2025 issue

oliva tessen

BY MERCACEI

the delicate pleasure of extra virgin olive oil...

crazy about EVOO
Valeria Mazza, between fashion, gastronomy (with EVOO) and the art of reinventing herself

chefs
Niko Romito and his connection with EVOO, an ingredient that he knows how to elevate to the nth degree

oleotourism
Olive Tour in China, exploring Nature, Culture and Cuisine

guest star
Philippe Starck, the visionary who has turned EVOO into a monumental work of art and sustainability

the origins of EVOO
Kings, emperors and extra virgin olive oil

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Pasión

POR EL OLIVO...

Obsesión

POR LA EXCELENCIA

HACIENDA QUEILES

ACEITES DE OLIVA VIRGEN EXTRA ECOLÓGICOS

"We travel, some of us forever, to seek other states, other lives, other souls"

Anaïs Nin

To Lola

Editorial

Pandora Peñamil Peñafiel
Editor in Chief

pandora_tessen

The olive tree and EVOO are a constant

The avant-garde writer Anaïs Nin said that "we travel, some of us forever, in search of other states, other lives, other souls". Olivatessen is that journey, that adventure, that way of living other lives and inhabiting other souls. The olive tree offers that window to a magical world in which its forms stretch as if we were in front of a quantum simulation in a wormhole that takes us backwards and forwards in time while it remains our only constant. This tree was already used by the Romans to mark conquered territories with its roots. *"Olea primum ómnium arborem est" ("the olive tree is the first of all trees"),* murmured as they planted it, as if it were part of an intimate ceremony that connected them with immortality.

But it is also a symbol of modernity through its EVOO, with unthinkable packaging, with AI programs in the farms, mills and cooperatives that produce it... It's *#trendingtopic* if you pair it well -and pretty- and upload it to *Instagram*.

EVOO is "the magic touch" with which supermodel Valeria Mazza finishes her dishes; it is "one of the four essential elements in the relationship between human beings and nature along with oxygen, water and salt" for designer Philippe Starck; it is "the memory of family meals" for 8 Michelin-starred chef and gastronomic consultant for Bvlgari Hotels & Resorts, Niko Romito; and it is "part of the DNA" of the Torres Brothers (Cocina Hermanos Torres restaurant, 3 Michelin stars). And they tell us about it because *Olivatessen* has asked all of them. Because to talk about EVOO is to spread its name, its flavor, its healthy benefits and its culture, as if it were a religion. A creed that we wanted to take hold of and that has an increasing number of followers.

With 10 issues behind us, we can say that *Olivatessen* has marked a before and after in the world of extra virgin olive oil. Architecture, painting, sculpture, music, literature, dance or cinema are concepts that have never before been associated with EVOO. We have opened that door and slipped inside. In fact, in this issue 11 we have traveled on the most luxurious trains in the world to find out what juices are used to season the succulent dishes offered in their restaurant cars; the most exclusive private clubs in New York, Paris, London, Mykonos or Rome have let us sneak in to taste their most opulent menus and discover their most eccentric services; and we have been able to confirm that the *fast good food* chains -which cook with EVOO- are here to stay.

Tutankhamen boasted of his own olive plantation; Cleopatra owned her own olive oil fragrance factory; Julius Caesar's favorite EVOO was from Baeza; Empress Sissi took baths of warm water with olive oil to keep her skin soft and smooth; and Cervantes became an oil collector for Felipe II.

All these stories, all these lives, are found in these page. If the olive tree and EVOO are not a constant, nothing else can be •

Valeria Mazza,

between fashion, gastronomy (with EVOO) and the art of reinventing herself

By Pandora Peñamil Peñafiel

Valeria Mazza has established herself as an international icon, not only in the fashion world, but also in the business and cultural spheres. Passionate about gastronomy and personal care, Mazza reflects on the importance of healthy habits in her lifestyle, where extra virgin olive oil occupies a privileged place. With a career that spans catwalks, business projects and social commitments, the story of this supermodel who shared the catwalk with Claudia Schiffer, Cindy Crawford or Naomi Campbell, reflects a balance between tradition, innovation and the constant search for new goals (gastronomic as well).

›› On some occasions you have said that pasta is your weakness and that you usually season it with skimmed milk or olive oil and little salt. What does olive oil mean to you?
I love pasta and olive oil is an essential condiment to season it. I remember being in Spain many years ago in a restaurant where we were offered the opportunity to taste different olive oils. It was the first time I was aware that there was the possibility of tasting different types of EVOO depending on what variety they were. The truth is that I was really impressed and, from that moment on, I love to try different oils. Undoubtedly, olive oil is an ingredient that is a must in my meals.

›› In your family you take good care of yourselves through exercise and diet. When did you start worrying about nutrition?
Since I started in the fashion world, when I was 17 years old, I started to become aware of what nutrition was and that food was the key to take care of myself. I have always been very mindful of what I eat. I used to be slim and in line with the designers' demands, and now it has become a habit of life. I do it, not to look better, but to feel better.

›› Your profession has required you to eat a rich and healthy diet... Does olive oil occupy a prominent place in this lifestyle? Do you use it regularly for cooking?
I firmly believe that "we are what we eat", so I pay close attention to the quality of the products I choose. I consume very little flour, fats and sugars. I indulge myself from time to time, but I am very conscious that it is just that, a treat. I use olive oil as the healthy ingredient that it is and, therefore, I take it into account when I do my shopping.
Of course, I regularly use EVOO in my meals, it is the only fat I consume. I also like to play with flavoured oils, for example with truffle, which add a magical touch to certain dishes.

›› During the pandemic you were encouraged to cook with your children and show it on social networks. What are your favourite dishes to cook at home? If some of them have olive oil, even better!
Yes, I love cooking and I cook a lot. During the pandemic, we decided to share as a family what our day-to-day life in the kitchen was like through social media, and it was a fun experience.
I like the cuisine little elaborated, that is to say, the homemade flavours, the simple but tasty, the prepared at home. I like to see what I have in the fridge or in the pantry and, with it, come up with different dishes, whether baked or grilled meat, fish, chicken, etc. I also make a lot of recipes with vegetables and I love soufflés. And I always, always finish my dishes with a touch of EVOO.

Graceful essence of wilderness
Extra virgin olive oil
M
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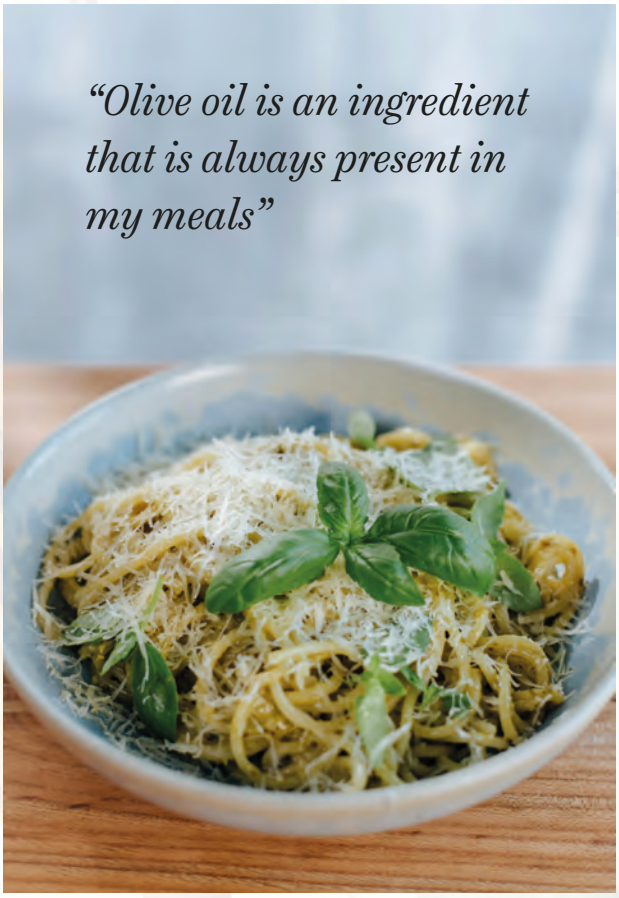
›› Regarding your children's nutrition, how do you get them to follow a healthy diet?
My children have been very athletic since they were very young, so they have always considered food as another tool in their training. Choosing well what they eat, that it is a varied diet, that the amount of protein, carbohydrates or fibre is adequate, has been something usual at home because we eat very healthily. They are also very conscious of what to choose when eating out because they know that food is fundamental for their health.

