Georgia told us that if the Georgians took better care of their vineyards, their wines would be even better, not to mention their winery work.

To conclude, regarding the *terroir*, we want to tell you a Georgian tale that we

like very much. Once, God said to the people: "Gather together tomorrow and I will divide the earth". The Georgians who heard this held a *supra* to praise God. After endlessly repeating "*Gaumarjos!*", they drank too much and got confused about the time. By the time they were ready to go, the earth had already been divided. Seeing the Georgians arrive late, God asked them why. Without trying to hide it, they said: "We held a *supra* to praise and toast to you. We drank too much and..." Benevolently, God exclaimed: "Well if that is the case..." and gave them a small territory that he had kept for himself, the best, which was none other than Georgia. **A**

**Winemaking in *kvevris* is practiced across Georgia, especially in rural areas, with native grape varieties.**

Traditionally, winemaking knowledge and methods such as the manufacture of vats were passed down through families, neighbours and friends who participated together in working on the vineyard and later selling the wine. By watching the adults, the children learned to work the vineyards, press the grapes, make the wine ferment, collect the mud and manufacture and bake the *kvevris*.



# 4 / COLOMBIA COMMITTED CUISINE

## The new Macondo

In post-conflict Colombia, we can see how food can be an engine of economic and social transformation. Projects that combine cooking and social responsibility are possible.



*Yuyo rice  
prepared by  
the cook Yazmin  
Aragón, in the  
community of San  
Miguel del Río  
in Timbiquí, in  
the Department  
of Cauca.*



## COLOMBIA



1,141,748

km² of surface area.  
It is the fourth-largest country  
in Latin America.

51,609,474

inhabitants

51,330

species of fauna and flora  
registered

115

indigenous communities made  
up of approximately  
1.2 million people

7%

is the amount that  
agriculture contributes to the  
Colombian GDP



IPIALES FARMER'S MARKET, IN NARIÑO PROVINCE.

*The new Colombian cuisine has found a way to claim its identity, assert itself as one of the most original and diverse in the world and become a powerful tool for development and change. The formula for success has been to look at the wisdom of traditional and ancestral cuisine coming from all corners and cultures in the country, from the communities in the Amazon jungle to the fishing villages of the Pacific.*

by Pamela Villagra /// **photos** Alejandro Osses Saenz

# THE POWER OF DIVERSITY

**Cuisines, like languages, play an important communicative role. Each recipe, ingredient, utensil or means of cooking hides hundreds of symbols that convey a fantastic cache of stories and events through which we can understand a place's geography, identity, history and culture.**

British food anthropologist Gillian Crowther believes that all cuisine is located in a specific area or place and that it is influenced by history and the environment as much as by economic and technological changes. In her book *Eating Culture: An Anthropological Guide to Food*, she recognises that gender, age, ethnicity and social position influence how we relate to cooking, because this is what gives shape to a social order and the place of the people in it.

The relationship between cuisine and territory is much clearer in Colombia, a

country that like few others in the world treasures a large number of ecosystems around which so many different cuisines orbit, with traditions, ingredients and techniques as authentic as they are unique. It is from the flavours and knowledge that many Colombians have reconnected with their multi-ethnic identity: they are approaching unknown territories for the first time and beginning to appreciate the biodiversity of which the country has always boasted.

In post-conflict Colombia, a period that began with the signing of the Peace Treaty in 2016, cuisine has been a tool of transformation and recovery of self-esteem, as well as the one most often used to rebuild trust and combat the poverty left behind by the war. Proof of this includes the seed delivery policy to replace coca crops, rural cooking training projects, community tourism initiatives, producer cooperatives



# It is through flavours that many Colombians have reconnected with their multi-ethnic identity.

and many other initiatives. This is especially true in rural areas, which account for 80% of Colombian soil and where a quarter of the population lives.

An example is the rural food tourism project “Tourist Routes through Forests and Peace”, which seeks to preserve diversity in critical deforestation areas and enhance peacebuilding in the Quinchas de Boyacá mountains, in the heart of the country, and in the Perijá de Cesar mountains, two departments in northern Colombia. This is also demonstrated by the Selva Nevada ice cream parlour, which makes ice cream from exotic fruits harvested by rural communities in areas affected by the conflict. Selva Nevada has created an additional source of income and a national market for small producers of *arazá*, *copoazú*, *açaí* (all Amazonian superfoods), Pacific vanilla, and *mambe*, which is the powder obtained from roasting, grinding and sifting the coca leaves. The fruits that used to be lost on the ground are now an additional and stable source of income for some communities. One of the suppliers that works with Selva Nevada is the Association of Indigenous Women of Tarapacá, in the department of Amazonas, a group dedicated to harvesting *camu-camu* (*Myrciaria dubia*), a native shrub that grows in alluvial soil. They harvest this wild fruit from their canoes when the river rises. In this way, they guarantee sustainable harvesting of the forest.

Corpocampo is another initiative that relies on cooperatives to benefit over 400 families who took advantage of the illicit crop substitution plan in Putumayo, in southern Colombia, and who are dedicated to cultivating the *chontaduro* palm (*Bactris gasipaes*), from whose trunks

hearts of palm are extracted. Many cooks from all over the country make dishes with heart of palm to promote its consumption and commercially consolidate the decision to replace coca plantations with alternative crops. The grilled hearts of palm at the Harry Sasson restaurant in Bogotá are famous, as are the hearts of palm with pitahaya and cauliflower made by Álvaro Clavijo at El Chato, also in Bogotá. Cuisine therefore helps a significant number of communities to obtain secure and legal income and to recover their dignity lost during so many years of harassment due to a conflict they never wanted.

## A country to savour

Laura Hernández Espinosa (37 years old) knows a lot about this. She has spent the last 12 years working on Colombia's development from the kitchen of the Leo restaurant, which her mother, Leonor Espinosa, opened in Bogotá in 2007. Laura is an internationalist specialised in social responsibility. With a Master's degree in Interdisciplinary Development Studies, she is the sommelier at the Leo restaurant (ranked 46th best in the world according to The World's 50 Best Restaurants), the president of Funleo, the foundation created by her mother, a senior consultant in culinary heritage and cultural entrepreneurship for the American NGO ACDI/VOCA and one of the most influential voices in Colombian cuisine.

Laura was speaking about “gastronomy for development” as far back as 2010, when few in the food industry understood the concept. As the president of Funleo and as the restaurant's sommelier, she has not only put Colombia on the map of important cuisine, but has also



On the left, a box with machetajos, fish typical to the Chocó area. Below, the fishing port of Bonaventura, in the Cauca Valley.







Woman of the Mizak community in the Silvia market (Cauca). Below, from left to right, a man prepares tarantana with maize and lemon in the Potrerillo market in Narino.



## Cooking is a tool for social cohesion in a country undergoing reconciliation and a way to boost rural economies and revalue identity.

demonstrated that cooking is the engine of development, a fundamental line to mitigate food vulnerability and a tool for social cohesion in a country undergoing reconciliation and a way to boost rural economies and revalue identity.

### **The effect of gastronomy**

All this work, which we recognise today by the term "social gastronomy", so widespread and applauded around the world, was not so easy for Leonor Espinosa to implement when she started Funleo in 2008. Two years later, Laura took over as executive director and the projects began to multiply. "When we told the institutions about this, they did not understand the relationship between cuisine and development, since they always thought of gastronomy as synonymous with restaurants, with cooking a recipe. It was time to spread the word so that they would understand what is so obvious today: that gastronomy positively impacts and transforms communities", Laura says.

Absolutely convinced and taking advantage of the loudspeaker that comes with being one of the best restaurants in the country, they blazed trails and raised awareness, promoting projects like the International Gastronomy Centre in Chocó, where they have transferred skills to the

Afro-descendant communities of the Colombian Pacific so they can establish governance that helps them to self-manage. They have diversified the products available by creating tourist routes and marketable products and have launched the Zotea restaurant, in Coquí, in the Gulf of Tribugá, employing and generating wealth for dozens of women, most of them victims of the armed conflict. This earned them the 2017 Basque Culinary World Prize, delivered by the Basque Culinary Centre, for their contribution to safeguarding traditions and promoting rural growth in food sovereignty contexts.

Laura holds firm to these ideas, adding other initiatives in the restaurant to her social and economic development projects in which to channel all her creativity and experience. This is the case of Territorios, a liquid project in which she distills the country's ecosystems to transform them into five of her own drinks. No. 1, Páramo, as they call it in La Sala de Laura, the bar located on the second floor of the Leo restaurant, is a distillate based on laurel and páramo rosemary, two herbs that are not used in cooking and drinks and that only the people living in this ecosystem know about.

It is fresh and humid, like the ecosystem it represents. No. 7, Desierto, is

a prickly pear distillate. Laura composes a cocktail in which she mixes *chirrinchi* (a traditional drink made by the Wayuu ethnic group, using sugar cane), *iguaraya* (a purple cactus fruit), Andean blackberry and a cloud of *pulantana* (a wild endemic plant from whose seed the natives make a kind of coffee).

"My work as a sommelier in the restaurant goes far beyond creating a cocktail or a pairing. Territorios came into being first as an expression of creativity. I find it nice and fun to be able to perform a contemporary reinterpretation of the country's ecosystems. After all, I am my mother's daughter and though I am not a plastic artist, I approach cuisine from the perspective of contemporary art". The sommelier adds that "Territorios is an innovative development that works with beverages. Leo is a niche company, which starts from the premise that we need to be much further ahead to maintain ourselves, and this project gives us something exclusive that you can only drink at Leo. Finally, I exalt our traditions with each bottle. I want Colombia to see itself and be surprised at what it sees".

### **Food-based change**

Social gastronomy, which transcends restaurants, is slowly gaining ground in



“

**The culinary talent, the resource potential and the originality of the diverse climates predict Colombia's exuberant culinary growth in the immediate future. The different anthropological influences have built a copious mosaic of good taste.**

**Josep Roca.**

”

Colombia and faces problems such as inequalities, hunger, displacement, abandonment of the countryside, the protection of biodiversity and cultural heritage. Many cooks in the country are committed to using food for change in Colombia. They take advantage of their undeniable knowledge of the food chain, animal husbandry, crops and fishing and explain how they influence the environment. They know the peasants, the fishermen and producers. They understand how they live, the insecurity of rural life and how difficult it is to transport food. They know outdated regulations that impede innovation and they understand better than anyone the value of delicate and rare ingredients, as well as how culinary experiences influence cultural trends. They know that the restaurant is an embassy, a speaker and an activist that can make a change in the system.

Leonor Espinosa, who has just been named the World's Best Female Chef 2022

by The World's 50 Best Restaurants, is the main point of reference in this subject. She has always used the restaurant as a loud-speaker for the lands on which her cooking draws. She travels the country from north to south to give visibility to products and producers, report bad practices and create short chains to promote the marketing of products from the communities that supply her restaurant.

"Haute cuisine is related to variables such as refinement, the quality of the ingredients, techniques and table service. But it is also defined by the cooks' commitment to the first link in the production chain, to cultural traditions, to the origin of food, to identities or, for example, to the use of responsible diversity and climate change". At her restaurant, Leonor builds her Ciclobio-mas menu, which she uses to exalt the Colombian pantry, valuing the knowledge of Afro, peasant and indigenous stew cooks, work that builds identity and promotes

**Colombia is one of the countries with the greatest variety of landscapes and diversity in the world.**

Over 50,000 botanical species have been registered, 33,000 of which are endemic. Almost all are used in the kitchen, such as *Santa María de Anís*, *mortiño*, mangrove fruits and all kinds of rhizomes.



A food stall in the Bazarito market, in Cartagena.



# **“Many cooks are committed to making a change in Colombia.”**



*The Vaupés jungle, in the southeastern part of the country, is one of the natural paradises of the Colombian Amazon. On the next page, an ear of maize, tortillas from the Cocha lagoon, cut fruit and a basket full of chontaduros.*

economic processes in communities isolated and forgotten by the armed conflict. Her extraordinary narrative skills, which make her cuisine unique due to her artistic and territorial expressiveness, have also earned her recognition as one of the 100 most influential women in Colombia, according to *Forbes* magazine.

Eduardo Martínez and Antonuela Ariza, both chefs and owners of the Mini-mal restaurant in Bogotá, provide another clear example of committed cuisine. They have spent 20 years using a restaurant to rebuild the social fabric, being the first to use cooking for social purposes. Mini-mal is an establishment that has gone down a path

running in the opposite direction of most of those who are involved in socially-motivated cuisine today.

Eduardo is an agronomist turned cook. He was a park ranger, working on sustainability projects in the Pacific and the Amazon. In the middle of the armed conflict, he created the Fundación Equilibrio together with other agronomists, which is the prelude to the restaurant. It is the showcase, the platform laid down by this foundation to show Colombia the wealth of those unknown and abandoned lands and make their rural economy viable at the same time. “We decided to open a restaurant because we were looking for







Above, Alex Quessep visiting guangul bean producer María Rúa. On the right, Antonuela Ariza and Eduardo Martínez, founders of the restaurant Mini-mal in Bogotá.



## Cocineros a Punto shares the idea of a gastronomy that safeguards culture and favours the consumption of local products.

the tool to help us to connect the countryside with the city, telling stories of value. We need something that is a loudspeaker for that richness that remains invisible", Eduardo says.

Before the establishment of Mini-mal, Eduardo and Antonuela's work sought to integrate the aesthetic with the ethical and economic. An example of this is their promotion of the ingredients and culinary traditions of the Pacific and the Amazon, providing commercial alternatives to the communities in these regions while also tempting urban customers through a contemporary Colombian cuisine full of surprises, rooted in the invisible countryside, with which Colombians in the cities and foreigners are gradually becoming familiar.

This idea is clearly seen in a dish of *empanadas* made with native maize from the Montes de María, cultivated by the Zenu community, indigenous to the Caribbean region, stuffed with *tucupí* meat stew.

*Tucupí* is a black chili made from the poison of the *yuca brava*. Eduardo learned it from his grandmother, Aurelia, a bearer of the Amazonian tradition of the Ticuna-Huitoto ethnic group in Leticia (who died of Covid in 2020). It is an ancestral recipe only made by indigenous people. Mini-mal was the loudspeaker for this

product and has connected it with a large network of restaurants in the country.

His work has also helped to revalue Colombian cuisine and has inspired many young people, including the *Cocineros a Punto* group, made up of other famous people such as Jennifer Rodríguez, from the Mestizo restaurant, in Mesitas de Colegio, Cundinamarca; Jaime Rodríguez, from Celele in Cartagena de Indias; Tomás Rueda, from the Oriente restaurant, in Guatavita; Alejandro Gutiérrez from Salvo Patria, in Bogotá, and more. They all share the idea of a gastronomy that safeguards culture and favours the consumption of local products.

### **Mixing in Colombia**

Alex Quessep is another leading figure in food activism, this time framed in the history of Arab mixing in the Colombian Caribbean. It is not discussed much, but when we talk about multi-ethnic Colombia, we refer to the presence of indigenous, African, Spanish and Arab cultures in building the nation, with all the mixing this implies.

Born in the savannahs of Sucre, Alex grew up in a Syrian-Lebanese family, the descendants of immigrants who arrived in the port of Barranquilla in 1880, escaping Ottoman persecution of Christians. Alex discovered a universe loaded with

**The cultures that have populated Colombia at different times in history have left their mark on its cuisine.**

The main influences have come from the indigenous peoples living in the territory, the Spaniards who arrived with their first conquests, the Africans who worked in harsh conditions on the plantations and the French and English who travelled there throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.