›› You currently live in Argentina but we know that you enjoy coming to Madrid. What would a day with Valeria Mazza on the streets of Madrid be like? Which restaurants do you like to go to when you visit your friends in the capital?
I live in Argentina, in Buenos Aires, although I have the Valeria Farm in Uruguay, where I also spend long periods of time. It is true that I go to Madrid very often because my eldest son lives there and because last year I was presenting and performing in the television program "Dancing with the Stars", which was filmed in the capital and which will take me there again in 2025. I love that city and Spain, its tradition, its food, its culture.

It is impossible to choose just one restaurant in Madrid because there are more and more new establishments opening so the best thing to do is to practice what we do, to go on gastronomic tours around the city to discover all the bars and restaurants we can.



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›› Many celebrities such as Alejandro Sanz or Francis Ford Coppola have launched their own brand of wine or olive oil. What do you think of these initiatives, and do you think they are a boost for the international awareness of products such as olive oil?
I love the idea of having a brand. I have my own brand of eyewear, perfume, cosmetics, shoes and accessories, but I do not rule out the possibility of creating a gastronomic brand. I have been talking to a winery for some time about launching a wine brand. In Argentina we have great wines and I would love to be able to make one that bears my name and position it in the international market. Both wine and olive oil are products deeply rooted in the culture of a place and linking them to international personalities is a definitive promotion for them.

›› We know that because of your work you have travelled a lot in different countries and cities. Where have you enjoyed its gastronomy and cuisine the most?
The places I enjoy the most are, without a doubt, Italy and Spain. But I also like to travel to Asian and Middle Eastern countries to discover their exotic cuisines. And, without going too far away, to Peru or Chile, where the food is incredible. What I like most in the world is to get lost in these places, and in many others, and enjoy their traditional cuisine, the real thing.

›› Until now, it was cool to understand wine. However, for some time now, the sophisticated thing to do is to know about olive oil and to give it as a gift, as it used to be possible to do with a good wine. In fact, Francis Ford Coppola and Javier Bardem have confessed that they often give EVOO as a gift when they are invited to a friend's house for dinner. What do you usually give?
When I am invited to a dinner party, I always bring flowers, wine and, above all, champagne. For one simple reason, I love it and I believe that sometimes you give what you would like to be given (laughs). But a good wine is always a wise choice. Oh, and many times I also bring a book of photographs of Argentina; I think it is a very good gift to promote part of my culture.

›› Let's talk a little about your profession. Being a model is a bit like cooking, it requires technique, but also talent and some improvisation. Did you always know you wanted to be a model? How have you evolved throughout your career?

NATURALMENTE BIOLOGICO

BIOORTO

DISCOVER OUR STORY

I never dreamed of being a model, it was neither my goal nor my desire. Since I was little, they told me a lot that I had to dedicate myself to it, but I hadn't even considered it. When I arrived in Buenos Aires, I started working as a model while studying occupational therapy to work with people with disabilities, which is my true calling. Shortly after, I went to Europe and the United States, working hard and making a career out of it, and over time I learned and discovered that I had a talent for this. I think that to stand out in this profession you have to have a great personality, because there are plenty of beautiful women, but there weren't that many super models. And personality played a fundamental role.
I always knew it was a short career, but I managed to make a name for myself in the fashion world and, thanks to that, I really enjoy what I do. *Valeria* is a brand that allows me to continue having my contracts as a model and complement them with the launch of products and my work in the social field. I use the popularity that the fashion world gave me to amplify messages that interest me, which have to do with childhood, health, education and disability. That takes me more and more time because I like it so much.

›› For a few years now you have also been immersed in the business world with your brands *Valeria Mazza Eyewear* and with *Valeria Mazza Shoes & Bags*. How was it to leap into this world? Do you have any other projects in mind?
I launched my first perfume in 1998. The fashion world opened many doors for me and I presented several television shows. I was also offered acting but I was never interested in that. However, when I had the experience of creating a perfume -I later also launched cosmetics- I discovered that this was my world. I really enjoy the creative process and teamwork while developing the product.
We partner with companies that, in addition to achieving a quality product, allow me to contribute the design, which is my hallmark, and that offer it at a good price, which is affordable. For me that is very important. I have been launching products such as glasses, perfumes and, recently, shoes and handbags for 15 years now -we have just presented the second collection- and it is something that makes me really happy. Of course, we always keep thinking: what else?

›› Finally, do you have any unspeakable (edible) pleasures?
I could say quite a few... As a good Argentine, any sweet dessert I eat has to have *dulce de leche* for it to be wonderful. In Spain, luckily, it is already available in many stores, so whenever I can I buy it and prepare desserts with *dulce de leche*. And, as I was saying before, the champagne. When people come to my house or send me gifts, I tell them not to think about it too much, just to send me a bottle of champagne (laughs). But, from now on, I'm also going to ask for EVOO, which I love. So, you know, if you want you can send me a little bottle! •

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EVOO & Music

Extra virgin olive oil and music have something in common: both stimulate the senses and evoke profound emotions in human beings.

By José Mª Penco Valenzuela
Director of AEMO and of the EVOOLEUM Awards competition

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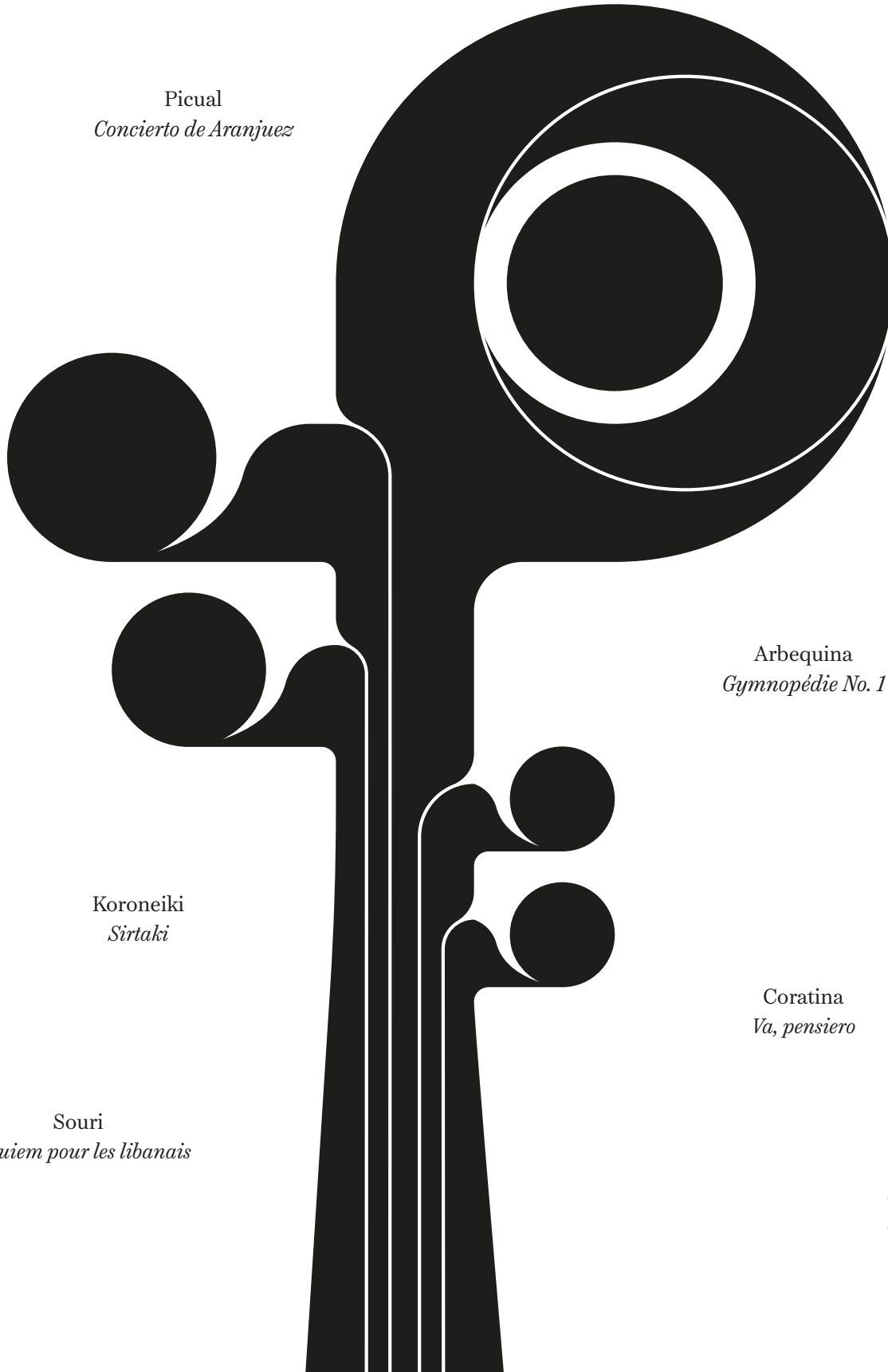
Hojiblanca
Danza Ritual del Fuego

Cornicabra
Bolero

Picual
Concierto de Aranjuez



Arbequina
Gymnopédie No. 1

Koroneiki
Sirtaki

Coratina
Va, pensiero

Souri
Requiem pour les libanais

The extra virgin olive oil is a sensory masterpiece. It not only delights the olfactory and gustatory senses with its intensity and complexity of aromas and richness of flavours, but also awakens the sense of touch with its unique texture in the mouth. Each variety could tell its own story through a symphony of fruitiness, bitterness, spiciness and fluidity, appealing to the senses in an immersive experience. But what happens if we add to this sensory concerto the sense of hearing? Can a melody enrich the perception of an EVOO or amplify the sensations it evokes in the nose and mouth?

The olfactory sense, with its two-way direct and retronasal senses, captures the aromatic nuances that distinguish each variety, while the taste identifies the basic flavours, such as bitterness, in an intimate and profound interaction. In addition, other sensations such as spiciness -a kinaesthetic response- and fluidity -a tactile experience- complete a sensory universe that seems to ask for music as a natural accompaniment.

This article proposes an unprecedented pairing where the musical notes are intended to dialogue with the organoleptic profiles of the olive oil, expanding the sensory experience beyond what is known. Every year at the EVOOLEUM Awards we are fortunate to taste and enjoy a unique line-up of varieties from distant corners of the planet. They are the best, the fruitiest, the most complex. Let us dare to propose a classical piece of music for the most important... starting this exciting journey with the Queen of Andalusia.

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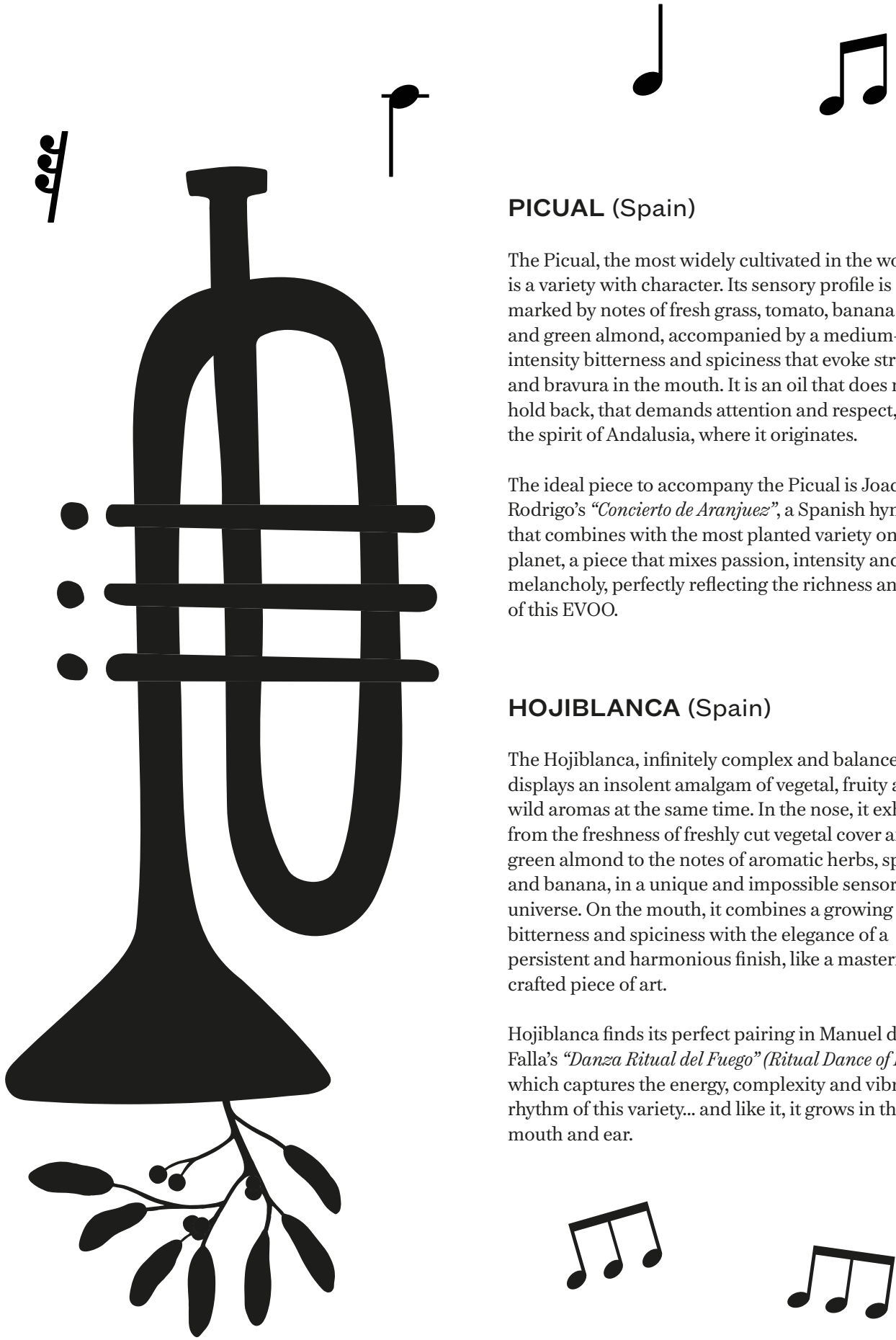

PICUAL (Spain)

The Picual, the most widely cultivated in the world, is a variety with character. Its sensory profile is marked by notes of fresh grass, tomato, banana peel and green almond, accompanied by a medium-high intensity bitterness and spiciness that evoke strength and bravura in the mouth. It is an oil that does not hold back, that demands attention and respect, like the spirit of Andalusia, where it originates.

The ideal piece to accompany the Picual is Joaquín Rodrigo's *"Concierto de Aranjuez"*, a Spanish hymn that combines with the most planted variety on the planet, a piece that mixes passion, intensity and melancholy, perfectly reflecting the richness and soul of this EVOO.

HOJIBLANCA (Spain)

The Hojiblanca, infinitely complex and balanced, displays an insolent amalgam of vegetal, fruity and wild aromas at the same time. In the nose, it exhibits from the freshness of freshly cut vegetal cover and green almond to the notes of aromatic herbs, spices and banana, in a unique and impossible sensory universe. On the mouth, it combines a growing bitterness and spiciness with the elegance of a persistent and harmonious finish, like a masterfully crafted piece of art.

Hojiblanca finds its perfect pairing in Manuel de Falla's *"Danza Ritual del Fuego" (Ritual Dance of Fire)*, which captures the energy, complexity and vibrant rhythm of this variety... and like it, it grows in the mouth and ear.

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CORNICABRA (Spain)

The Cornicabra has a robust and vegetal personality. Its aromas are reminiscent of field herbs, olive leaves and fresh fruits, while in the mouth it surprises with a powerful bitterness and spiciness loaded with polyphenols, providing a powerful yet well-structured sensory experience. It is an oil that expresses tradition and soil, from the land of La Mancha.

For Cornicabra, the ideal piece of music is Ravel's *"Bolero"*, whose slow and powerful progression reflects the strength and persistence of this cultivar.