### THE FLOWER

The shrub grows easily in tropical areas, growing up to two or three metres high. The branches are slender with dark-coloured leaves and the small flowers grow in clusters on short stems.



### THE LEAF

Among other substances, the coca leaf contains alkaloids, from which cocaine hydrochloride is obtained.



## CULINARY USES OF THE COCA LEAF

In its natural form, the coca leaf is a mild stimulant like coffee and tea. A wide range of products are made with it for nutritional, medicinal and agricultural purposes (to make compost, for example). We discovered some of its uses in the kitchen.

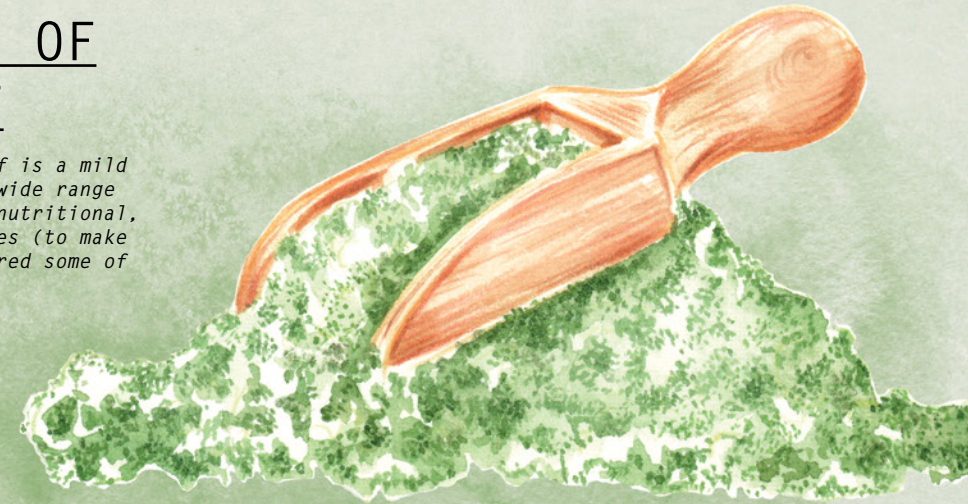
### INFUSIONS AND BEVERAGES

Like other plants such as açai, coca is a powerful natural energiser with which you can make infusions. Fresh coca leaves are used fresh, toasted or in the form of flour.



### COCA FLOUR

This is the most widely used coca-derived product. After collection, the leaves are left to dry in the sun for two days. They are then roasted in a clay cooking pot and finally ground.



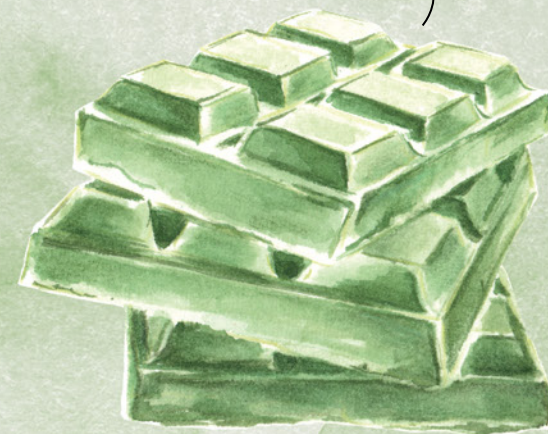
### COCA ICE CREAM

Coca flour is a product with impressive versatility that brings a greenish hue similar to that of matcha tea to foods such as ice cream.



### COCA CHOCOLATE

Coca and chocolate are two products characteristic of Colombia. A few companies make tablets with flour from the plant.



### COCA OIL

To make flavoured oils with garlic and herbs, for example, you can add a couple tablespoons of coca flour. Oils are also made from coca leaves and other medicinal herbs for giving massages.



## THE COCA STIGMA

THE LONG AND DARK SHADOW OF COCAINE DRUG TRAFFICKING HAS HIDDEN THE TRADITIONAL USES OF THE COCA PLANT SINCE PRE-HISPANIC TIMES IN AREAS SUCH AS THE SIERRA NEVADA DE SANTA MARTA AND THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON. THE SHRUB BELONGS TO THE *ERYTHROXYLACEAE* FAMILY AND THE SPECIES WHOSE LEAVES ARE USED IS *ERYTHROXYLUM NOVOGRANATENSE* VAR *NOVOGRANATENSE*.





symbols that was essential to investigate, document and tell to preserve the cultural memory of the Caribbean. His restaurant Palo de Mango, in Barranquilla, is an allegory of this mixing.

Quessep is renowned for conducting studies on the influence of Arabic cuisine in the Colombian Caribbean and for his work with the country's Ministry of Culture to recover the memories of traditional cuisines in what is called the Caribbean *montuno*, or the interior, in the departments of Atlántico and Sucre, respectively.

#### **Identity and self-recognition**

The work done by Laura, Eduardo, Antonuela and Alex breaks the paradigm of the development models implemented in Colombian communities, almost always with a focus on modern production techniques, and opens the way to new forms of wealth creation based on identity and self-recognition.

"You cannot create development when you turn your back on your identity. That also leads to violence. It is the origin of racism and war, something that in Colombia we know very well. And that

*Casabe is a crunchy, thin and circular shaped bread of pre-Hispanic origin made of cassava flour. Grandmothers like Beatriz Lucitante of the Cofán community, in Putumayo, make it in the traditional way.*

## **Cuisine can help to recognise the rural past and present of products, people and cultures.**







## Cooking educates, promotes and builds significant narratives around landscapes, products and people.

is the great opportunity that cooking provides, as a tool to recognise our rural past and present, to learn about our diversity and, ultimately, to assume our identity", says Eduardo Martínez from Mini-mal. "If restaurants or chefs are truly going to adopt a social stance, we should all become platforms to show that diversity in the form of products, people, cultures and ingredients. Most of all, we should ensure that these processes of connecting with the food they produce and their ancestral knowledge begin in the communities but are valued in the city and produce wealth that returns to those communities and does not remain in the restaurant", adds Antonuela.

This is something with which Laura Hernández agrees. "Change is beginning to be seen in the countryside. I go Quibdó or to Tumaco (on the Pacific coast) and I see empowered people doing their thing. Self-esteem for what is ours and recognition of our diversity is beginning to transcend the urban environment. The farmers tell me: 'You don't know how much my *viche* (heritage distillate from the Colombian Pacific made from sugar cane) sells for at the Leo restaurant or Mesa Franca', and they proudly take ownership of their product, their wealth. The self-recognition is real".

According to them, this self-recognition is the great revolution in Colombia,



**Leo Espinosa (Cali, 1963) is a chef, economist and artist who has revolutionised Colombian cuisine and shown it to the whole world.**

Her efforts discovering and recovering recipes and ancestral culinary techniques throughout the country and her work in her restaurant Leo, in Bogotá, have made her one of the most prestigious chefs. She was named the World's Best Female Chef in 2022.

a young country that is beginning to access its territories naturally and to recognise its cultural and ethnobotanical wealth. Understanding the territory and its crops is essential to strengthening identity and safeguarding diversity. In light of the facts, there is no doubt that there is no greater manager of social and intercultural dialogue than food.

Cooking educates, promotes and builds significant narratives around landscapes, products and the people that produce them. It seems like gastronomy is the new Macondo, that enchanted paradise **A**



Leonor Espinosa and her daughter Laura Hernández (top) are the heart and soul of the restaurant Leo in Bogotá. Right, one of the Territorios, Hernández's liquid project.





**THE ORIGINAL 1876 RECIPE**

**100% NATURAL INGREDIENTS**

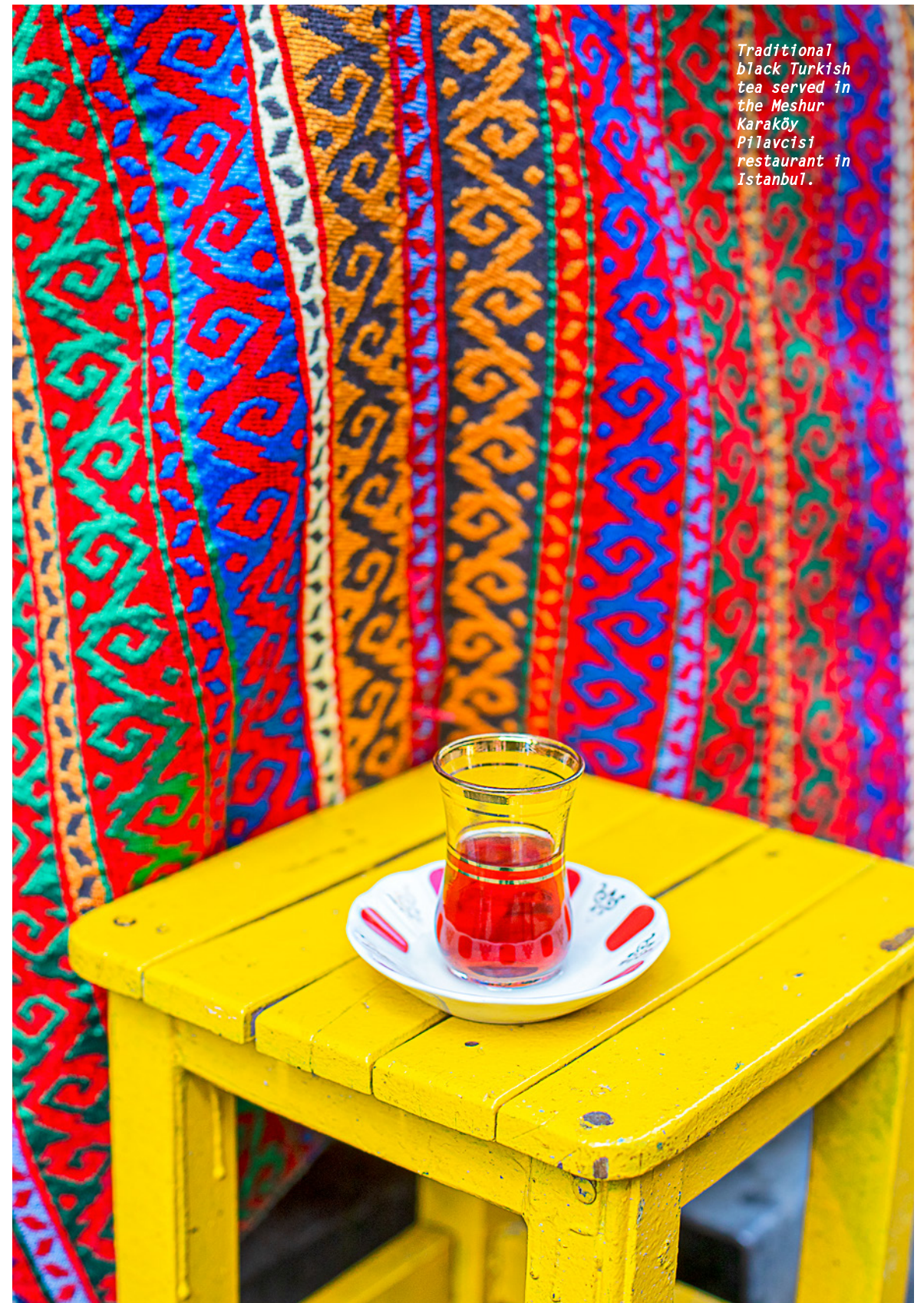
Please enjoy responsibly.



# 5 / TÜRKİYE THE IMPORTANCE OF ROOTS

## In search of lost flavours

Let's travel to Türkiye to take the pulse of one of the richest cuisines on the planet with one of the most famous chefs in Istanbul. Through a journey to its origins, we rediscover traditional Anatolian ingredients and recipes. Recover the past to secure the future.



*Traditional  
black Turkish  
tea served in  
the Meshur  
Karaköy  
Pilavcisi  
restaurant in  
Istanbul.*





CHEF MAKSUT AŞKAR STROLLING THROUGH STREET MARKETS IN THE DEEDİNDÜ DISTRICT

28° 57' 52.3" E

## TÜRKİYE



İSTANBUL

1,412,452

inhabitants of the city of  
Istanbul (2020)

536 M

above sea level  
at its highest point,  
Aydos Hill

39

districts on both sides  
of the Galata Bridge, which  
separates Asia from Europe

1663

year when the Spice Bazaar  
was created

1,122

restaurants registered  
in the city (2015)

*Chef Maksut Aşkar, one of the top figures of the new Turkish cuisine, seeks to rediscover the culinary culture of Anatolia, that of his childhood memories, through a modern cuisine that preserves traditions and guarantees the sustainability of the land and those who work it.*

by Andrés Mourenza /// photos Bradley Secker

# RETURN TO CHILDHOOD FLAVOURS

**Occasionally, strolling through Istanbul, chef Maksut Aşkar detects a scent that sends him back to childhood.**

It could be a simple *bufe*, those small kiosks that prepare cheese and sausage sandwiches, whose aroma transports him to the sandwiches he ate during school breaks, or a modest eating house that reminds him of homemade meals in Iskenderun, the Mediterranean port a stone's throw from the Syrian border where he was born in 1976. He often feels like the character in Marcel Proust's novel, to whom a spoonful of tea mixed with bits of madeleine brought to the surface memories of his childhood: his Aunt Leonie on distant Sunday mornings in Combray, the walks in Mr. Swann's park... The following sips, on the other hand, blurred his memory.

For Maksut Aşkar, those aromas that he catches in the streets of Istanbul push him to go in and try it, almost always to later admit defeat: the smell is similar, but the taste is not the same.

Aşkar is one of the most prestigious chefs of the new Turkish cuisine. His dishes, a feast of textures, colours and intense flavour, have earned several awards and recognition for him and his restaurant, Neolokal. However, his cooking cannot be understood without taking a trip to his childhood. The return to that happy and safe place, heavy with the smell of jams cooking over a slow fire, of the steaming pots in preparation for the great family banquets, of the preserves before being bottled, of the tomatoes drying in the summer sun...





*Pide is a type of flat bread prepared with a base of flour, yeast, eggs and oil on which desired ingredients are placed before baking. It is one of the foods that can be tasted in the streets of Istanbul, where there are many stalls selling many other products, such as olives and the traditional cheese of eastern Türkiye (on the following page).*

It might seem contradictory, but Aşkar got his start in the kitchen because of his clumsiness. If his mother sent him to go buy eggs, he always returned with a broken one; if he went out with his friends, he always came back with wounds or bruises. When he explains it, he laughs with that frank smile of a man satisfied with the course life has taken him. “Yes, I was a bit clumsy and distracted. This is why my mother didn’t let me play much in the street. She preferred for me to be at home. I was very curious and I’d ask: ‘Why do you sauté the onions before cooking the meat?’ or ‘Why do you add the salt now, and not before?’”

His paternal grandfather died when he was seven years old and he was chosen from among all the grandchildren to keep his widowed grandmother company. “What language can a seven-year-old boy and a seventy-year-old lady have in common? Cooking”. He was entrusted with roasting the coffee with cardamom; he helped to shell the pulses, to remove the



pebbles from wheat and rice; he stirred the sofrito; and he participated on long summer days devoted to preserving tomato and pepper and to making orange concentrate to drink when the heat arrived.

#### Library of flavours

“The best cook in our lives is our mother. In Anatolia, all culinary wisdom is passed from mother to daughter. My mother was the eldest daughter, who is the one who receives the most knowledge from her mother, and she also learned from my paternal grandmother. It is knowledge that is transmitted orally, which is why there are few written sources”, he says. “So, by helping to cook, I had the opportunity to try the things we prepared and that gives you a reference for the flavours. I see culinary knowledge as a library in which I store these kinds of lessons. And I began to fill that library from a young age”.