ARBEQUINA (Spain)

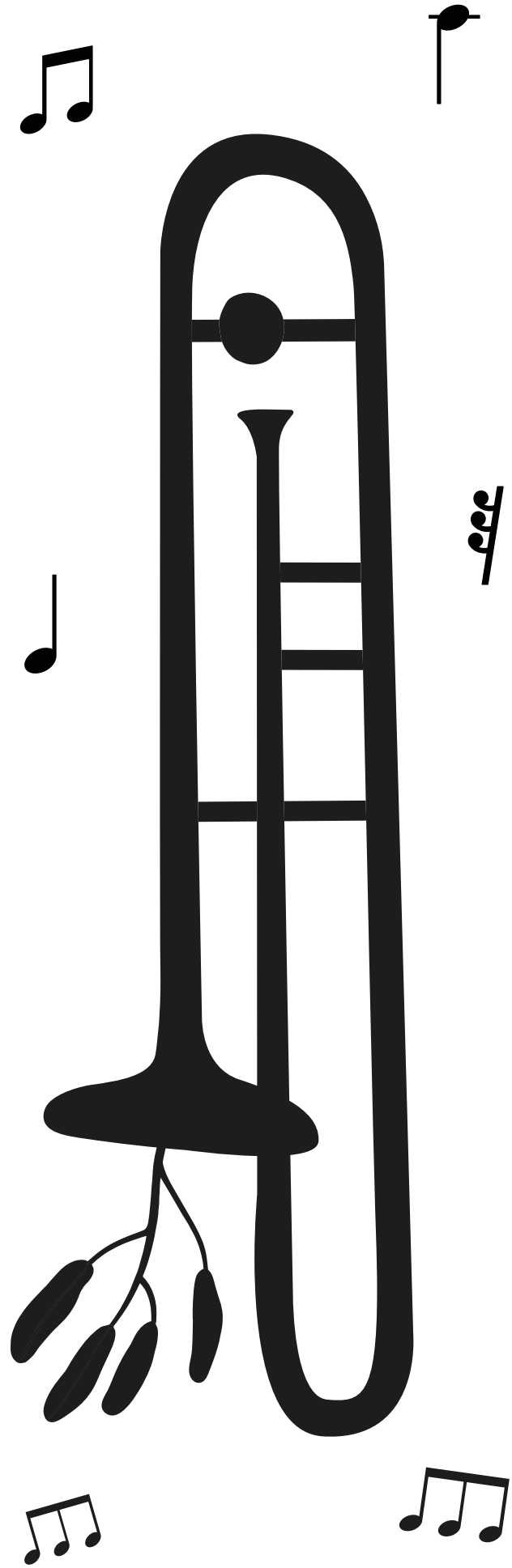
The delicacy of Arbequina shows a completely different spirit. This soft, sweet and fruity oil, with aromas reminiscent of apple and almond, moves to the rhythm of a quiet and melancholic melody. On the mouth it displays elegance and subtlety, with infinite balance.

The piano music of Erik Satie, *"Gymnopédie No. 1"*, fits perfectly with its gentle character and great harmony, inviting a sensory experience that conveys calm and gentleness.

KORONEIKI (Greece)

The Koroneiki variety, originally from Greece, is fresh, fruity and elegant. Its green and herbaceous aromas, with hints of wild flowers and rosemary, evoke Mediterranean landscapes where olives ripen under the Hellenic sun. In the mouth, this variety balances bitterness and spiciness in a subtle manner, culminating in a vibrant finish.

The perfect musical pairing for the Koroneiki is Mikis Theodorakis' *"Sirtaki"*, a traditional Greek piece that grows in intensity, capturing the freshness and vitality of this ancient variety.



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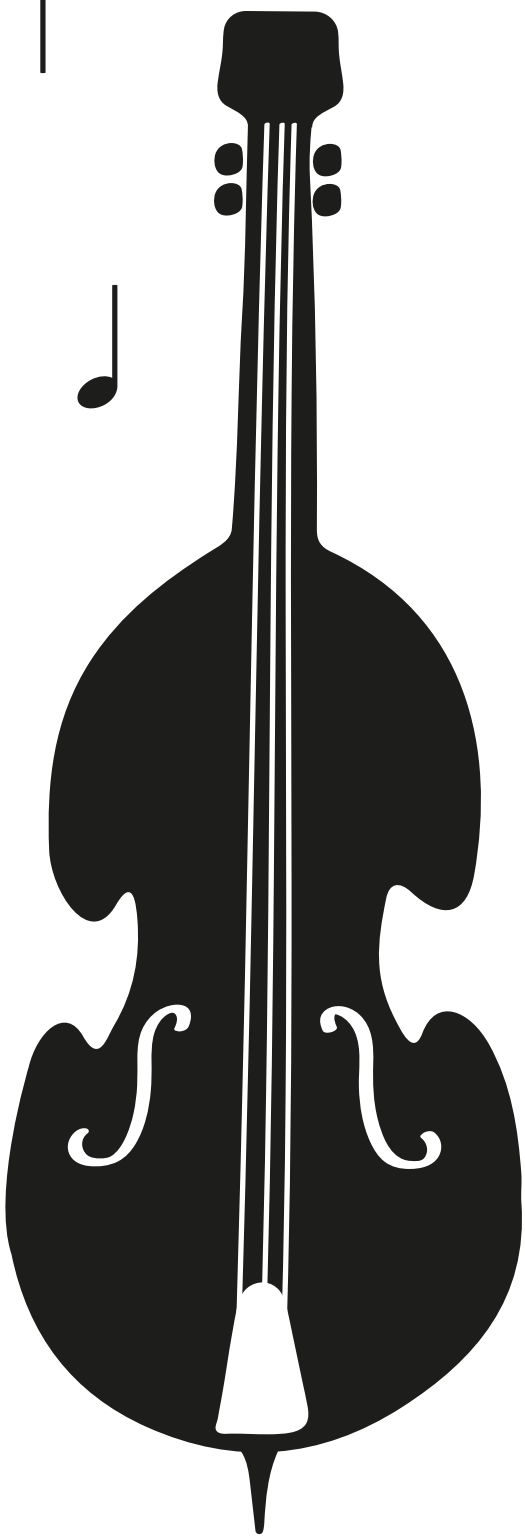

CORATINA (Italy)

The Coratina is a sensory explosion in itself. With the highest concentration of antioxidants among all varieties, it is intense, spicy and bitter, but also deeply fruity and vegetal, with fruity notes combined with artichoke, tomato and almond. Its potency and complexity are its hallmark, challenging the palate as a legendary extra virgin that is difficult to forget.

For the Coratina, the perfect piece is Giuseppe Verdi's *"Va, pensiero"*, the chorus of the Hebrew slaves, which combines emotion, complexity and timeless beauty, like this Italian juice.

SOURI (Lebanon/Syria)

Souri, from Lebanon and Syria, is an exotic and elegant variety. Its aromas combine ripe fruits and aromatic herbs, with spicy notes that reflect the soul of the Orient. In the mouth, the spiciness and bitterness are delicately balanced, offering a refined and exotic profile.

For Souri, the ideal music is *"Requiem pour les libanais"* by Bechara El-Khoury, a Lebanese work that blends tradition and modernity, reflecting the history and character of this cultivar, the mother of varieties.

Let us dare to fuse extra virgin olive oil with music, two jewels of cultural heritage that are in perfect harmony. A sensory symphony that deserves to be listened to, savoured... and shared •

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LIVING NATURE

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Olive Tour in China

Exploring Nature, Culture and Cuisine

By Robert Woo
Olive oil taster, wine taster and marketing executive officer of Beijing Regalland Convention Exhibition Co., Ltd.

Join us on an exciting journey to visit China's olive oil producing areas and explore their unique nature, culture and gastronomy. Snow-capped -and golden- mountains, ancient cities, giant pandas, the world's oldest irrigation system, local cuisine with extra virgin olive oil... Different itineraries to discover an unknown but always hospitable and fascinating China.

The history of olive cultivation in China is young. Under the impetus of Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, among others, olive trees, mainly from Albania, Italy, Spain and France, were planted in large parts of the country from the 1960s onwards. To date, the plantation area has reached 17,200 hectares. But where are olive trees planted in China and which are the olive oil producing areas?

First of all, it is useful to know where olive trees can be grown in China, which areas are suitable for this ancient tree to thrive. The olive-growing areas -between 23 and 35 degrees north latitude- extend mainly around the cities of Kunming, Chengdu, Chongqing, Longnan and Shiyan as the focal points of an unforgettable journey.

Yunnan: adventure, snow-capped mountains and ancient cities

Yunnan has long held a powerful fascination for foreigners and Chinese citizens alike. This south-western province is characterised by idyllic landscapes: snow-capped mountains, lakes, gorges and the enigmatic Shangri-La mentioned in British author James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*. Our first stop is the city of Kunming, the provincial capital of Yunnan, home to Dianchi Lake and the Kunming World Horticultural Expo Park. Here we can also find a 60-year-old olive tree of great historical value planted by former Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, at Kunming Haikou Forest Farm; as well as a small olive tree museum that houses valuable historical images, documentaries and objects related to the olive trees planted by this prominent politician who ruled from 1949 to 1976. There are small olive groves in the Asan, Yimen, Dongchuan counties and other areas around Kunming that allow the experience of olive picking to be enjoyed in September and October each year.

We leave Kunming for beautiful Lijiang. To get there we have two options: by car or by high-speed train (4 hours). The first is a tour of the ancient city of Dali and Erhai Lake -a plateau lake whose beautiful natural scenery attracts countless tourists- discovering its rich cultural heritage -with diverse architectural styles from different historical periods- and the unique ethnic customs of the area. Next, we can visit olive groves and olive oil processing plants in Yongren and Yongsheng counties.