Sometimes, Aşkar leaves clues, like crumbs of Proustian madeleine, for whomever wants to follow them.



## **“The best cook is our mother. In Anatolia, the techniques, the recipes, all the culinary wisdom passes from mother to daughter.”**

In the tasting menu that he prepared for the restaurant Villa Magna in Madrid in 2017, he included his dessert Frigo, a cold sweet with chocolate, pistachios, heavy cream with cinnamon and *salep* (wild orchid flour widely used in Türkiye to make ice creams and drinks), which mixes creamy and crunchy textures. To the unfamiliar, the name and flavour may not tell much—which is no obstacle to enjoying it—but it will take any Turk over 30 years old back to the summer afternoons of their youth, when they went

to escape the heat in the elegant and majestic cinemas, not yet devoured by the multiplexes of shopping centres and in which there were still ushers who moved between the aisles selling popular cold chocolate bars called Frigo.

Actually, Maksur Aşkar did not study cooking, but tourism and hotel management. It was the circumstances of life and a “journey of personal discovery” with the library of flavours that he has been accumulating as a guide since he was little that pushed him into the kitchen. Since he was

a teenager, he has worked in bars and restaurants to support himself, always keeping an eye on learning new techniques. In the early 2000s, he experimented with design: he created flavours and designed caterings for art galleries and even presented an energy drink based on natural herbs and spices for an exhibition in Luxembourg. In summer 2007, he was invited to jointly run the kitchen of a restaurant in Alaçati, the chic coast of Izmir.

It was the first time he worked the stove. At the end of the season, he got in-





Jars with marinated artichoke hearts at chef Maksut Aşkar's canned fruit and vegetable shop Enginarci Harun, located in Kurtulus, a neighbourhood with over 500 years of history.







Night falls in Istanbul: a passenger ferry navigates through the Bosphorus and the port of Karaköy teems with life with travelling stalls selling roasted chestnuts and other delicacies.

## “Our intention is to take the flavours of tradition, the recipes of our mothers and grandmothers, and recreate them through modern cooking techniques with a fresh look.”

spired and opened a place, MultiMekan, where he started to experiment. Then others arrived: Lilbitz and SekizIstanbul, with a tasting menu where he mixed classic flavours of international and local cuisine, with a touch of his own. “At the time, I wrote down a lot of my thoughts. What do I cook? Who do I cook for? Why do I cook? I came to the conclusion that, not being an Italian cook myself, no matter how well I did it, my *penne all’arrabbiata* would never amount to more than a good copy of the original because I was not born into that culture. I was born into a very rich culinary culture and I have grown up with the notes of these flavours since I was little. So I told myself that I should follow the path of my mother, of the Anatolian mothers and translate it into today’s cuisine with my own language”.

This is how Neolokal came into being, first as the motto of SekizIstanbul, where international dishes were gradually replaced by Anatolian cuisine—with products exclusively from the land—later as the proper name of his current restaurant, in the Salt cultural centre in an imperial building on the slopes that descend from Galata Tower, once the headquarters of the Ottoman Central Bank.

There, next to a café that fills up with students when the adjoining library is full

because exams are approaching, are the kitchens—open to public view—where the Neolokal team starts working on dishes starting from the morning. It is not uncommon to see the team and Maksut Aşkar himself at the long tables in the small inner courtyard, smoking a cigarette and discussing the menus. “Because I want to represent Anatolian cuisine, I need to know other people’s childhood memories, ask questions, investigate, travel. This is why I try to ensure that our team has representatives from different parts of the country, because the childhood memories and culinary culture of someone from the Aegean coast cannot be the same as mine”.

An example of how he uses this culinary background can be found in his recipe for *mihlama*, a typical dish from the Black Sea coast halfway between polenta and fondue. Instead of maize flour, Neolokal uses *firik* wheat flour, a variety from southeastern Anatolia that is harvested green and smoked. Instead of cheeses from the north, it uses *tulum* from Izmir, which has a stronger flavour.

“In this way, by mixing a recipe and ingredients from various regions, we create a flavour that is not foreign. But at the same time, it is new. Our intention is to take the flavours of tradition, the recipes

of our mothers and grandmothers, and recreate them through modern cooking techniques with a fresh look. It’s about sustaining the tradition by expanding its horizons”, he explains.

### **Empire of flavours**

Istanbul is an immense city, vast in time and space. As the capital of three empires, it is hard to dig without bumping into a remnant of the past. And that archaeology is not just stones, but layers of history of the communities that inhabited this place with their culture and their cuisine, vestiges over which new ones have been deposited.

“What does an empire do to hold on to the lands it conquers?” asks Aşkar. “It tries to assimilate the people of those lands. It moves populations from other areas to there and moves the population from there to other places. When moving from one place to another, the only thing that people can take with them are their memories and their culture. In their cuisine, they adapt the recipes that they know to the new geography to which they have been taken”.

During the reign of Justinian (5th to 6th centuries AD), Constantinople reached a half million inhabitants and was one of the most populous cities in the





*Beyoğlu, with the Galata Tower looming between the buildings. Below: fish in a market in the Kurtulus district.*



## Anatolia has been a place of passage between Europe and Asia, East and West.

Bathed by the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, the peninsula of Anatolia officially belongs to Türkiye. However, its geographical and cultural limits go beyond political borders.

world if not the most. It reached one million at the beginning of the 20th century and now has more than 16 million. Istanbul is no longer an imperial capital, and not even the capital of its own country, but its cross-cultural character remains part of its essence. It is the engine of Türkiye (one third of the national GDP is generated there) and a destination for immigrants from neighbouring regions and countries. Sixty per cent of its inhabitants were not born in the city and over half of the rest have their family origins in other parts of the country or further afield, such as Greek islands like Crete, the Balkans, the Caucasus or parts of the Middle East.

"My mother is from Antakya and my father is from Iskenderun. Both cities were part of Syria 90 years ago and I still have relatives on the other side of the border. But the area was also under French rule for 30 years, and before that it belonged to Aleppo Prefecture in the Ottoman Empire, whose borders stretched from Yemen to Ukraine. So, what references do we take to establish the limits of a cuisine? This is why I prefer to use a geographical term, Anatolia, rather than a political one to define my cuisine.

Because in Anatolia, there is room for Georgian, Armenian, Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Bulgarian cuisine and more..."

### From inside

However, those immense dimensions (and the very dynamics of global capitalism) have also made Istanbul more mainstream. The growing population of the city must be fed quickly and cheaply. In the last 20 years, supermarkets have gained ground over vegetable markets and small businesses; shopping centres have become popular socialisation centres and are springing up like mushrooms, each one with exactly the same brands as the last. Franchises of cafés, pastry shops and *kebab* shops have multiplied. The flavours have become standardised. Therefore, Aşkar maintains that the true cuisine of Anatolia is the one that takes place in homes and that you can enjoy more gastronomic variety by entering mothers' kitchens than in restaurants.

### The love for craftsmanship

Maksut Aşkar makes his way through the myriad of shoppers, porters and peddlers who populate the alleys of the Eminönü

“In Türkiye, we were looking for the meeting of two cultures focused by the same light. Istanbul, a culinary capital for centuries, was a place of influence in mediaeval Catalonia and still is today.

Joan Roca.

”





neighbourhood, between cheese shops and coffee roasters, packing shops, wedding dresses and circumcision outfits. These alleys and the streets that climb the hill, with centuries-old galleries, old caravanserais and cisterns converted into warehouses and workshops are the true bazaar, since the Grand Bazaar has been turned into a property reserved for tourists. “Just a moment. I’m going to enter here”. In the shop where the chef gets his supplies of knives and other kitchen utensils, the owner is swearing about the crazy inflation affecting the country while negotiating a discount with a client and rummaging through supplier in-

voices to prove why he cannot lower the prices any further.

Maksut and the owner embrace in a hug and some tea immediately appears, that essential and idiosyncratic element of commercial relations in Türkiye. “Maybe I could get the same thing and cheaper from a modern wholesale distributor, but in addition to quality, I seek to establish a personal relationship. Maybe it’s something sentimental”, Aşkar shrugs. The same applies to the producers from whom he buys the raw materials. “When I was little, there were only aubergines in summer. You only found strawberries in May. Now we have the whole year. Sometimes I miss

*On the previous page, the tram crosses the Galata Bridge from Eminönü in Karaköy. At Pak Pide Salonu, near the old Büyük Valide caravanserai, they prepare pides in the traditional way.*

**“What language can a seven-year-old boy and a seventy-year-old lady have in common? Cooking.”**



# STROLLING ALONG WITH MAKSUT AŞKAR

A DOZEN RESTAURANTS, STALLS  
AND SHOPS OFF THE USUAL TOURIST  
PATHS TO WALK ALONG LEISURELY  
THROUGH THE STREETS OF ISTANBUL  
AND DISCOVER THE BEST-KEPT  
SECRETS OF TURKISH CUISINE.

**1 Meşhur  
Karaköy Pilavcısı**  
İlhami Görmez has been  
at this small street  
stall for 20 years  
making rice, which he  
serves with chickpeas  
and crispy chicken.

**2 Lades Menemem**  
They have been serving  
traditional Turkish  
breakfast since 1969:  
feta cheese, olives,  
fresh tomatoes and  
peppers, menemem  
(scrambled eggs,  
tomato and pepper)  
and eggs with kavurma  
(lamb meat cooked in  
its own fat). There  
are also dairy sweets,  
such as rice pudding.

**3 Neolokal (Maksut's  
restaurant)**

**4 NATO Lokantası**  
As its name indicates,  
the restaurant has  
been in operation  
since Türkiye joined  
the Atlantic Alliance  
in 1952 and has fed  
merchants and office  
workers in the Karaköy

neighbourhood ever  
since. It is one  
of Maksut Aşkar's  
favourite lokanta  
(homemade cooking  
houses).

**5 Dönerci Engin Usta**  
Probably the best  
döner kebab in  
Istanbul. The secret  
is in its simplicity—  
they serve the meat  
on bread accompanied  
only by fresh chives,  
tomato and radish when  
it is in season—the  
quality of the meat  
and the marinade,  
which has been kept  
secret for three  
generations.

**6 Pandeli**  
This restaurant  
in the upper gallery  
of the Spice Bazaar  
has been in operation  
for over a century.  
Maksut Aşkar  
recommends  
their kebab with  
aubergine and  
for dessert,  
the sour cherry  
ekmek kadayıfı.

**Buuzecedi**  
**10**

**Pak Pide  
Salonu**  
**8**

**9 Siirt Şeref Buryan**

**5 Dönerci  
Engin Usta**

**7 Köfteci Yaşar**

**2 Lades  
Menemem**

**4 NATO Lokantası**

**1 Meşhur Karaköy  
Pilavcısı**

**7 Köfteci Yaşar**  
Three generations  
have run this small  
restaurant where they  
serve traditional  
and tasty grilled  
köfte (beef and lamb  
meatballs).

**3 Pak Pide Salonu**  
Forty years of making  
pide (Turkish pizza)  
for merchants at the  
Grand Bazaar have made  
them experts on the  
dough: crispy to bite,  
fluffy on the inside  
and light, and not  
as filling as other  
pideci.

**9 Siirt Şeref Buryan**  
Kadınlar Çarşısı  
square (Women's  
Market) is lined with  
cheese and butcher  
shops of merchants  
from Van, Siirt and  
other southeastern  
provinces of Türkiye,  
as well as restaurants  
specialising in  
bûryan, lamb typical  
of the Kurdish region  
roasted in ovens  
similar to tandoori,  
which produce honeyed  
meat that melts in  
your mouth. Aşkar's  
favourite is Siirt  
Şeref Buryan, run by  
a family with over a  
century of tradition  
in the business.

**10 Buuzecedi**  
The exodus of almost  
four million Syrian  
refugees to Türkiye  
has also meant the  
arrival of cuisine  
from Aleppo and  
Damascus to Istanbul.  
This place was known  
to Aşkar through his  
Syrian relatives and  
offers specialties  
from the country such  
as humus, fete (based  
on chickpeas, nuts,  
yogurt and garlic) and  
falafel, in addition  
to lavash bread baked  
in their own oven at  
the entrance.



# “Every self-respecting cook has to pass the test of making good rice: loose grains and a smooth texture.”

**Sweets are an inseparable part of Turkish cuisine. The best known is baklava, but there are many others.**

Sweets like Turkish rice pudding and Turkish cream with bread and milk have been prepared in Istanbul shops for generations. Baklava, a pistachio pastry in a honey-bathed dough; *lokum*, a cube-shaped natural jelly confection and *dondurma* (or Maraş ice cream), are some of the most famous Turkish desserts.

missing strawberries or aubergines in December, because if you make a dish with aubergines in winter, it will not achieve the flavour that takes you back to childhood: if the ingredient is not the same, the flavour will not be either. Since childhood memories are very important to how I understand cooking, to preserve the flavours that I remember, I need to be in contact with the producers. I need products that are in season and are the tastiest from each specific region”.

## Street cooks

Thus, he has begun to go after them: in addition to growing his own garden, the Neolokal team buys fruit and vegetables from a weekly market in the Fatih neighbourhood on Wednesdays and organic produce at the Bomonti market on Saturdays. They also purchase from a network of producers from all over Anatolia with whom he has been establishing contact: farmers and ranchers who respect the land and its cycles. “I realised that people who do this kind of agriculture earn less than those who practice conventional farming. The first is because they have less production and then because of intermediaries. So I decided to buy from them directly, paying them more for their production and saving on agents. In this way, I can convince them not to abandon their production methods”, he says. Dedication, effort and love for a job well done: these are the values guiding Aşkar. This is why he feels so much admiration for craftsmen, from those who knead bread to those who handcraft the copper pots he uses in his restaurant.

This is why it is a pleasure to explore the streets of Istanbul with him. Though it sometimes depresses him not to find the flavour promised by the scents he catches on his walks, in recent years he has acquired a good handful of excellent places to eat. They are not large restaurants or fine establishments, but quite the contrary: chefs who feed workers and merchants, but who have managed to hold on to their essence despite the odds. For example, a few metres up the street from Neolokal, the “master” Engin prepares an immense *döner*: the cuts of meat are placed perfectly in the cylinder on a spit, a mixture of beef and lamb covered in sheep’s tail fat. He has been in the trade for 45 years, which he learned from his father, who learned it from his grandfather. When he asks for the recipe, he just falls silent and smiles. “I’ve been coming here for years and I haven’t been able to discover it yet”, Aşkar adds with a laugh.

A few metres further down, in a side street leading from the Karaköy hardware bazaar, the elderly İlhami Görmez has a little stand serving rice with chicken and chickpeas. Rice pilaf is an institution in Turkish homes and Maksut Aşkar argues that every self-respecting chef must pass the test of making good rice: loose grains and a smooth texture without going overboard. “You have to sauté it well and correctly balance the fat with the water”, he says.

This is what Maksut values: the voice of experience, a passion for work. “How can I make a better dish than someone



The dining room of Maksut Aşkar's restaurant Neolokal, with views of the historical centre of Istanbul.







## “What I look for, when someone eats at Neolokal, is to tell them the story of my culinary tradition.”



who has been doing it for 40 years or several generations? It is impossible. To do that, you have to spend as much time as they have. All I can do is find a way to explain the value of that person's work".

For him, this transmission of craft knowledge between master and apprentice (or matrilineally, in household cooking) is very important. "In Japan, they have a lot of respect for this way of learning. Here it is at risk of being lost, but it continues to exist". We see this risk when visiting the restaurant Köfte Yaşar: "I am the third generation that runs it", the cook says, but adds: "And also the last one". His children study at the university and they will dedicate themselves to other careers, better paid and with less suffering.

It is a waste of time to stop and cry over the past. Maksut isn't overly nostalgic either. "By presenting them in an attractive way for today's style, what I try to do is make the traditions survive". And that is what he does with the dozens of young cooks who accompany him in his restaurant. "My mission is not to create provocative flavours that those who have tried them will never forget. What I look for, when someone eats at Neolokal, is to tell them the story of my culinary tradition". What I do is refine Anatolian cuisine, bringing it to the present so that new generations can appreciate it. And if young cooks receive it and pass it on, in the future they will be able to experiment and, if they wish, create their own flavours based on it. **A**

*In the restaurant of Maksut, they work with seasonal products bought from farmers and local livestock raisers, with dozens of young chefs adapting traditional recipes and presenting them in an attractive way.*



# 6 / MEXICO THE CULTURE OF 'MOLE'

## A dish that lays claim to identity

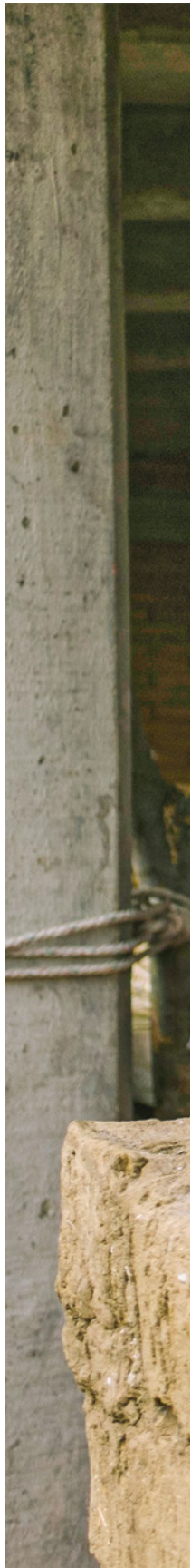
Through *mole*, we follow the history of the country.

A preparation found in the most renowned restaurants of Mexico, it also lays claim to the role of women and indigenous cultures.



Handmade and  
handcrafted  
spoons and  
utensils to  
prepare mole.





Contrary to what popular myths tell us, mole did not originate in the time of the galleons and viceregal banquets, but rather belongs to a different time and another world view. A century before the ingenuity of this dish was attributed to “divine grace”, whether due to the virtues of Sor Andrea in the convent of Santa Rosa in Puebla or those of the Franciscan friar Pascual, who spilled the ingredients “by accident” in the casserole, the conquistadors knew or had already tried at least one version of these “chilli sauces” or chilmollis, as they were described in documents from the Indies.

by Renata Lira /// photos Araceli Paz

# TRUE HISTORY OF THE CONQUEST OF ‘MOLE’

There is a predominant image of *mole*, with a piece of a bird (the leg alone or the whole thing) on a clay dish, made of Talavera ceramic or melamine, bathed in a thick sauce with an intense and bright coffee colour, with copper reflections and a hail of toasted sesame seeds on top, almost always garnished with red rice and vegetables.

The image is not bad in itself. On the contrary, for those of us who like *mole*, what it inspires is a craving, nostalgia; we imagine spooning the rich sauce onto a piece of corn tortilla or reheating

it the next day on a fried egg or in *enchiladas*.

The downside to the power of this image is that it shows a homogenised form of a food that is actually diverse (as is the case with much of our national narrative).

Behind the archetypal figure of *mole*, which, in reality, refers to only one of the (at least) 17 varieties that are traditionally prepared in the state of Puebla alone (the famous *mole poblano*), there is an entire universe of *moles* of different colours, flavours and textures, scattered across Mexico’s geography.



## MEXICO



129,150,971  
inhabitants (2022)

200  
varieties of  
native chillis

68  
indigenous languages  
with 287 different  
linguistic varieties

652  
markets that provide  
65% of the products  
sold in the country





*In the cornfield, the traditional agricultural system of Mesoamerica, from Oaxaca, the main crops are corn, beans, squash, chillis and tomatoes. Below, a basket of Creole apples to prepare black mole.*



## **If we go back in time, in the beginning *mole* was chilli and stone. It was the son of the cornfield and the mountain and of the movement of the body on the earth.**

never stops transforming, and yet it has an essence that is permanent, which gives it an identity and makes it a *mole* and nothing else.

### **Result of intuition**

If we go back in time, as far back as our imagination allows us, at the beginning *mole* was chilli and stone. It was the son of the cornfield and the mountain and of the movement of the body on the earth, of the stone on the chilli and the chilli on the tongue. Its origin is in the meeting of these two worlds, not the Mesoamerican and the European, but rather that of taste and technique. Like other ancient sauces, *mole* is not the result of reason, but of intuition; that spark of umami and burning in the mouth, which spreads throughout the body, is what makes the difference between eating to survive and eating to feel life (and death too). When the colonisers arrived, *mole* was just that, a celebratory meal. It was served at the banquets of the Pochteca merchants to thank the divinities for their commercial exchanges and played an important role in sacrificial rituals.

In the 16th century, the Franciscan missionary Bernardino de Sahagún described many types of casseroles or *chilmollis* (*mollis* or *mullis*) based on different ground chillis such as red, *chiltepín*, green and yellow, which could include large tomatoes or gibellets, as well as some thickeners like ground pumpkin seeds, corn dough or ground beans, scented herbs such as *hoja santa*, *epazote* and avocado leaf and fruits like non-ripened plums. These casseroles could be served with meat from different animals such as turkeys, frogs, *tadpoles*, *axolotls*, different types of fish, lobsters, shrimp, ants, *maguey* worms, different varieties of mushrooms and pigweed. Names are mentioned such as *totolin patzcalmollo*, chicken with red pepper, tomato and pumpkin seeds, *meocuiliti chiltecpin mollo* (*maguey* worms) and *chiltepín* sauce and *izmiqilmolli* with green chilli.

Colonial *moles* were inspired by these preparations, to which they incorporated new ingredients; other recipes (within indigenous families)

From the first written references to the present, we could group the history of *mole* into three stages: the first, until the arrival of the conquerors; the second, which began to take shape in convent kitchens in colonial times (such as *mole poblano*); and the third, which started in the Porfiriato and reaches the present day. Although these stages are marked by historical milestones, they do not follow one another as cultural practices, but flow in parallel, sometimes exchanging elements, and other times, remaining intact.

What I want to say is that *mole* today coexists along with many *moles* of the past and present, since a *mole*





Traditional cooks in Oaxaca. On the next page, the preparations to make mole: before grinding, the ingredients must be prepared (tortillas, tomatillos, chillis, apples, seeds).

remained intact through oral tradition. In the state of Oaxaca, for example, it is still common to find yellow *moles* with only chilli peppers, corn dough and some wild herbs, like *hoja santa* or *epazote*.

#### The logic of mole

Just as *mole* does not have a precise origin, it does not have a recipe either, since its conception is unconnected to written language and came before it.

You learn to cook *mole* by watching and repeating; there are no exact quantities or

rules, but a logic that is assimilated over time, an intuitive hegemony of flavours and techniques that is passed down from generation to generation and is only perfected through the daily act of cooking. In other words, making a good *mole* is not learned overnight. Making *mole* is a long-term commitment, a trade, an art. More than a recipe, *mole* is a progression of ingredients and flavours in space and time, where space refers to the link with Mother Earth, to her fruits (according to the characteristics of the *terroir*) and, in general terms, to the sense of identity and belonging, and time corresponds not only to the transformation of the flavours or level of mastery acquired by the person preparing the *mole*, but in a global sense to the historical context and to the political and social events that have influenced these processes.

#### The convent's contribution

The second stage of *mole* is characterised by a complex transculturation process that began to develop after the first religious orders settled in the conquered territories of the Americas.

According to Rachel Laudan in *Cuisine and Empire* (2019), the Poor Clares, who are credited with the invention of *mole poblano*, "were as important to the spread of Catholic cuisine as the monks were to Buddhist cuisine and Sufis were to Islamic cuisine". The author highlights the level of power and economic independence that the women of these orders acquired and their influence around the world.

The kitchens of the convents were authentic culinary laboratories. Historian Sonia Corcuera describes the complex but enriching relationships that were generated within these feminine ecosystems, where an inevitably close coexistence was fostered between women from very different strata and cultures, but who achieved their most brilliant meeting point in the kitchen. Indigenous, creole, mestizo,



### The kitchens and convents of the viceregal era had imported products within their reach.

The nuns knew how to use the ingredients that arrived aboard the Manila Galleon (the group of ships that linked trade between Asia and the Americas for two and a half centuries) and the *moles* evolved with new products.



# AROUND 300 VARIETIES

THERE IS NO ONE CORRECT WAY TO COOK MOLE. THERE ARE HUNDREDS, SINCE THERE ARE NOT ONLY DIFFERENT TYPES (BLACK, RED, GREEN, YELLOW, WHITE, PINK, ALMOND, CHEESE, POBLANO, XIRMOLE, DE OLLA, ETC.), BUT TASTES AND INGREDIENTS OF THE SAME MOLE VARY FROM ONE LOCATION TO ANOTHER AND FROM ONE FAMILY TO ANOTHER. THE MOLE IS ALWAYS CHANGING, BUT IT HAS A PERMANENT PRESENCE.



## DIFFICULTY

Mole is also a progression of ingredients and flavours, from simple recipes, such as yellow moles and Oaxacan sequeza, with only chilli paste, tomatillo, and some fresh herbs, to complex ones with over 50 ingredients, like black mole and poblano, recipes with only pre-Hispanic

products and others with all kinds of spices brought to the Americas from the East by the Silk Road. Cooking mole is also about making decisions. First of all, you have to choose based on what is available. Adapting a mole in terms of place and time is much less complex than we imagine; if you

just have dried chillis (which can be kept indefinitely in airtight containers, so you don't even have to buy them often), tomatillos and a couple of spices, you are on the right track. With practice, you can even develop your own family recipe, which, like a ritual, will only improve with time.



## INGREDIENTS

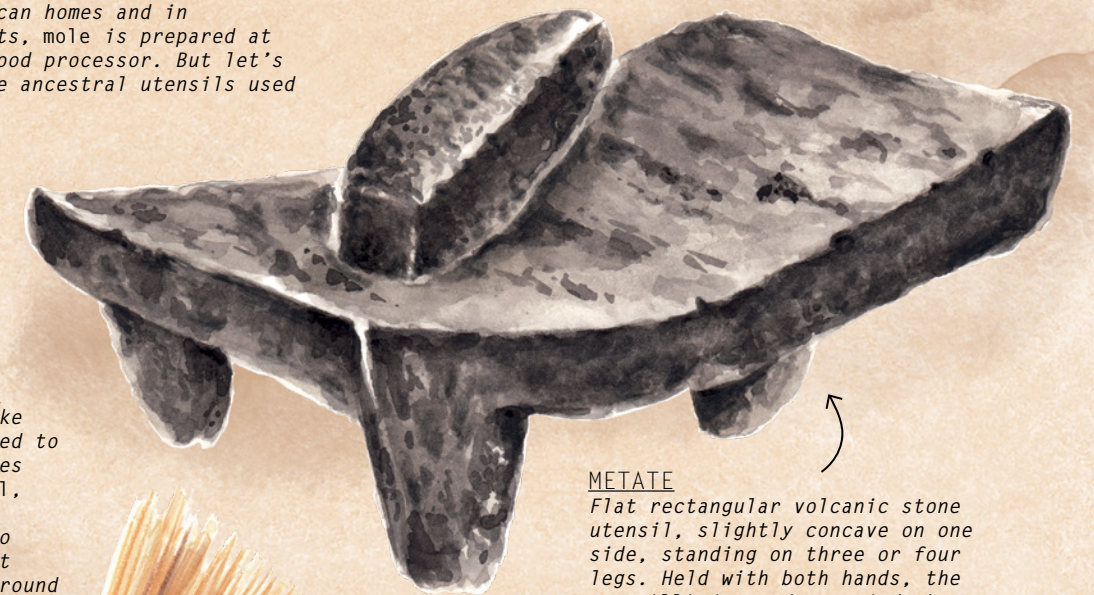
Depending on the formula, mole includes dried chillis, spices, fresh herbs, nuts, seeds, fresh vegetables, fruits, sweeteners, broths, fat and additional thickeners.

### ACCOMPANIMENTS

Mole is a dish in itself, but it can be accompanied with tortillas, served with rice, eggs, tacos, tortilla chips, chicken, beef, pork, lamb, fish, shrimp, vegetables...

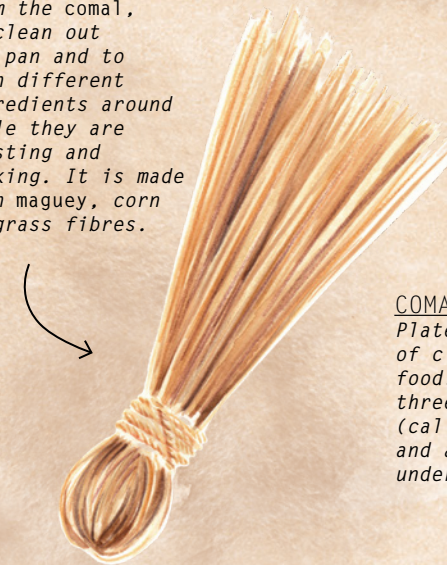
## TRADITIONAL UTENSILS

Today, in Mexican homes and in many restaurants, mole is prepared at worst with a food processor. But let's get to know the ancestral utensils used for centuries.



### ESCOBETILLA

This brush-like utensil is used to remove residues from the comal, to clean out the pan and to push different ingredients around while they are toasting and cooking. It is made with maguey, corn or grass fibres.



### METATE

Flat rectangular volcanic stone utensil, slightly concave on one side, standing on three or four legs. Held with both hands, the metapilli is used to grind the ingredients.

### COMAL

Plate-shaped piece of clay used to cook food. It is placed on three or four stones (called tenamastles) and a fire is lit underneath.







The mole process includes preparing the ingredients, soaking, grinding and finally cooking.



## The efficiency, genius and female leadership and ancestral wisdom of indigenous cooks is underestimated and invisible.

African and European peoples, each with their particular customs and eating habits, were connected, in one way or another. In short, the indigenous women taught the nuns to use *metates*, maize and chillis, and the nuns taught the indigenous women to use spices, wheat and butter. This culinary mixing, adds Corcuera, was profoundly beneficial. Though not very noticeable in the short term, it ended up being a modern cuisine in the 17th century and remained a legacy for the future.

### Female legacy

A similar phenomenon arose later, in the post-revolutionary era, when it was the housewives and a large number of their recipes, compiled and published by authors of the time, such as Josefina Velázquez de León and Vicenta Torres Rubio, who managed to provide Mexican society with the closest thing to a feeling of identity. Since then, the exchange of recipes and culinary knowledge among women has acted as a kind of glue for the social fabric during social transformations and all kinds of crises, including pandemics and natural disasters.

However, what we see as a constant throughout the history of *mole*, and of

Mexican cuisine in general, is ironically a growing underestimation and invisibility of the efficiency and genius of female leadership in particular and of the imagination and ancestral wisdom of indigenous cooks.