Lijiang is an ancient city with a long history and rich cultural heritage, with a unique architectural style of the Naxi ethnic minority, integrating the beauty of the watery city south of the Yangtze River with the rugged temperament of the

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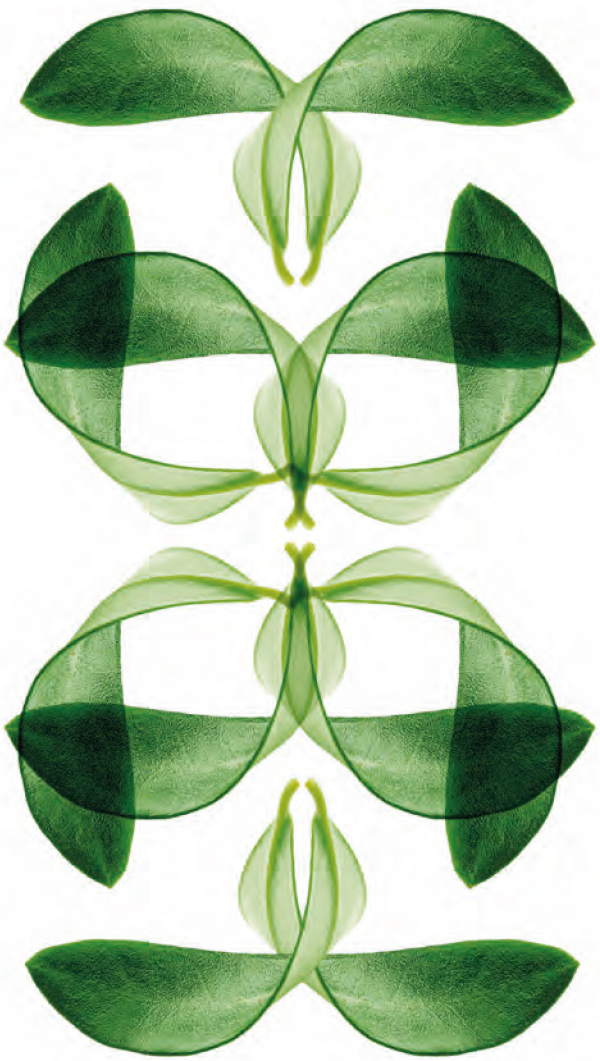

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snowy plateau. Early in the morning it is highly recommended to enjoy the beautiful scenery of the snow-capped Yulong Mountain -5,596 metres high- and the shimmering sunshine of the Golden Mountain, a sight to behold: when the first lightning strikes the top of the snow-capped mountain, the whole mountain seems to be covered with a layer of golden radiance. The magnificence and sacredness of the moment is capable of quickening hearts and making the experience unforgettable.

In the foothills of the snow-capped mountains of Yulong in Lijiang and Haba in Shangri-La there is a huge gorge, known as Tiger Leaping Gorge. It is one of the deepest canyons in the world and is considered one of the 'Top 10 Classic Hiking Routes in the World': a majestic, peculiar, dangerous and steep route. Also located here is an olive grove, Garden City Olive Estate, which since 2012 has grown into a 400-hectare organic olive plantation, prompting local residents to develop a 4,000-hectare olive plantation area. Garden City Olive Estate has an olive seedling centre, a germplasm resource bank, an olive oil processing workshop and an olive leaf bio-extraction workshop.

During the site preparation phase of the Garden City Olive Estate, excavators uncovered a substantial number of stones at the base of the plantation. These waste stones were later used to build the Olive Industry Art Museum, which won a Special Mention in the Architizer A+ Awards 2023 (Sustainable Interior Project) and the Z-Carbon 2023 Global Zero Carbon Cities Innovation Award.

The olive trees grow in a slightly alkaline soil rich in calcium, nourished by melting snow from the mountains and bathed in 2,700 hours of sunlight a year. The significant temperature variation between day and night has turned this place into a privileged enclave for the production of high-quality olive oil products. This is the case of its extra virgin olive oil, called *Golden City Olive Oil*, which won the Gold Medal in the Best Ripe Fruity category at the Mario Solinas Awards of the International Olive Council in 2018.

Continuing west from the city of Lijiang, we reach the 'paradise on earth' described in James Hilton's novel *Lost Horizon*, a haven of harmony and cultural diversity: the mysterious Shangri-La, a tourist destination par excellence that offers numerous attractions: Blue Moon Valley, Placo National Park, White Horse Snow Mountain, Meili Snow Mountains, Napa Sea or Shangri-La Grand Canyon, among others.

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Sichuan: giant pandas and cooking with olive oil

Close to Tibet, and traversed by a mountain range older than the Himalayas, Sichuan is not only synonymous with spectacular scenery, but also home to giant pandas and a world-famous gastronomic paradise. A land of natural wonders and cultural heritage where nature, culture and health go hand in hand. Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan, is a city you won't want to leave, where you can enjoy a quiet and leisurely life and a gastronomic culture that stands out for its richness and diversity. Sichuan cuisine is known for its spicy flavours, whether in the form of hot pot, barbecue or stir-fry. Olive oil has become the paradigm of healthy food, adding lightness, freshness and modernity to traditional Sichuan cuisine: olive oil is used instead of canola oil in the hot pot, preserving the full flavour and reducing the greasy feeling; while classic dishes such as *Snowflake Chicken* and *Dadao golden silk noodles* have been re-interpreted with olive oil, giving them a new vitality and refreshing taste. At the Youyun 1911 restaurant in Chengdu -a veritable hub of the flavour, aesthetics, culture and history of Sichuan cuisine- we can taste these healthier versions, perfectly combining extra virgin olive oil with traditional Sichuan cuisine. In Chengdu's high-end restaurants, you can also try ice cream and coffee made with olive oil, which gives it a unique aroma and silky texture.

The proposed itinerary in and around Chengdu combines natural landscapes, historical culture and healthy gastronomy. We start by admiring the thousand-year-old Dujiangyan irrigation project, the oldest in the world, a masterpiece of China's water conservation culture that not only shows the wisdom of the ancients, but also continues to bring fertility to the Chengdu Plain. A feat of ecological engineering that has been in operation for more than 2,000 years and was declared a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site in 2000. The walk across the Anlan Bridge allows you to enjoy the views over the magnificent landscape of the river diversion.

In the afternoon it is time to visit the Panda Valley and enjoy the enchanting Chinese giant pandas. In this base that integrates scientific research and protection we can not only learn about the life habits of these adorable plantigrades, but we also have the opportunity to observe their daily activities up close and take precious photos as souvenirs.

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After the trip to Panda Valley, we headed to the backside of Mount Qingcheng to stay and enjoy a high-end dining experience. It is a famous summer resort with a luxury resort tucked away in the mountains, Su Shien Valley Hotel -a member of Relais & Châteaux- where you can enjoy the most luxurious service and peaceful natural surroundings. A backdrop of mountain peaks and mist-shrouded forests, ideal for walks in harmony with nature and a haven for a spiritual retreat. Its 18 rooms and suites are an invitation to contemplation, with a minimalist décor of flowing lines and large windows. In harmony with Taoist philosophy, the Hotaru restaurant, located in a bamboo plantation, serves typical Sichuan cuisine that follows the rhythm of the seasons.

At dinner we can enjoy a vegetarian feast seasoned with fresh olive oil and combined with local ingredients to create healthy and delicious dishes. And for dessert, spicy Sichuan tofu (*Sichuan Mapo Doufu*) with olive oil ice cream, whose unique flavour gives the traveller a new taste experience. But the prominence of extra virgin olive oil does not end here: in the morning we can enjoy a coffee with olive oil to start the day in the best possible way.

After breakfast we finish our tour by heading to Jintang County to visit the local olive plantation base in the Longquan Mountains. Here we will learn all about the olive oil production process, from cultivation and harvesting to pressing the fruits, and we will have the opportunity to taste fresh olive oil.

In addition to the olive production areas of Jintang, Sichuan's olive-growing areas -which benefit from unique climatic and soil conditions- are mainly distributed along two routes. The Northern Route includes Mianyang, Guangyuan, Langzhong, Dazhou and Nanchong. The olive industry in these places emphasises organic cultivation and green development. In Langzhong, where historical culture and modern agriculture are perfectly integrated, we can walk through the farmland and participate in olive picking activities, and enjoy the beautiful scenery of Langzhong Ancient Town. The Southern Route includes Mianning County and the cities of Xichang and Panzhihua. The Mianning and Xichang olive-growing areas are large-scale plantations producing superior quality extra virgin olive oil with a high content of mono-unsaturated fatty acids. The visit to the plantations can be completed with a stay at Xichang Zhongze Olive Estate, surrounded by mountains and rivers, enjoying its olive oil cuisine.