The new cuisine that Corcuera talks about came into being and with it, a new generation of *moles*, though without supplanting the first ones. In *Los moles. Aportaciones prehispánicas* ("Mole: Pre-hispanic Contributions") (2004), scholar Cristina Barros uses fragments of ancient recipes to reconstruct this progression: roasted sesame seeds appear for the first time on a *clemole* in the recipe book of Dominga Guzmán (1750), which also has a thick chilli sauce with *chile ancho*, sesame seeds and peanut (it is unknown if this last ingredient was previously used in *moles* but it is possible, given its Mesoamerican origin); the *Recetario novohispano* ("New Hispanic Recipe Book") (1791) includes a *clemole* with toasted sesame seeds, coriander, cumin, garlic, cloves, pepper, cinnamon and ginger that could well be related to a South Asian curry; in the famous *Cocine-ro mexicano* ("Mexican Cookbook") (1831), there is a *clemole* with almonds in the shell and a green *mole* with pine

nuts and peeled and fried walnuts; but according to the author, it was not until 1872 when in the *Arte novísimo de la cocina*, ("New Art of Cooking"), a palace *clemole* appeared that included half a pound of golden cacao; the first reference to the precious ingredient in *mole* (however, cacao must have been used before, since the combination of chilli and chocolate was already common in drinks).

### Histories of back and forth

What can be observed as a distinctive characteristic between pre-Hispanic and colonial *moles* is a clear contrast between indigenous sobriety and sophistication, as opposed to the overload and ostentation typical of European baroque. In *¡Qué vivan los tamales! Food and the Making of Mexican Identity* (1998), Jeffrey Pilcher points out how this tendency to refinement was repeated in the preparations of the indigenous cooks, who were more meticulous in terms of the combination of chillis and spices with the different meats, unlike the colonial habit of tossing the whole pantry into the casserole.

This clash of philosophies, mainly regarding the perception of value, has remained latent in Mexican cuisine.



# The present, the past and our linear and Cartesian perception of time have little to do with the evolution of Mexican cuisine.



*Red mole enmoladas are one of the most traditional dishes of Mexican cuisine. The main ingredient is red mole, which is characterised by being very spicy and tasty.*

However, it has sparked new controversy in recent years. That is why, to approach the third stage in the history of *mole*, we should start from front to back, since, as we will see, the present, the past and our linear and Cartesian perception of time have little to do with the evolution of Mexican cuisine.

## ***Mole* and modernity**

Do you remember the *mole* dish from the opening paragraph? Now, replace the image with this one: two concentric circles

on a white ceramic plate, almost perfectly flat; the first, outer circle is a black *mole* or *mole madre* (“mother *mole*”) with over 100 ingredients that has been reheated for three thousand days; the second, inner circle, is a new red *mole*, which is prepared every two days to feed the first, like sour-dough or oven flour. The dish has no other accompaniment than some freshly made corn and *hoja santa* tortillas and is part of the tasting menu at the Pujol restaurant, a consistent member of the English list of The World’s 50 Best Restaurants since 2011, whose chef, Enrique Olvera, has been said to be the head of a growing movement to modernise Mexican cuisine.

Other authorial approaches to the iconic dish are found on the menu of other Mexico City restaurants, such as the choice of two of Rosetta’s lesser-known and more feminine *moles*: white *mole* or “bride’s *mole*” and pink *mole* from Taxco, Guerrero, which owes its colour to the use of pine nuts and beetroot; or the interesting inclusions of regional *moles* in tasting dishes, such as cabbage, pigweed with onions with Actopan *mole* from the Quintonil restaurant; or local turkey with almond *mole* from Milpa Alta; pigweed and amaranth from Sud 777; or the homage to family *moles*, such as Abuela Cata’s thick chilli sauce from the Nicos restaurant.

Yet as I have said, you don’t learn to make *mole* overnight, nor is it in the curriculum of the institutes where notions of savoir-faire are still rooted in the ideals of the 16th century bourgeois pretension and the figure of the patriarchal chef. Like all born traditional cooks, Abigail Mendoza, from the restaurant Tlalmanalli in Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca, started as a child. At the age of five, her mother taught her the basics: to shuck the corn, to hold the *metate* in her hand, to grind sauces and to make *tortillas*.

She then worked with her great aunt, who was the town cook, preparing food for events, and at the age of 13, she began to train in the most complex preparations, like *tamales* and *moles*. Technology is absent in her kitchen (even in traditional



*Red mole is a recipe from Oaxaca that is prepared with different chillis and spices.*



“

In Mexico,  
you realise it is  
impossible to capture  
a miniscule part of  
the culinary heritage.  
It is an overflowing  
and simple cuisine at  
the same time, with  
some hot, fascinating,  
stimulating  
ingredients...

Jordi Roca.

”



Abigail  
Mendoza, from  
the restaurant  
Tlamanalli,  
prepares Zapotec  
mole just as her  
ancestors did.

homes where blenders are common, for example, their use does not replace *metates* and *molcajetes*, as people negotiate between past techniques and the present). Hence the practical difficulty of making good *moles* in restaurants, since only liquid *moles*, such as *huaxmoles*, *moles de olla*, and yellow *moles*, can be made without the help of a *metate* or a grinder (although even in these cases, the quality is not the same) and not many restaurants have the capacity or knowledge to operate them.

When speaking of cultural appropriation in Mexican cuisine, there are important points to consider: the first is that this concept tends to be confused with that of cultural assimilation and, although the meanings of both terms are not opposed, they do run perpendicularly.

While assimilation is a horizontal and egalitarian process, appropriation, on the other hand, is only possible through privilege. The foregoing, transferred to a self-colonised and abysmally disparate

society like Mexico, with a white/mestizo ruling class that has little or nothing in common with cultural minorities, the exploitation of the imagination of a sector in inequality, takes on a particular meaning, because it represents the concealment of a more serious and profound socioeconomic problem.

#### Return to origins

Now, going back to the concepts of value, technique and sophistication, Olvera's career is an unbeatable example of the "reverse" evolution that I am trying to describe. After graduating as a chef in New York and opening a restaurant in 2000, Olvera's benchmarks, as he explains them, moved from Keller's Californian *nouvelle cuisine* to Adrià's deconstruction and from there to Redzepi's simplification to, finally, while exploring Oaxacan cuisine, end up reducing his preparations almost entirely to the use of four basic tools of Mexican peasant cooking:

#### The restaurant Tlamanalli, in Teotitlán del Valle, is a benchmark for Zapotec cuisine.

Since 1990, the Mendoza sisters have cooked endemic ingredients cultivated or domesticated in their community. Recipes like theirs can be found in the book *Cocina indígena y popular* ("Indigenous and Popular Cooking").





a stone grinder, a *comal*, an underground oven and a spit.

This return to basic techniques and flavours only confirms what Diana Kennedy tried to explain to the Anglo-Saxon world in her books 50 years ago: “that Mexican cuisine has always been—in itself—a high art”. Therefore, there is currently no movement to modernise Mexican cuisine because it has never needed to modernise. Nevertheless, it has never stopped evolving.

In different interviews, Abigail Mendoza, a recognised representative of Zapotec cuisine in the world, affirms that the movement of the body and the force of the stone on the ingredient is where “the flavour is respected as it is”. “I have no problem with technology”, the cook says. “It’s just that when you have a demanding, subtle palate, you can identify the flavours”.

For her, the use of the *metate* is not only fundamental in terms of flavour, but also of meaning: the squatting position

*Grinding is one of the most important steps in preparing mole. The Pujol restaurant, in Mexico City, prepares it in various ways. On the right, mole madre.*

**There is no movement to modernise Mexican cuisine because it has never needed to modernise.**







In the markets of Mexico City, there are many stalls where you can buy ready-made mole. On the right, the Oaxaca Food Market.

## The true future of *mole* lies in a world where the importance of women and indigenous peoples is recognised.



### **'Mole' is above all a celebratory dish.**

The author's suggestion in the article is that whenever you decide to cook it, you should make a party out of it: gather your loved ones, invite them to be part of the process, cook together, eat, have fun, hug, drink and don't forget to save some to reheat the next day, as *mole*, like a good wine, only gets better with age.

indicates a reverence towards food and, consequently, gratitude towards Mother Earth. In addition, when Abigail grinds on her *metate*, she feels "that she is one with her ancestors, with her grandparents, that the roots are still alive".

#### **The true value of a *mole***

Perhaps, for a world obsessed with individual genius, it is difficult to understand that *mole* is a dish whose power comes "from the bottom up".

The aforementioned modern approaches to this are significant as a reflection of the time in which we live, due

to their aesthetic quality and because they served as a bridge to the knowledge of a richness that was previously little visible.

However, the future of *mole* lies in a world in which the social, historical and scientific importance of women in cuisine has to be properly valued and in which the worldviews of indigenous peoples are respected, labour abuse vanishes and the value of a *mole* is not determined from a privileged position, but rather from purity of its ingredients and methods, due to its historical and cultural value and its political and social background. **A**



# 7 / SCOTLAND IN PRAISE OF AUSTERITY

## Valuing the local pantry

For many chefs, the natural products of Scotland have taken them as far as the nation. With them, they create an amazing and simple cuisine in a country that was until recently unaware of its potential.

*At Edinvale Farm, in Forres, they make crosses between three native breeds: Highland, Aberdeen Angus and Shorthorn.*







*Scotland's natural ingredients, which are exported everywhere, are impressive: seafood, exquisite beef from native breeds, cheese... Accompanied by Mark Donald, the chef at Lalique, the restaurant located in the Glenturret whisky distillery in Crieff, we will discover a group of chefs who proudly lay claim to the modern cuisine of the most northern part of Great Britain for the first time.*

by Cate Devine /// photos Alan Donaldson, Laura Otálora and Alex García Martínez

# CONSTANTLY EVOLVING CUISINE

Low-lying grey clouds lend an air of wintry dampness to the lovely Perthshire countryside in central Scotland. Sudden citrus-coloured shafts of light burst through, staining the cumulus clouds with orange and yellow hues and imbuing the landscape with a friendly welcome. A fleeting light runs through the mountains, rivers, trees, heather, birds, sheep, cattle, old towns and farms. When I wrote these lines, spring was upon us.

It is in the midst of this unique and ancient setting that the modern Scottish food movement has taken root

through a group of energetic young chefs. In the kitchen of Lalique, the restaurant located in the 18th-century Glenturret Distillery in Crieff, Scottish-born head chef Mark Donald is busy.

A whole cherrystone clam rests in its shell smeared with a gooseberry glaze with fresh foraged truffle dulse; there is a spoot (razor clam) dipped in dinky brown butter and Rausu Kombu seaweed tart; a caramelised potato scone (Tattie Scone) filled with potato mayonnaise and topped with Highland Wagyu beef carpaccio, winter truffle and caviar. Together, they make



SHEPHERD ISLANDS, IN THE NORTH OF GREAT BRITAIN, ARE ONE OF 32 SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

1° 14' 8.4" W

60° 20' 49.1" N

## SCOTLAND



1.72  
million farm herds  
in Scotland

1.38  
billion bottles of whisky  
exported each year

70%  
of the coast of the  
United Kingdom  
belongs to Scotland

25,000  
is the number of lakes  
in the entire country

10  
restaurants with a  
Michelin star

2,098  
vessels that make up the  
Scottish fishing fleet





The River Dee runs through the Scottish Highlands and is a popular fishing site.

# The Scots have turned their satisfaction with their world-renowned products into pride.

quince; and Kumquat Penicillin is inspired by the classic whisky cocktail with honey, ginger and lemon.

The chef's culinary style is influenced by his trips and stays in renowned establishments: at the Noma in Copenhagen; at the Andrew Fairlie Restaurant in the Gleneagles Hotel in Perthshire; at Claude Bosi's Hibiscus in London; as head chef at the Bentley in Sydney, and again in Scotland to achieve the first Michelin star at Number One at Balmoral in Edinburgh.

The most striking part of the project is that the restaurant is located within the space of the oldest working distillery in Scotland (dating from 1763), as well as the fact that it is the only distillery in the world where you can eat in a restaurant with a Michelin star, which was awarded in February 2022. So in a matter of a few months, Mark has made culinary history. "For me, the most important thing is flavour, and I like to create a large palette of flavours based on exposure through travel", he explains. "I was trained in classic French cuisine, but what I do is not French gastronomy in any way. It reflects where I've been, where my palate has been, around the world, but using the very best Scottish produce as much as possible. Even though there are a few Scots on the team, we are an international bunch. Offering good local fare is of the utmost

importance both to me and to the other chefs currently working in Scots gastronomy", he adds.

Donald applies age-old techniques, such as ageing, pickling and fermentation, and adheres to the contemporary whole product, zero waste ethos. For example, his koji shoyu/miso/shio is made from Scots barley from the distillery; the kimchi baechu that he prepares includes cabbages from the Tom Na'ha community market garden in the village; and his *mugolio*, a traditional syrup made from pinecones from the Italian Dolomite Alps, is prepared Scottish-style from the native fir cones that grow in the shadow of the mighty Mount Ben Chonzie. He also offers Scottish Sika deer with braised Sika Achilles tendon, seasoned with Sarawak pepper and Blackthorn sea salt flavoured with black maple from Ayr in the west coast of Scotland, where the only black maple tower in the world stands that still produces this condiment following a particular traditional method. He is also in the process of developing a new dish of leg of lamb from North Ronaldsay, one of the Orkney islands, fed with seaweed, marinated in French wine and dried for four months. The pigs are sourced from medicinal herbologist Charlotte Blackler in Crieff, where she feeds them whey from the local cheese dairy.

Synergies between restaurants and producers are essential. Gary Goldie (right) gathers seaweed and oysters off the Scottish coast, becoming a supplier of wild products for many restaurants.



up an aperitif suite of endless delicacy, served without cutlery and conceived to be consumed quickly from the chef's tasting menu, an exciting and often surprising synthesis of tradition and innovation.

The entrees include a buttermilk mock crêpe folded over langoustine ceviche, dotted with dashi gel and served with matcha green tea and local herb jus; and a bisque-it, a delicate langoustine-shaped biscuit sandwiched with a bisque cream and dusted with smoked langoustine head powder. Scottish wild Sika deer is smoked over wild juniper lit by Japanese charcoal and accompanied with sour



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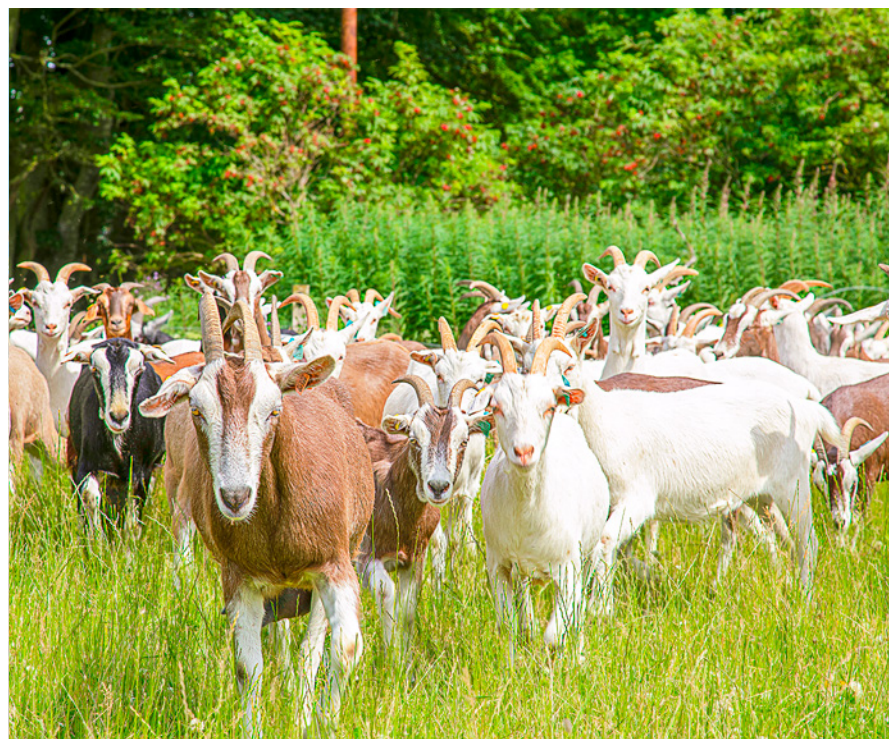
## A national symbol?