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Longnan & Shiyan

Two other important olive-growing areas are located in the cities of Longnan and Shiyan. With almost 1 million hectares (0.7), Longnan in Gansu Province is the largest olive-growing area in China. From October to December each year, during the harvest season, many workers pick and carry the fruits, their smiling faces showing their joy at the abundant harvest.

The Xiangyu Ecological Industrial Park in Longnan covers an area of about 180 acres (72.8 hectares) and is a major tourist attraction. The complex is structured in five main sections: tourism, industry and agriculture area; landscaping area; R&D area; tasting area; and experiential area for parents and children. In addition to learning about the history of olive growing in China and around the world, immersing yourself in the culture of the olive tree and discovering all the stages of the production process, the guided tour allows you to discover the nutritional value of this foodstuff and enjoy a tasting experience. The park's cultural corridor can accommodate 500 visitors at a time, whether they are tourists, students, companies or members of the government. The regular presence of golden pheasants, wild rabbits or white egrets adds a touch of vitality to the park. In the tasting area you can try not only EVOOs and table olives, but also all kinds of derived products: olive tea, olive crisp, olive vegetables, olive sauce, etc. The park's restaurants offer local specialities and dishes made with olive oil.

The city of Shiyan in central Hubei province is a new olive production area with more than 6,700 hectares of olive groves. A visit to the Oriental Olive Estate is a must, which integrates organic farming, healthy food, biotechnology, culture and tourism in a single complex, with olive oil as the flagship of the project and an investment of 500 million yuan by Hubei Xinlanyuan Olive Technology Co., Ltd. Xinlanyuan Olive has its own organic olive plantation -over 400 hectares- and has adopted the cooperation model of 'Enterprise + Grassroots + Cooperative + Village Collective + Farmer' to boost the development of the Shiyan olive plantation area of over 100,000 acres (40,468.5 hectares), encouraging 30 towns, 60 villages, 43 market entities and nearly 10,000 farmers to engage in the olive industry. The company has built the first smart factory -10,000 square metres-

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for olive processing in China, which currently has 9 production lines.

With olive culture at the core of its business, Oriental Olive Estate has focused on health and wellness tourism, establishing a model based on five care -eye care, stomach care, home care, elderly care and heart care- and developing unique attractions around this ancient tree such as Olive Light (Guanjiang Lighthouse), Millennium Olive Prayer Garden, International Olive Culture Exchange Center, Olive Light Mediterranean Theme Hotel and Olive Oil Featured Health Food Experience Area.... We are talking about 1,700 acres (688 hectares) of organic olive groves to offer a complete olive oil tourism experience.

Apart from oleotourism, the area is rich in natural and cultural attractions. Situated next to the Taoist holy land, with Wudang Mountain to the east, Yunyang Dinosaur Egg Fossil Group National Geological Park to the west, Shennongjia National Nature Reserve to the south and the ancient capital Xi'an of the Thirteen Dynasties to the north, visitors can enjoy the scenery of the Han River, trace the footprints of ancient peoples, relive the eternal fascination with dinosaurs, delve into the origins of the Chu and Han dynasties or indulge in the local cuisine with olives and olive oil.

We come to the end of our journey through the main olive growing areas in China. All that remains is to visit mountainous cities such as Chongqing and discover the famous Three Gorges on the Yangtze River to complete a different kind of journey through a China that is different but always hospitable, proud of its traditions and increasingly devoted to the indisputable charm of the olive tree and extra virgin olive oil.

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Sciatu di Luna

ORGANIC - certified extra virgin olive oil, crafted from a blend of carefully selected varieties grown within our production areas. *Sciatu di Luna* is an elegant oil characterized by a medium fruitiness, perfectly balanced between bitterness and spiciness. On the nose, it reveals enveloping aromas of unripe tomato, hints of aromatic herbs, and artichoke. Versatile and easy to pair, it adds a touch of elegance and refinement to any dish. Recommended raw on dishes such as salads and crudités, it is also ideal for soups, grilled meats, or fish.

Carizza d'Amuri

Monovarietal extra virgin olive oil, crafted from a blend of meticulously selected olives.
Medium in intensity, it is rich in vegetal notes with hints of green apple and tomato leaves. With a slight spiciness and a pleasantly bitter tendency, it is a true "caress of love" that enhances meat and fish dishes. Particularly well-suited for soups, legumes, and salads.

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VANIZIA

Extra virgin olive oil crafted from meticulously selected olives of the *Nocellara dell'Etna* and *Nocellara del Belice* varieties, sourced from the highly fertile olive-growing lands of eastern Sicily. Made from green olives, it features a medium-intensity fruitiness with distinct notes of green tomato and artichoke. On the palate, it is harmonious: spiciness and bitterness coexist to create a unique flavor, an intense balance that persists like the passion in a love story.

GIOALE

ORGANIC - certified extra virgin olive oil crafted from a blend of carefully selected varieties from Sicilian areas within our production chain. The slight tingling sensation comes from the freshness of the olives used, while its sweetness, with a gentle spicy and bitter aftertaste, makes it a delicately flavored extra virgin olive oil.
It is perfect for introducing olive oil to children and adults who are not yet accustomed to stronger flavors. Ideal as a dressing for fish and seafood, in salads, and in baking as a substitute for butter, especially for preparing cookies.

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EVOO & Fish

The harmony of freshness and taste

They say that anything that tastes good is rarely healthy. Obviously, this is not true for two of the healthiest foods in existence, fish and olive oil, which occupy the top of the Mediterranean Diet pyramid in terms of hierarchy and, therefore, occupy an important place in most healthy food recommendations and dietary programs.

By Maria Katsouli, wine sommelier and olive oil taster, director of the ATHENA International Olive Oil Competition (ATHENA IOOC)

When pairing extra virgin olive oil with seafood and fish, we must seek a balance of flavours whose result is not only nutritious, but also pleasantly hedonistic. Based on this premise, the beneficial health properties they provide to our body, we discovered that olive oil and fish share several characteristics.

First of all, the charm of its flavour is based on its freshness, an important and necessary condition for us to enjoy and benefit from all its nutritional advantages. When it comes to eating fish, the words "fresh" or "freshness" are self-evident, as rancid fish can put us directly in the hospital. However, in the case of olive oil, they are unfortunately not a necessary condition, although a popular proverb in my country (Greece) constantly reminds us of it: *"new oil, old wine!"*.

Secondly, both are consumed raw, with olive oil being the winner, as it also acts as a flavour enhancer for raw fish. Finally, the way they are used in the kitchen, in combination with cooking time and temperatures, changes the flavour and aromatic profile of each one separately in different ways and has a direct impact -positive or negative- on the final result of the dish and enjoyment of the meal.

After all, that is the goal: to broaden our palate through our "explorations" of taste, discovering new combinations that allow us to enjoy every bite to the fullest. Even with our mind, since, as far as perception is concerned, everything occurs there. That's why in every pairing -a combination of harmony in taste- I always ask myself what the objective is, especially when I am presented with the perfect raw material. Should I emphasize the flavour of the fish, for example, looking for that extra detail that enhances its organoleptic characteristics and the beauty of its taste by presenting a different dimension of it? Or should I keep its primary flavour as it is, in a natural way? But then, wouldn't everything stay the same and, therefore, at some point it might get boring? I guess this is how chefs operate, with dozens of experiments on a raw material, in the case of fish, until they manage to create the most complete dish in flavour and texture.

In my opinion, the key words on which the rule of taste harmony of EVOO and food is based are similarity -in aroma and flavour-, complementarity and "appeasement", that is, the ability of olive oil to achieve the balance of very intense flavours. Success in any culinary game begins with knowledge and understanding, not only of the raw material

of a dish, but also of each of the materials that accompany it separately. Cooking techniques, different temperatures and the correct selection and management of all complementary materials -ingredients and seasonings- used to enrich and enhance the raw material -in this case fish and seafood- are decisive factors. Not in vain, it is what will change or transform the textures, aroma and flavour of each dish, essentially causing its harmonious and combined integration in the final result and, ultimately, an explosion of pleasure on the palate and in the aftertaste, leaving a strong imprint of flavour.