Scotland (in the photo, one of the roads of the Shetland Islands) has used stories to show its character. Now cuisine has entered the conversation and the most iconic dish, haggis (a pudding made from lamb offal), is receiving a new narrative from the most avant-garde chefs. Mark Donald prepares it with lamb's heart, lungs, liver and trachea, spices and Scottish oats. He adds foie gras, pork and chicken fat and serves it with pickled mashed turnips and mashed potato with smoked butter.

Yet haggis is not strictly Scottish: they say that the ancient Romans created it and before that Homer mentioned a similar delicacy in the *Odyssey*. If it is considered Scottish, it is because of the 1787 poem "To a Haggis" by Scottish national bard Robert Burns, who made it a national symbol. It was later replicated at the Burns Dinners, held every 25 January.







*David Lowrie's fish, Charlotte Blacker's cattle and herbs and Selina Errington's cheeses are examples of how Scottish producers work to lay claim to their own ingredients.*

When he first considered working at Glenturret, he understood clearly that he did not want to make “the hearty traditional distillery fare known the world over”, such as fried haggis dumplings with a whisky cream sauce. “My intent was to make dishes that would get off the beaten track, erase prejudice and exceed expectations. I wanted to find out how I could innovate and when I saw how the whisky was made, I began to see that I could apply the same process to my own cooking”. His creations contain cereals and liquor, but not as we usually know them.

#### **A dynamic movement**

Donald's work illustrates the dynamic Scottish food movement that is sweeping the country thanks to a new generation of chef-patrons who have travelled the world and are increasingly returning to Scotland to be part of the great revolution in Scottish cuisine. These male and female chefs are working to debunk the longstanding myth that Scottish food consists of

deep-fried chocolate bars and unhealthy, high-calorie pizzas washed down with sugary drinks.

The movement could be said to have arisen with the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, when many of the first MPs were farmers and the importance that Scotland placed on food and drink became apparent again. The creation of the coordinating body Scotland Food & Drink in 2007, and the launch of the Scottish Food and Drink Policy in 2009, the first to be undertaken in the UK, helped to turn Scots' satisfaction with their world-renowned products into pride.

Various forms of aid allowed this aspiration to come true. The Scottish food and drink industry now produces around £15 billion per year and sales of Scottish brands in the UK have increased by 40% in the last decade. There are over 17,000 food and beverage businesses, many in rural and island communities. Almost all the regions of the country have become centres of food

## **There are over 17,000 food and beverage businesses, many in rural and island communities.**

production with differentiated characteristics. There are now 18 regional food groups in parts of Scotland as diverse as Angus, Argyll, Arran, Ayrshire, Bute, East Lothian, Fife, Forth Valley, Glasgow, Grampian, the Hebrides, the Highlands, Inverclyde, Lanarkshire, Perthshire, South-West Scotland, the Orkney Islands and the Shetland Islands. They all cater to the growing demand of the new generation of chefs across the country.

Local seaweed, cold-pressed rapeseed oil, artisan cheeses, culinary salts,

charcuterie, heritage-grain bread flour, samphire, artisanal berry sodas, small-batch craft beers and spirits: the volume of products that are made in Scotland is considerable, and even more so if compared to 20 years ago. Those at the heart of the movement believe that the trend is reversing in terms of global recognition.

#### **A sublime pantry**

Chef Lorna McNee, 34, earned a Michelin star for the restaurant Cail Bruich in Glasgow in 2021, just a few months after

becoming head chef, her first time in the role. She came to the post-industrial former shipbuilding city after working for 12 years with the late Andrew Fairlie in the two-Michelin-star restaurant that bears his name in the Gleneagles Hotel, where she was second chef until Fairlie's death in 2019, and continued to do so under Steven McLaughlin, Fairlie's successor and long-time collaborator. Chef Lorna's award-winning dishes at Cail Bruich include pickled west coast crab meat in crab bisque dressed with razor



**The link between sherry and whisky, one of the quintessential Scottish products.**

The barrel in which whisky is aged is fundamental to giving it all its nuances. In the case of The Macallan and other distilleries, the oak containers come from Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz, Spain), where they are used to age sherry wine before emptying them and sending them to Scotland.

clams; roast langoustine seasoned with ponzu sauce, citrus, bacon and smoked langoustine head powder; toasted brioche with Bordeaux mushroom butter, locally foraged chanterelles, roast chestnut mushrooms, Madeira jelly and truffle and Madeira sauce... Another dish that is being developed is a homemade mackerel bottarga.

Now an ambassador for the Krug Champagne winery, the chef is "convinced that Scotland is growing on the international food scene. There's never been so much noise around Scottish food as there is now. More and more people are really starting to sing about Scottish gastronomy and they are interested in what we do with our fantastic natural larder, where is it from and how it is grown".

"We learn from other cultures, but I believe that we in Scotland can do our own

thing, find our own ingredients, make new flavours and keep on surprising", she continues. "Why would I go anywhere else than Scotland when there's so much here? Our venison, game, scallops and other seafood are all wanted by English chefs. They are jealous of it", McNee says.

**Assimilation of other cultures**

Modern Scots gastronomy draws on its unique natural heritage and sense of place while embracing global influences alongside hyperlocal ones. Thus, Mediterranean, Nordic and Southeast Asian elements merge with the fruits of the precious Scottish *terroir*.

In part, the dynamism of the emerging Scottish scene is the result of deepening awareness that it has a unique geography in the world. Scotland, the northernmost part of the United Kingdom, occupies



Joan, Josep and Jordi Roca visiting The Macallan distillery, in Speyside.

“

**Its cuisine is a silent heritage. Austere products on land and brave ones at sea. A host of hidden treasures. Whisky is pure river water, barley and peat, and age-old knowledge about distilling.**

**Josep Roca.**

”



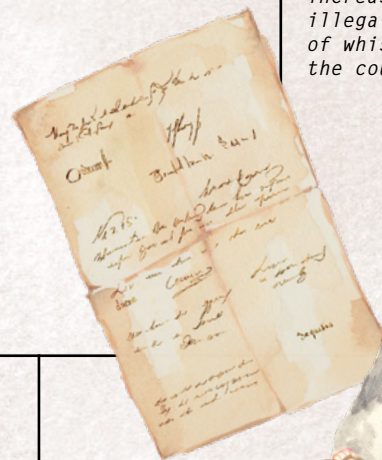
# SCOTCH WHISKY, 500 YEARS OF HISTORY

THE FIRST WHISKY DISTILLATION IN SCOTLAND WAS RECORDED IN 1494. IN 2022, 39 BOTTLES OF THIS BEVERAGE ARE EXPORTED EVERY SECOND TO 200 COUNTRIES. THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL DISTILLATE HAS SURVIVED WARS, PLAGUES AND REGULATIONS THAT HAVE PUT PRODUCERS' EXPERTISE TO THE TEST.

1664

## CLANDESTINE WHISKY

The first taxes are imposed on the production of Scotch whisky, causing an increase in the illegal distillation of whisky throughout the country.



1494

## THE FIRST WHISKY IN SCOTLAND

The oldest record of whisky distillation in Scotland is listed in The Exchequer Rolls, which says: "Eight bolls of malt for Friar John Cor, intended for making aqua vitae."

1785

## A DRINK WORTHY OF A POEM

Scottish national poet Robert Burns writes the poem "Scotch Drink", which includes the verse: "O thou, my muse! Guid auld Scotch drink!"

1823

## THE DISTILLERY "BOOM"

The Excise Act is passed, ending smuggling and illegal distilleries and giving way to the rise of legal distilleries all over the country. Three hundred are established years after the law is enacted.

1880

## WHISKY OVERTAKES BRANDY

Phylloxera devastates the French vineyards and the Scots take the opportunity to convert whisky into the most popular liquor, beating out brandy.



1831

## A KEY INVENTION FOR WHISKY

Irishman Aeneas Coffey invents the still. This aids the production of flavoured grain whisky, which, mixed with strong malts, popularises Scotch whisky.

1912

## UNITY ALWAYS MAKES STRENGTH

The Wine & Spirit Brand Association is created, which becomes the Whisky Association in 1917 and is known as the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) starting in 1942.



1939

## EXPORTS IN WARTIME

The Second World War transforms industry. A member of government declares: "The country needs food, dollars mean food and whiskey means dollars". Annual export targets are set and producers look increasingly towards foreign markets.



2009

## TIME TO RESTORE ORDER

The Scotch Whisky Regulations are enacted and come into force, rules that establish how Scotch whisky should be produced, labelled, bottled and advertised to protect its reputation.



2022

## 39 BOTTLES PER SECOND

Scotch whisky is one of the most appreciated in the world. Each second, 39 bottles are sent to nearly 200 countries around the world.

1994

## HALF MILLENNIUM

The 500th anniversary of whisky production in Scotland. Whisky exports are worth two billion pounds.

1920

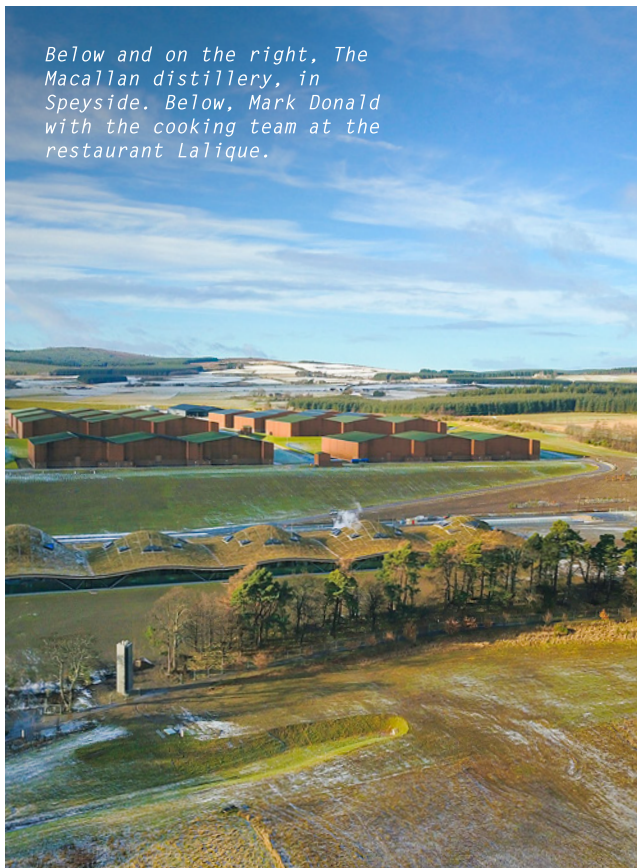
## DODGING PROHIBITION

Prohibition is passed in the United States, but the federal government establishes an exemption for whisky prescribed by a doctor for medical reasons.





Below and on the right, The Macallan distillery, in Speyside. Below, Mark Donald with the cooking team at the restaurant Lalique.



## A unique soil has made Scotland's most characteristic drink the envy of the world.

79,000 square kilometres (England occupies 130,279). It is estimated that the Scottish coastline measures 18,743 km (almost 70% of the United Kingdom) and is bathed by the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the North Sea to the east. It has more than 125,000 km of rivers and streams and over 25,000 lakes.

Scotland's peculiar *terroir* has made its most characteristic drink, single malt whisky, the envy of the world. It also makes its products in demand by chefs all over the world. When French beer connoisseur and filmmaker Franck Ribière visited Edinburgh in 2021, invited by the family-run meat business Macduff Beef, to present his new film about the renaissance of pure native Angus beef in Scotland and was asked for his opinion about Scottish soil, he said: "You can't get a better *terroir* than the Scottish one. Rain and grass. That's all you need".

### **The new generation**

Other of the most outstanding chefs of the new generation are Graeme Cheevers, from the restaurant Unalome in Glasgow, which also received a Michelin star in 2022; Pamela Brunton at Inver in Strachur, Argyll; Roberta Hall of the Little Chartroom in Edinburgh; Billy Boyter at the Cellar in Fife; Derek Johnstone at 18 Rusacks, St Andrews; and Calum Montgomery at Edinbane Lodge, on the Isle of Skye. Many were trained by the "pioneers" Tom Kitchen, Martin Wishart, Geoffrey Smeddle, Stevie McLaughlin and, of course, the late Andrew Fairlie. Now they

are the ones who train the next generation in their kitchens.

Pamela Brunton opened Inver in 2015 with her partner Rob Latimer, and several of their students have opened their own premises in Edinburgh and Glasgow. For the first time, they have hired a head chef and sous chef at Iver: the two will settle in Argyll, and she will become the executive chef. "This is huge for us and marks a big change in our business", she explains. Pamela says there are better restaurants in Scotland now than when she came back seven years ago. She says that a key to Inver's success is the micro-*terroir* where it is located. "When your product comes out of the ground or the nearby sea, it is the envy of the world".

### **The importance of suppliers**

The new generation can push the movement forward with a renewed supplier network powered by the youngest members of already established family businesses. Lewis Lowrie is the 30-year-old son of seafood merchant David Lowrie, who founded his business 35 years ago when he began selling haddock to fish and chips shops.

Now Lewis deals directly with restaurants and has seen a change in cooks' demands compared to those of his father's day. "There are more young chefs coming into the industry with flair and confidence in their abilities", he explains. "I can say 'I don't have halibut today but I do have good brill', and they'll take it and adapt what they were going to do. Flexibility is

**Lalique is proof that haute cuisine can be made at a distillery.**

When the new owners of the Glenturret distillery hired Mark Donald, they knew that the chef had to complement the oldest distillery in Scotland with a restaurant that reflects Scottish hospitality. He does not lack for experience: Donald has worked in the kitchens of Noma (Copenhagen), Hibiscus (London) and The Balmoral (Edinburgh).



# “The chefs of the past did not adapt to market forces so easily.”



*In the Glenturret garden, Laliue's cooking team harvests wild herbs and flowers that will become ingredients in some of the dishes on the menu, such as the one Mark Donald prepares in the photo on the following page.*



key. Older chefs were more regimented and didn't adapt to market forces so easily”.

“They used to want cuts and fillets, but now many want whole fish on the bone, and will use every part of it using new fish butchery and cooking techniques. Cheek, collar, offal and whole heads are being used”, Lowrie explains. Although cooking fish heads may be reminiscent of the traditional northern Scottish recipe of Crappit Heid, new flavours and techniques are applied today.

He tells us that “chef Mark will always ask for something nobody else is using. We have an exclusive arrangement to supply only him with cherrystone clams and

he has asked me to send boats up towards Norway to source good sea urchins. Mark has the confidence to do something fantastic with them”.

Edinburgh cheesemaker Rory Mellis, 23, joined his parents' business and updated it for the lively Scottish food scene. He supplies Mark Donald with European and also Scottish cheeses, such as Black Mount, a soft, unpasteurised lactic goat cheese from Selina Errington's herd in Lanarkshire; and another Scottish Gouda-like cheese from the Connage creamery in Inverness.

James Murray, the new head chef at Timberyard in Edinburgh, who has taken







*Lalique's dining room only opens for dinner, with a seating capacity of 26 diners and a menu that includes dishes made with local products, such as scallops, prawns, asparagus, venison and smoked fish.*



Scottish cuisine to exciting new levels, is part of the thirty-something generation of chefs with a new vision.

"We've all travelled the world and we're now coming back with what we've seen and learned, and applying our own creativity to the best of Scottish produce, and we're getting better access to better local producers and suppliers than those who have gone before us", says this 36-year-old chef who was head chef at the Edinburgh Food Studio after having worked at Raymond Blanc's Le Manoir aux quat'Saisons, in Oxford, the Nur in Hong Kong and Lyle's in London. "It's very exciting to buy things that used to go to London. Now I get first dibs. That's the result of nurturing good relationships with my suppliers". He also prepares goose ham, which is similar to foie gras, based on letting the meat age for a month in the cellar.

#### **A constant challenge**

Due to this success, there has been an increase in competition to obtain the best products. Scottish chefs have to pay the same price as foreign buyers or risk not getting them. This has given rise to an unprecedented respect for precious products and a return to traditional conservation techniques.

Chef James Murray says: "Keeping up with sourcing the best ingredients is a constant challenge and you can't be half-hearted about it... otherwise someone else will get it before you". For example, "I heard they were about to slaughter a fully-accredited Fife Dexter cow. I called the farmer, but he told me he had already sold it to Macduff's butchers (a family of wholesalers based in Wishaw, near Glasgow, whose son, Andrew Duff, has gone into the business and now buys from small-scale rare-breed farmers and sells directly to restaurants)". But he was lucky in the end: "I had to rush, but I finally managed to bag the whole animal".

This new need to always be on the lookout has upended old habits: it is a pressure you didn't feel before. James



Withers, who was head of Scotland Food & Drink until August 2022, acknowledges that maintaining supplies can be difficult. "It's interesting to realize that 15 years ago, the ambition of many Scottish growers was to supply supermarkets. Now many aspire to sell them directly to upscale chefs, restaurants and bars. In cattle markets you now see cooks and butchers who go personally to make offers, when before only the big wholesalers came. So, demand is not a problem, but maintaining supply can be a challenge. We have 16 overseas workers who sell Scottish produce all over the world, from the US to Europe and Asia. Coupled with rising demand at home and

from the rest of the UK, we need to ensure we have the next generation of producers coming in".

Back in Glenturret's kitchen, Donald says: "I wouldn't say it the Great Scottish Food Revolution. I'd rather say it the Great Scottish Food Evolution, because it's a continuum from the chefs who came before us, and there is lots still to discover". As he looks around the old distillery, he says: "There is no other distillery restaurant in the world doing what we do at Michelin Star level. It is truly pioneering, and no doubt we will be copied before long. This is what Scotland can uniquely give the world". **A**

**"Continuing to get the best ingredients is a constant challenge. You can't be half-hearted about it."**

#### **A country with more sheep than people.**

According to Scottish government data, there are over seven million sheep spread over about 15,000 farms in the country, where 5.3 million people live. Sheep farming is so important that all kinds of economic activities are connected to it, from meat, textile and dairy production to fairs and events such as the auction that takes place every year in Lairg, the most important in Europe.



# 8 / THE SOURCES OF CACAO FROM BEAN TO BAR

## The power of some seeds

For the first time in history, we can understand the nature of cacao. A change in production that prioritises quality and increases farmers' gains has spread to the sources of cacao, from Ecuador to Colombia and Venezuela.



*Inside each cacao pod there are between 20 and 60 beans, whose colour depends on the variety from which they come.*



*It is a product that we are just beginning to discover and that materialises an unprecedented present from the “bean to bar” movement, in which women play a prominent role. We didn’t know anything about these movements just 15 years ago, but today they are spearheading a process that positions chocolate towards the future. We travelled to Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador to see how it has stopped being faithful to the past to establish it as the result of today.*

by Ignacio Medina /// photo Sergio Recabarren /// BBVA

# WOMEN WHO SPEAK WITH CACAO

I meet Mayumi Ogata in Catanzama, the sacred place of the Arhuaco people, a meeting point for the four cultures (Arhuaco, Kankuamo, Wiwa and Kogui) that make up the Tayrona Indigeouns Confederation and share control over what is now the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Natural National Park. A dune protects the town from the sea, enveloped in the sticky heat that prevails in these latitudes, while high up, to the left, we see the snow-capped peak of the mountain chain, at an altitude of 5.7 kilometres. It is the largest coastal mountain range in the world; snow in the middle of the Caribbean Sea.

Camilo is the leader of a community that understands the world, life and cacao in

a very different way. They are the chosen people and they existed in the thought of creation before anything else existed. They are also the older siblings and those who have arrived in the last 500 years are the younger siblings, destined to pass on by. While that happens, the area that they care for and protect was declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO.

The Arhuaco people not only live in harmony with nature, they also strive to vitally preserve the balance of natural elements: sun, rain, wind, fire, plants, stones or animals. Any activity involving manipulating or altering the natural environment in this area must be authorised by Mamo Camilo (*mamo* is the title that distinguishes leaders).



COLOMBIA  
ECUADOR  
VENEZUELA



1,239

is the number of producers attached to Cacao Amazonas Perú

5.7 KM

is the maximum altitude of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta

100,000

people live off cacao production in Ecuador

\$2,366

is the price of a tonne of cacao in the futures market (August 2022)

1,250 M

is the altitude above sea level for cultivating cacao

ARHUACO PEOPLE ARE STRONGLY ATTACHED TO CACAO.





*Various native peoples Arhuaco, Kankuamo, Wiwa and Kogui) are the custodians of the lands where cacao is cultivated. They all maintain traditions such as the preparation of txokolatl, a ritual drink that is at the origin of chocolate.*



## Who said that chocolate has to be bitter? Surely a bad producer who roasted it too much.

everyone by name. She raises her voice, gesticulates and laughs with them, but she knows the ways that govern life in the village, takes care of the rituals and knows how to express herself.

### **Between Colombia and Japan**

The relationship between Mayumi Ogata and the Arhuaco community comes from far away. She tells me that years ago, she made her first visit to the traditional isolated area, protected by native communities for 40 years, in which she expected to find white cacao trees. Surprised that nobody spoke of cacao, about which she had such high expectations, she found nothing that caught her interest. Time passed and she continued thinking about the same story: she had to come back. She did so, exploring new areas until she finally found the white cacaos she had been looking for, many of them in the lands controlled by the Arhuaco community of Catanzama. The life of Mayumi Ogata is divided unequally between Colombia and Japan (more time on the cacao farm and factory than in her homeland). Her first encounter with the Colombian cacao farm took place in 2009, then in 2013, after touring cacao-growing regions halfway around the world, she decided that it would be

her land and the centre of a life dedicated to cacao for almost 14 years.

Originally from Sagamihara, a city in the department of Kanagawa near Tokyo, she graduated with a degree in Nutrition and worked for years developing chocolate products for a food company, until one day she thought something was wrong: after working with chocolate for six years, she had never seen a cacao pod. She packed her bags and travelled the cacao world for four years, looking for a new beginning, which she wanted to achieve with producers, until she decided on Colombia.

In the lands of Catanzama, she found the place she was looking for. She toured the farms, small agricultural lands, often helped by the children of the villages, those who know the countryside best, and found unique specimens. On Gladys María Mestre's farms, she showed me a plant that produces the whitest and strangest cacao I have ever seen, the only survivor of the drought brought by El Niño, the climatic convulsion that disrupts life on the shores of the American Pacific from time to time. At Doña Victoria Torres' farm, on the banks of the Don Diego River, she showed us more, always striking and different, and some more at Gladys Villafaña's farm, and so on, tree after tree, farm after farm, revealing the



**“People can live without cacao, but with cacao and chocolate people are happy and when cacao is not happy, the consumer is not happy either.”**



*At Gladys María Mestre's farm, the cacaos are not very productive. Each bush makes about four pods and some are quite small. Getting to the plantations is not always easy and sometimes you have to cross rivers, like the Chiriaco, in cages that serve as makeshift cable cars. On the next page, Mamo Camilo drinking txokolatl.*



essence of a land about which cacao continues to tell stories. To begin, they speak of the extraordinary genetic diversity of the fruits of the area and their ability to provide chocolate marked by subtlety and floral and fruity aromatic notes, limiting astringency and taming bitterness. Who said that chocolate must be bitter? Certainly a bad producer who roasted it too much.

“I speak to the cacao and it tells me things”, she tells me when we stop to talk at the small mill they had built to ferment and dry the cacao from this part of the Sierra Nevada. I have already seen her identify the varieties of cacao even without seeing the fruits, only by the shape of the

leaves, so nothing surprises me any longer. “What does it tell you?”, I ask her. “Look into my heart”. The chocolate is the result of her work, but in the beginning there is always the cacao. “It is the theme of my life; people can live without cacao and chocolate, but with cacao and chocolate people are happy and when cacao is not happy, the consumer is not happy either”. In 2015, Cacao Hunters presented their first bar made with Arhuaco cacao. It is called Arhuacos and contains 72% cacao. It is one of the seven cacao origins that she sells (two from different areas of Tomaco, Magdalena, Arauca, Río del Oro and another coming from the rest of the Sierra Nevada).

In the new world of cacao, the consum-





# BEAN TO BAR, THE PROCESS OF CHOCOLATE

FROM TREE TO BAR, CACAO UNDERGOES SEVERAL PROCESSES THAT END UP TURNING IT INTO CHOCOLATE. SOME OF IT IS DONE ON THE PLANTATIONS OR NEAR THE PRODUCTION AREA, WHILE THE LAST STEPS TAKE PLACE IN THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY.



**1-HARVEST**  
Looking at the colour of the pods is key to knowing if the cacao is ready to harvest: the shell should have a yellowish colour.



**2-SHELLING**  
When the pods are opened, the cacao beans are extracted and the mucilage is used to make cosmetic products.



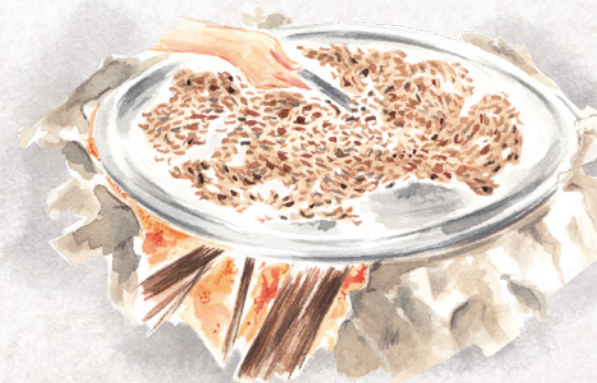
**3-FERMENTATION**  
In a period of between five and seven days, the cacao seeds rest in the shade so they can ferment and release all their aromatic potential.



**4-DRYING**  
From the shade, the seeds are moved to the sun to dry. For days, growers move the beans with a rake so they dry evenly.

## **5-SELECTION**

This is one of the most important parts of the process: when the grains have fermented and dried, it is time to choose those that meet the texture and aroma requirements to continue the production process.



## **6-ROASTING**

To intensify the aroma and flavour of cacao, the beans are roasted. The method, temperature and time will depend on the type of bean and the results to be achieved.

## **7-PEELING**

Before the next step, you have to remove the cacao beans from the husk so that the beans are peeled and move on to the next step in the process.



## **8-GRINDING**

The cacao beans are crushed and ground at a temperature of between 60 and 80 °C. Here the cocoa liquor is obtained, which is mixed with other ingredients to make the chocolate.



## **9-MIXING**

The liquor, mixed with cocoa butter, sugar, milk or aromas, depending on the product, is mixed in a refiner that presses the dough and makes it even finer. This step in the process can also be done with a stone mill.



## **10-MOULDING**

The process ends by putting the mixture in the moulds that shape the chocolate bars. The mixture is warm to give it a shiny patina and the bars harden in the moulds.





## “What are the keys? The women and the isolation of the place, where there are no roads and there are only plantations you can walk to...”



*Cacao puts nature to the test with pollen that doesn't spread through the air and flowers that face downwards. Above, Mayumi Ogata with Mamo Camilo. On the next page, Jordi Roca looking at a cacao pod from Colombia.*



er's happiness is directly related to the producer's happiness. This is the perspective of Mayumi and Cacao Hunters, who have created the Macondo School, a collection, fermentation and training centre not far from there, in the lands of Aracataca, Gabriel García Márquez's hometown. They argue that the future of quality chocolate is based on improving the living conditions of cacao farmers. She works with them and trains them in the post-harvest treatments, the fermentation and the drying of the grain, in which the nature of the chocolate is defined. The school has become an experimental centre where Cacao Hunters conduct tests to determine the suitability of each new variety of cacao. "When I make chocolate," says Mayumi, "I don't like strong bitterness or astringency. From this point of view, I go back to genetics and prefer cocoa that does not have a strong flavour and that offers more aromas". The personality of a single cacao or a mixture of several? "It depends on what we want to do. If I am looking for a long aroma, I mix several. Nothing is right or wrong in the world of cacao. I always think how I want to depict it and if I'm wrong, I go back and do it again".

### **The other perspective**

"Cacao listens and you listen to it", says Venezuelan chocolatier María Fernanda di Giacobbe at the end of her explanation about the success of Chuao's chocolates. What are the keys? "The women", she answers, "and the isolation of the place, where there are no roads and there are only plantations you can walk to...". In this isolated area between the sea and the mountains, with only one access point by land, there are plants representing 20 different genetic strains. "Everyone has gone to teach the women", explains María Fernanda, "to tell them how to ferment, and they have continued doing as ever before. They do not have a fermentation and drying protocol. They will leave the cacao for some amount of time as they get it that day, and this makes Chuao always taste like Chuao". It is the only plantation that really belongs to a community, where those who work get paid and those who don't work don't get paid, where everything is linked to their way of life. "They don't know where New York is and they don't care. They don't know what the London stock market says (these two cities host the futures markets that decide the price of cacao in the world). They set

the price they want and this all allows them to live as they like". We continue our journey... From Hacienda Victoria, with its 500 hectares of land, two thirds of which is dedicated to cacao cultivation and experimentation, doors open that are called on to change the course of Ecuadorian industry. We are south of Guayaquil, near the epicentre of cacao activity in Ecuador, the largest benchmark in the region. It barely covers 3% of production, but





“

**We follow the trail of cacao to understand the complex nuances of the bean in its *terroir*. Like the grape, cacao is infused with its environment and the gesture that supports it in the process to create chocolate, which is also its human landscape.**

**Jordi Roca.**

”

67% of the world's quality cacao grows in these lands. The Dominican Republic comes in behind, recalling the power of cacao in the Caribbean, while Venezuela, the first country in the region to address genetic selection, has lost its way, although Chuao remains, reminding us that this is a land used to resisting and surviving. Hacienda Victoria represents the revival of the large plantations that turned the cacao bean into a golden nugget and Guayaquil into the most prosperous city on the South American Pacific coast.

Everything turned around in the first half of the 20th century, swept along by the growth of cultivation in Central Africa and Asia, which pushed the trade from cacao to bananas and agrarian reform that fragmented crop ownership.