To understand step by step all of the above (cooking techniques, temperatures, fish cuts and secrets of freshness and delicacy) I turned to George Papaioannou, an experienced professional chef and owner of the restaurants of the same name who was initiated in all the secrets of seafood and fishing at a very young age. He began his apprenticeship with his father in the family tavern in Piraeus, located in a narrow alley in Kastela that ended in what is now Mikrolimano. Today, George Papaioannou

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continues his family's history with dedication and respect, raising the bar even higher through his new gastronomic vision: the only criterion is always excellent quality, meticulous selection of raw materials and offering his clients fish and seafood exclusively according to their seasonality.

I invite you, therefore, to start your own tasting game, on the occasion of my own search for the best harmonious combinations of fish and seafood that I propose together with olive oils of popular and worldwide known varieties. Games and experiments that will lead you to a delicious or even hedonistic result in terms of taste, because one olive oil is never enough for us to be happy and enjoy the delicious freshness of fish and seafood, but also of all the other foods that we carefully choose for our table.

HARMONIES OF FLAVOUR WITH DIVERSE PREPARATIONS

Raw fish and seafood are dishes closely related to the nature of the sea, full of freshness, delicious and very healthy, as long as the raw material is fresh, that is, caught the same day. In raw preparations, the fish or shellfish is "cooked" in vinegar, apple cider vinegar, citrus juices or other acidic fruits. Fruit acids break down proteins and "cook" the flesh of fish and seafood, keeping it firm and intact. The time they remain in the marinade has a significant effect on the final result, so that the acid touch does not hide the freshness and sensation of the seafood, but enhances it.

Olive oil in these raw preparations can be used as a marinade ingredient to infuse the fish or seafood with flavour. However, it can also be used as a condiment at the time of serving, since it has the ability, thanks to its smoothness and fruitiness, to "soften" or moderate the acid, salty and iodized intensities of fish, seafood or marinade, providing aromas, flavour balance and harmony. Among the most popular raw preparations are Ceviche, Tartar, Carpaccio and Tataki.

The key words on which the rule of taste harmony of olive oil and food is based are similarity -in aroma and flavour-, complementarity and "appeasement"

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CEVICHE

It is a world-renowned traditional technique of Nikkei cuisine -a fusion of Japanese and Peruvian cuisine- present in most restaurants of a more or less gastronomic nature. The dominant element of this preparation is how it is cut and how long it remains in the marinade. Here, the fish or shellfish are cut into small or slightly larger cubes and marinated in citrus juice, especially lemon or lime, for a few minutes. This gives the fish or shellfish a shiny appearance, as well as a flavour and depth that accentuates the marine experience. Put another way, the citrus juices extract the sweetness from its raw flesh, showing the beauty of simplicity. Although ceviche is often enhanced with touches of chopped chives, fresh cilantro, radish, pink peppercorns and other flavour-enhancing additions, this is where choosing the right olive oil is important.

Red Porgy Ceviche & Hojiblanca

Red porgy is a Mediterranean fish characterized by its white flesh with a cohesive, firm texture and rich flavour. Consequently, look for an EVOO of similar consistency: fruity, with medium intensity and aromas of exotic fruits, leaves and fresh herbs. The particular elegance and freshness of the sea present in this dish are glorified through the charismatic boost of the sweet and spicy combination found in the olive oil of the Hojiblanca variety, giving an aftertaste marked by marine freshness. The result is equally harmonious with Frantoio, Coratina and Arbequina varieties.

Red Shrimp Ceviche & Coratina

What makes red shrimp very special and delicious is its silky texture and flavour, full of aroma and sweetness. The Coratina variety stands out for the richness of its aromas and its talent for achieving a perfect balance between the sweetness of the fruit and its spicy and slightly bitter taste. Here, the sweetness of the olive oil is integrated with the sweetness of the shrimp, which adds an extremely pleasant spicy flavour to the finish that embraces the flavour identity of the dish. It is also equally pleasant with Frantoio and Hojiblanca, as well as being extremely interesting with a Brazilian blend of Arbequina, Arbosana and Koroneiki.

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TARTARE

The preparation of "fish tartare" is considered a reduction of meat tartar, which began in the 1970s in France and spread to many restaurants in Europe and America in the following decade, remaining a classic to this day without losing its reputation. In the case of fish, the raw ingredient is cut into small cubes, allowing the marinade to "cook" it on the outside, but leaving the center of the raw fish flesh. The marinated ingredients are similar to those of Ceviche, with the only difference being that vinegar can also be used here. If the fish is very fatty, the classic meat recipe can also be followed, using chopped onion, capers and parsley, or additional elements such as ginger to balance the fat of the seafood. The guide for choosing olive oil is still the taste of the fish -in this case, even more so- and the ingredients used to enrich it.

Tuna Tartare with Osietra Caviar & Arbequina

Tuna is a popular fish for raw preparations -and much more- in the fatty fish category. With a red and very tasty meat and a cohesive texture, it creates the illusion of meat in the mouth, splashed with the salinity of the sea. Although oily fish generally look for olive oils with high intensity of fruitiness, accentuated spiciness and rich flavour, the refined taste of this particular preparation overrides the rule, as it finds an unexpected love partner in the Arbequina variety. Its intense fruitiness softens the fat of the fish, harmoniously complementing the botanical notes and the slight minerality of the fish, with the presence of iodine from the caviar, sealing a delicious sea voyage. Other companions on this sea voyage are Koroneiki and Hojiblanca, capable of transforming the salty, iodine taste of caviar into airy silk, making it stand out even more for its delicacy, as well as a Spanish blend.

Crayfish Tartare & Frantoio

Crayfish is a popular crustacean that can be found near coasts, as well as in freshwater lakes. In terms of flavour, crayfish is distinguished by its silky sweetness and lingering aroma, much more pronounced than shrimp. Its sweetness and aroma emerge more elegantly with a few drops of olive oil with hints of green banana, apple and herbal and spicy notes to complement its punch. In this case, the Coratina and Frantoio varieties compete with each other to be victorious, and both cut the winner's thread in a different way. While the former blooms deliciously on the palate with floral notes and harmoniously balances the sweetness, the latter adds complexity of aromas, spicy textures and a buttery, airy flavour to the palate, hedonistically emphasizing its taste. Likewise, Picual and Arbequina, as well as the mild blends of Spanish varieties, also present themselves as impeccable traveling companions.

EVOO AND SEA WATER
MYTHS AND LEGENDS

The dispute between Athena and Poseidon to be the protector of the main city of Ancient Greece was resolved by Zeus with a vote of the citizens. Poseidon offered a fountain from which seawater flowed, but Athena won with her offering of the olive tree from which the precious oil was obtained. Both elements, seawater and oil, became immiscible. There is only one olive tree that witnesses this fact that, submerged in the Mediterranean and only when shaken by a storm, produces Marioli, an ephemeral mixture of the two elements.

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TATAKI

This classic and simple Japanese preparation usually has tuna as raw material. Always cut into thin pieces, the tuna is cooked very lightly through an "airy" passage through the fire until its proteins change colour, darkening slightly. Thus, its texture changes only externally -that is, superficially- and in the center the fish remains raw. The secret of this technique lies in the fact that the pure and authentic taste of the fish and the presence of salinity and iodine remain unchanged, offering a lot of Umami to the palate. Tataki is often used with other fish and is accompanied by Ponzu sauce, a mixture of soy and yuzu, dashi, seaweed and mirin, with freshly chopped garlic, spring onion or ginger.

Tuna Tataki with red pepper & Hojiblanca

Tataki tuna is perhaps the most popular preparation of this fish, as the flavour-enriching spices, such as red pepper or lime, make the tuna taste even meatier and richer, reducing the fat, emphasizing the saltiness and providing iodine notes to the palate. The smooth and elegant taste of the Hojiblanca variety together with the tuna tataki represents a unique tasting experience that offers an abundance of herbaceous and tropical aromas to the palate, combining land and sea. At the same time, it balances the oily sweetness and meaty texture of the fish, offering a lingering aftertaste embellished with spicy and herbal hints of marine iodine. A bond of love is also created with the Coratina variety, which enriches it with suggestions of bitter herbs, and the Picual variety, which accompanies the taste of the fish at every step. And it is also worth trying it with an Italian blend from Tuscany, which gives us an incredible aftertaste.

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CARPACCIO

Originating in the Italian Piedmont, the popular thinly sliced strips of raw beef fillets were originally served at the famous Harry's Bar in Venice and quickly took restaurants around the world by storm, being adopted by raw fish enthusiasts as well. Naturally, raw fish enthusiasts around the world eventually adopted them. Although it may be simple to prepare, fish Carpaccio is one of the most elegant appetizers. A few drops of extra virgin olive oil will improve the flavour perception of the fish, which must be completely fresh, in a harmonious way.