At the Hacienda Victoria farm, they work on the genetic selection of national cacao. Its variety laboratory works with

more than one hundred different varieties, looking for genetic crosses that lead to the finest, highest quality and most representative cacao product from the Ecuadorian coast. Until now the work has offered two fine varieties, with a good aroma and optimum production: two tonnes per hectare. The largest one is called Arriba Victoria and the other, with a smaller plantation, is called Perla.

They do not produce chocolate at Hacienda Victoria. They are cacao producers and make packaging tailored to the buyer, adapting the cacao fermentation process to each customer's needs.

Each formula ensures the character and the difference of the chocolates. I have the result on hand as I write, in the form of a bar made by Jordi Roca that I took from Casa Cacao, in Girona. It is elegant, cheerful, delicate and serious all at the same time; an impeccable packaging

**Small crops that put the producers' ingenuity to the test.**

This is the case of the plantation that Victor Kining founded in 1999 near Uut, in Peru. He only has one hectare and grows cacao and bananas. In fact, he uses banana leaves to cover the cacao when fermenting it, since it maintains the temperature better.







*White cacaos are the weakness of Mayumi Ogata, who has travelled the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta looking for the best varieties, taking advantage of the diverse microclimates of an area that still hides virgin corners with an almost unique richness.*



## **“When I make chocolate, I don’t like bitterness or strong astringency. From this point of view, I go back to genetics and prefer cocoa that offers more aromas.”**

of flowers and fruits that show a different way of working with cacao.

### **Quite the challenge**

The cacao tree is not easy to master, as it is very prone to crossing and hybridisation. The reason is its heavy and dense pollen, which does not spread through the air, and flowers positioned downwards that prevent pollination by many insects. Everything hinges on a tiny mosquito, *forcipomyia*, which thrives among the fallen leaves and does not distinguish between families. It is a magnificent pollinator, but it encourages miscegenation. When you open a Piura white cacao pod, you can always find a part with purple beans. Due to this, only genetic selection and grafting remains.

It is essential work to open the door of quality, which assists our attempts to conquer more selective markets and increase the price of a kilo of cacao. We are in a sector that sets prices in the futures market (London and New York), depending on the volume of the harvest in Côte d’Ivoire, the world’s top producer with 45% of global production. Purity is important to get good prices (with current prices, the small Latin American producers will hardly be able to get out of poverty).

In the cacao sector, large companies make decisions about the lives of the producers, set prices and establish conditions. Abuse is committed on a small scale, beginning with the most isolated producers, who are the most vulnerable. The tool is the harvester, an often obscure character who works on a small scale, producer to producer, and runs the business regardless of quality. He sets a low price for cacao mucilage and a slightly higher price for dry beans, regardless of fermentation or the drying conditions. The state of the bean is not important. The more remote and isolated the producer, the lower the price they can offer.

### **A story in leaps and bounds**

Cacao comes originally from the north-eastern Amazon and moved to Central America, where Mesoamerican cultures made it an object of worship. The beans became common currency and a bitter and spicy ritual drink called *txokolatl* was prepared with it, which contained dry cacao beans, vanilla and at some point, chillis, and which they believed enhanced relationships with the afterlife. Other cultures, on the banks of the Marañón River, had already fermented cacao bean mucilage to obtain another ritual drink.

Remains dating from the year 5330 BC have been found in a vessel discovered in a tomb belonging to an unclassified culture excavated in Palanda, in the Ecuadorian part of the Mayo-Chinchipe basin, a tributary of the Marañón River. These remains are nearly 2,000 years older than the next oldest remains, found in Macaval, Veracruz.

It is not clear if cacao was first mixed with sugar in a convent in Oaxaca or in the Piedra monastery, in Zaragoza, but it was in the 16th century and gave rise to the first great change in the nature of the product. The chilli and achiote were eliminated and sugar and new spices were added. It remained like this until the Industrial Revolution brought some advances, such as the solidification of the chocolate in the first bar, the first cocoa powder and a movement based in Switzerland in which Jean Louis Cailler (1819) took advantage of the new developments.

He was followed in his work by names such as Suchard, Lindt, Tobler and Nestlé. They were supported in their efforts by the press invented in Holland that attained cocoa powder and separated the cocoa butter from what we call “cocoa liquor” today, the invention of powdered milk and condensed milk, and the



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## Fermentation is the key

The fermentation process tries to transform the characteristics and benefits of the cacao bean. Changes to the inner colour, from purplish to white to brown, eliminates the germ, reduces the natural bitterness and stringency of the bean, transmits the aromas of the mucilage or *baba*, adding aromatic complexity, and defines its acidity profile. It also prepares it for drying. It is a land in which work is now beginning. We can influence the flavour of chocolate by changing the fermentation patterns, but it is essential to ensure that the sugar, pH and temperature levels are meticulous and constant.

Fermentation occurs in places protected from wind and rain. To stimulate the rise in temperature in the drawers, which are usually made of wood, neutral woods are sought, which do not add flavour and are usually cut with the Moon in the waning phase to extend their useful life.





# “The ‘bean to bar’ movement, which seemed somewhat romantic and strange, revealed everything that was in cacao.”



Before roasting and grinding the bean, fermenting and drying it is a key step in the chocolate creation process, since it will mark its nature. Making it with white cacao from Piura comes with an extra challenge, as they have to fight against high temperatures.



creation of the grinder machine. The use of milk lowered costs and the grinder machine helped to incorporate it into cocoa, popularising a product previously reserved for the elites.

In a process that has developed in leaps and bounds, people had to wait until 1986 to see the first cocoa with over 55% purity, then wait 10 more years to receive the first chocolate of origin and six or seven more until farm estate appeared. Ten years later, the “bean to bar” movement emerged and everything began to go much faster. After several millennia, we learned to understand and manipulate cacao and chocolate and we discovered that it is not black or bitter. When care is taken of the bean and the creation process, chocolate reveals the authentic colour of cacao: generally red, when it comes from Africa, or brown, if it is of creole origin. The bitterness is considerably reduced, giving way to the floral, fruity and spicy notes of the fruit.

## A radical change

María Fernanda di Giacobbe, the Venezuelan supporting the process to change chocolate in Venezuela, emphasises the idea. “The ‘bean to bar’ movement, which seemed somewhat romantic and strange, revealed everything that was in cacao. It showed that if you take away the butter, lecithin and vanilla, you are left with the true nature of cacao. Once this is done, all you have to do is check that the sugar level is similar to that of the salt in the food: the right amount”.

She first heard of “bean to bar” in 2006 and thought “this movement is made for Venezuela, a country whose cacao is never talked about. Instead, they speak of cacao from Chuao, Carenero or Ocucaje”. From her point of view, chocolate stopped being surprising due to the uniformity caused by the industry and now a different world is opening up.

A decisive event for explaining this process was the publication of *Chocolate para entendidos* (“Chocolate for Connoisseurs”)



in 2007, a book by Chloe Doutre-Roussel that shows small machines for working chocolate and teaches readers how to use them.

## American origin

The “bean to bar” movement emerged in San Francisco in 1996, ten years before its name was popularised and the concept caught on when Robert Steinberg and John Scharffenberger founded Scharffen Berger Chocolate Maker. Recognition would come years later, with a generation of chocolatiers that would open up new markets, such as the controversial Max Brothers, who began to buy chocolates from other companies to make their mixtures.

Beyond the shortcuts, the movement gives life to a generation of artisans who are recovering the spirit of the craftsman producer: beans selected from various or-

igins, almost pocket-sized machinery and short productions. We see it at Casa Cacao, the chocolate company founded by Jordi Roca in 2019, a small workshop in the historic centre of Girona from which it supplies the shop, Bar Cacao and the workshops of El Celler de Can Roca, Normal and Mas Marroch, the family’s restaurants. On the last visit, they had just received beans from Kerala, India, and were conducting the first tests of their latest chocolate. The size of the space and of the machinery they use enable them to make small productions based on the work of small communities: the nine communities of the Awajun ethnic group in the upper basin of the Marañón River, in Peru, the women of Chuao, in Venezuela, the communities of Kerala, the producers of Chiapas, the Arhuaco cacao of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and the entrepreneurs of Piura, again in Peru. **A**

**The purity of cacao is important to get fair prices for the thousands of small producers in Latin America.**

In the bed of the Marañón River, a tributary of the Amazon, there are nine communities of the Awajun ethnic group who work with cacao of the Marañón variety. A lot of work has been done to maintain the purity of the cacao fields, here and in other parts of Latin America, looking for the best graft to standardise the crops. This is how to make the leap from “bean to bar” to “tree to bar”.



# PRACTICAL GUIDE

## 1/ Barcelona

### Addresses

**LA GORMANDA**  
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**+info:** .  
Aribau, 160. Barcelona.  
Tel. +34 93 127 60 49  
[www.lagormanda.com](http://www.lagormanda.com)

### To find out more

**Visit Barcelona**  
To find out everything about the city and the gastronomic revolution, this webpage serves as a hub with all information in one place.  
[www.barcelonaturisme.com](http://www.barcelonaturisme.com)

## 2/ Peru

### Addresses

#### MIL

Much more than a restaurant: it is an interpretation centre that brings together art, science, culture and cuisine.  
**+info:**  
Vía a Moray. Maras, Cuzco.  
Tel. +51 970 645 908.  
<https://milcentro.pe>

### Books

**MARTÍNEZ, Virgilio, et al., Mil, Catapulta ed., Buenos Aires, 2022.**  
A book about an interdisciplinary project that invites the reader to delve into a culinary and cultural journey to Cuzco.

### To find out more

**Chef's table series, volume 3: Virgilio Martínez, 2017.**  
One of the episodes of this Netflix documentary series is dedicated to Virgilio Martínez, the creator of the Central and Mil restaurants, among others.

## 3/ The cradle of wine

### Addresses

We highlight one of the many wineries mentioned in the article. Advance reservation is required to visit.

#### IAGO'S WINE

The first winery in Georgia to receive the organic certificate in 2005. It produces 5,000 bottles of organic natural wine every year with one of the best grape varieties in the country, *chinuri*.  
**+info:**  
Village Chardakhi. Mtskheta (Georgia). Tel. +995 599 551 045.  
[www.iago.ge/](http://www.iago.ge/)

### Books

**WOOLF, Simon, Amber Revolution: How the World Learned to Love Orange Wine, Interlink, 2018.**  
This book tells the story of this ancient wine (white wine made like red) and its modern struggle for acceptance. It is a story of lost identity and pioneering winemakers, from the Caucasus to the Adriatic.

### To find out more

**<https://voyage-en-amphore.com>**  
Keiko & Maika's website, with further information about the project and the book *Voyage en amphore*.

## 4/ Colombia

### Addresses

#### LEO

A meal at this restaurant by chef Leonor Espinosa and her daughter, the sommelier Laura Hernández, is a culinary journey through the ethnobotany of the cultures that inhabit the various Colombian biomes.  
**+info:**  
Calle 65bis # 4-23, Bogotá.  
Tel. +57 317 661 68 66.  
<http://restauranteleo.com>

### Books

**ESPINOSA, Leonor, Leo: el sabor ancestral y moderno, Planeta, Barcelona, 2018.**  
Chef Leonor Espinosa tells stories about ancestral stoves and captures the modern vision through her experience in seven indigenous communities.

## 5/ Türkiye

### Addresses

#### NEOLOKAL

Chef Maksut Aşkar and his team have taken a fresh look at products of Turkish heritage and Anatolian culinary culture, his resources from childhood, through a modern cuisine deeply rooted in the environment. The restaurant offers stunning views of the Golden Horn.  
**+info:**  
SALT Galata. Bankalar Caddesi Karaköy. Estambul.  
Tel. +90 551 447 45 45.  
[www.neolokal.com](http://www.neolokal.com)

### Books

**DAGDEVIREN, Musa, Turkey Gastronomy, ed. Phaidon, London, 2019.**  
A renowned Turkish chef comprehensively showcases the diversity of Turkish food, with hundreds of recipes celebrating Türkiye's remarkable European and Asian culinary heritage, from little-known regional dishes to those recognised everywhere.

### To find out more

**GONZÁLEZ, Luis, The Turkish Way, 2016.**  
The three Roca brothers' experiences in Türkiye are explained in this documentary, which can now be seen at Filmin. The film takes the form of a travelogue that shows viewers one of the most unknown, powerful and ancient cuisines in the world.

## 6/ Mexico

### Addresses

#### TLALMANALLI

Abigail Mendoza has been in charge of this restaurant in Teotitlán for over 30 years. She learned the basics of cooking as a child and later became an expert in *moles*.  
**+info:**  
Tecutlán. Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca. Tel. +52 951 524 40 06.

### Books

**OLVERA, Enrique, Mexico from the inside out, Phaidon, London, 2019.**  
The book explains Olvera's creative process through 65 recipes divided into 'Face A' (the most sophisticated recipes that can be found in Pujol) and 'Face B' (the simplest dishes

that you like to eat at home with family and friends and that are served in other restaurants of Mexico City). The photographs are from our collaborator Araceli Paz..

### To find out more

**Chef's Table series, Season 2, Episode 4: Enrique Olvera, Netflix.**  
Chef Enrique Olvera has also starred in one of the episodes of *Chef's Table*. In it, you will see how he transforms street foods and traditional ingredients from Mexico in dishes applauded by everyone in his restaurant in Mexico City.

## 7/ Scotland

### Addresses

#### LALIQUE

A 17th-century restaurant located in the oldest distillery in Scotland got a new chef in 2022, placing Mark Donald in charge of the kitchen so that its dishes reflect the essence of Scottish hospitality and turn the distillery into a gourmet destination.  
**+info:**  
The Glenturret Distillery, The Hosh, Crieff.  
Tel. +44 176 465 6565.  
[www.theglenturret.com](http://www.theglenturret.com)

### Books

**ROCA, Joan, Josep and Jordi, Distilling Scotland, Librooks, 2018.**  
The chronicle of the trip that the Roca brothers made to Scotland to learn its secrets, from the production of whisky to how producers and chefs work to lay claim to the country's ingredients.

### To find out more

**QTÁLORA, Laura, Chef's Diaries: Scotland, 2019.**  
At Filmin, you can see this documentary that joins Joan, Josep and Jordi Roca on their journey to discover the ingredients of Scotland and a cuisine that has remained almost anonymous for years.

## 8/ The sources of cacao

### Addresses

#### HACIENDA VICTORIA

In the small town of Cerecita, in Ecuador, at least an hour from Guayaquil, this farm has more than 500 hectares of land, two thirds of which are dedicated to growing and experimenting with cacao.  
**+info:**  
Tel. +59 34 5109025.  
[www.hacienda-victoria.com](http://www.hacienda-victoria.com)

### Books

**ROCA, Jordi, MEDINA, Ignacio, Casa Cacao. The Journey Back to the Source of Chocolate, Grub street, 2019.**  
The story of Jordi Roca's journey to the origins of cacao to learn in depth about the entire production process and create revolutionary new desserts.

### To find out more

**Documentary El sentido del cacao: buscando el gusto perdido.**  
Motivated by a good friend who lost his sense of taste, Jordi Roca decides to recover the taste memory through cocoa.  
[www.elsentidodelcacao.com](http://www.elsentidodelcacao.com)



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## THE SECOND ISSUE OF APART WAS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO MANY PEOPLE’S NETWORKING...

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## #2

THE SECOND ISSUE OF APART (ENGLISH VERSION)  
WAS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO THE ORGANISATIONS  
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*Discovering the micro-revolutions that are shaking the culinary world would not have been possible without the support of companies that trust in the adventure. Therefore, we want to express our thanks for the support of:*

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*Thank you for your generosity and your commitment to an innovative approach that continues moving ahead with the purpose of growing with your support.*

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