Tuna Carpaccio & Frantoio

The Frantoio variety, with its strong fruity presence on the nose and palate surrounded by herbal notes, unexpectedly embraces the rich, meaty flavour of the fish, also offering its botanical and bitter elements on the palate to raise the bar of pleasure and at the same time enrich and complete its fatty texture. Equally pleasing is the coexistence with Arbequina which, through mutual interaction, makes the sweetness of the fish more appealing, reducing the salinity. In addition, Koroneiki and Picual cover it aromatically, adding flavour intensity to the palate and aftertaste. And another splendid combination is to pair it with the coupage of Picuda, Picual and Hojiblanca.

MARINATED ANCHOVY

in traditional style & Picual

Traditionally, anchovies are initially cooked in salt and then in vinegar, with the time spent there having a decisive effect on the overall texture and flavour. Finally, it is washed and placed in a recipient with olive oil. In addition to providing flavour, it should completely cover the fish to preserve it, with an ideal consumption time of three days. The key to flavour harmony is the intensity of the sour taste, as it balances the fat content of the fish. This is why this preparation seeks olive oils with a strong personality, high fruity with herbal touches and accentuated spiciness, with the bitter taste playing more the role of an extra. The Picual variety is the predominant choice, as the exuberant flavour of its aromas mitigates the pungent taste of the vinegar, adding new aromas and transforming the taste of this small, accessible and even humble fish into something divine. Equally pleasant is the combination with the Italian variety Itrana, but also with Brazilian blends with Arbosana, or a mixture of Tuscan varieties.

GRILLED OCTOPUS and Squid & Koroneiki

With legions of fans around the world, squid and octopus are undoubtedly the most popular seafood on the planet. The similarities between them are many: the crispness of the taste, the sweetness, the intense aroma of the sea... and the fact that both love olive oil. As for their differences, squid has a crunchy *al dente* texture, while octopus is chewy and, compared to squid, has more intense elements of the sea, with salinity and the omnipresent aroma of iodine.

Olive oil becomes a loyal ally in a cooked preparation, since it offers moisture through its fat content, which makes it more flavourful and softer, while incorporating pleasant herbaceous or spicy nuances, attenuating its sweetness and aromatically highlighting its flavour. The intense aromatic personality of octopus and squid persistently seeks the company of olive oil with medium to intense fruitiness, slight spiciness and bitterness. In some taste tests, these contrasts brought new life to the whole. In these tests, the punch of the Koroneiki variety, with its abundant fruitiness, flirts with them in a hedonistic way, balancing the sweetness of the seafood and offering the required fat content/texture to the flavour. At the same time, it enhances the palate and aftertaste with aromas reminiscent of a bouquet of herbs with citrus leaves, adding a touch of freshness. All this makes the taste of octopus in particular more seductive by discreetly reducing the intensity of iodine. Varieties such as Arbequina, the blend of Brazilian cultivars and, in some cases, Frantoio and Picual, which provide spicy notes of freshness, are also suitable.

GRILLED RED SHRIMP & Picual

Red shrimps, dressed in their red costume, stand out from other shrimps not only for their colour, but also for their exuberant sweetness and aroma, amplified by the grill, as well as for the extraordinarily soft texture of their flesh, as fluffy as absorbent cotton. In the olive oil, the red shrimp combines perfectly with the generous Picual EVOO, because what matters here is... the contrast. The spicy temperament of the Picual variety significantly reduces the sweetness of the shrimp and adds herbaceous aromas and a peppery taste to the tongue; while in the aftertaste the sensation of the brulé flavour is transferred to the Picual, enhancing the enjoyment, resulting in a win-win situation. Also noteworthy is the deep friendship with Coratina, Frantoio and a Spanish blend, as well as with the Koroneiki variety, which adds elegance to the sweetness of the shrimp through hints of barbecue.

Conclusions

›› Never forget that the most important thing to achieve the best pairing and harmony between any food/dish with EVOO is dictated by the intensity and flavour balance of the trilogy of fruity, bitter and spicy, always in relation to your aromatic palate.

›› Pay special attention to polyphenolic olive oils, with their intense bitterness and spiciness, which must be in perfect harmony with the fruitiness, because in some cases it leaves an unpleasant taste on the palate.

›› Oily fish generally prefers EVOO with generous personality and rich flavour, where the spiciness plays a crucial role in balancing its fattiness. However, be careful with the aftertaste, as the bitterness of the olive oil can often dominate the taste of the sea and overpower the dish.

›› Olive oil proves to be the best seasoning for fish and seafood, deliciously enhancing the freshness of the sea flavour, in contrast to lemon juice, which unfortunately is often used. Instead, replace the lemon with a few drops of olive oil: you will be grateful for the result •

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SCAN ME

Kings, *emperors & EVOO*

By Alfredo Briega Martín
Illustrations by an AI

Here is a unique historical account of the relationship between powerful monarchs, great emperors and legendary conquerors and extra virgin olive oil, a foodstuff prized since ancient times for its various uses, which often found its way into their feasts...

Mycenaean tablets, mouldable portions of clay used to make temporary records within the administration of Mycenaean palaces, are the earliest written documents that speak of olive oil and its importance in the court of King Minos for the economy of Crete, some 2,500 BC. For the ancient Egyptians (2,000 BC.), the olive tree -which was called Tat- was a sacred tree, and according to mythology, it was the goddess Isis, wife of Osiris, who gave men the knowledge about its cultivation, the numerous benefits of its fruits and the process of obtaining the oil from which they extracted the maximum benefit, since, apart from consuming its fruits, the olive oil obtained was used as an ornament and medicinal ointment, to preserve mummies, to make cosmetics and perfumes and even to illuminate the temples. Tutankhamun himself boasted of his own olive grove, and in his tomb were found ornaments and wreaths made from olive branches, the fruits of which were intended as food for the pharaohs in their passage to the afterlife.

Olive oil was one of the ingredients in the perfumes -one of the great passions of the Egyptians- used by Cleopatra, who owned her own factory where fragrances were created exclusively for her. *Chanel No. 5* at the time would have been a blend of myrrh, cardamom, olive oil and cinnamon. The last queen of Egypt had different uses for olive juice such as make-up remover, exfoliator and cream and mask for moisturising. To combat wrinkles, Cleopatra used a mask made from sliced cucumbers, whipped cream, olive oil and honey, while to keep her skin smooth, she used a cream made from honey, bicarbonate of soda, sea salt and olive oil. Finally, the famous queen, the most powerful woman in ancient Egypt, used a body scrub based on crushed olive pits that was applied to dry areas with circular movements to remove dead skin cells and keep the skin smooth and hydrated.

Julius Caesar's favourite EVOO...

We travel from ancient Egypt to the Roman Empire. Legend has it that in 46 BC, on one of the journeys of the Roman brigades from Híspalis (Seville) to Cástulo (Linares) led by Julius Caesar -who incorporated olive oil into the *annona*, the supply that the army received for its sustenance, which caused its demand to soar- they stopped on the high plateau that now makes up the city of Baeza, camping for several days in that lush olive grove. It was in that spot called *Solarium Baetim* (Latin for 'Balcony of the Guadalquivir') that Julius Caesar's troops enjoyed for days the then known as *Oleum ex albis ulivis*, extra virgin olive oil made from the healthy, green olives harvested by hand by freedmen from the olive trees planted there. Such was the delight experienced by the famous ruler, surrendered to the incomparable aromas and flavour of that authentic liquid gold, that he continued to enjoy those magnificent early oils from that moment until the end of his days.

... and the Lex Olearia of Emperor Hadrian

During the second half of the 1st century BC, olive cultivation spread throughout the Guadalquivir and Genil valleys, and in the 2nd century Hadrian created the ideal conditions to ensure and stabilise the supply of wheat and other staple products, including olive oil in the food distributions to the plebs of Rome, which further favoured the extension of land dedicated to olive growing. The agricultural policy of Emperor Hadrian had in the *Lex Olearia* an important legislative measure aimed at supplying olive oil both to the city of Rome and to the armies and inhabitants of other provinces of the Empire. To satisfy the government's demand for oil, the law obliged every olive tree owner or lessee to sell a third of their harvest to the State -an eighth in the case of land with tax privileges- at the price prevailing in the region, that is, upon payment by the Treasury of the normal market price. At the end of Hadrian's rule, the *diffusores olearii*, in charge of collecting and supplementing the amount of oil regularly received by the state for the *annona* became more important, putting an end to the large chain of middlemen and

bringing about a drastic decrease in the final price of oil. Subsequently, the production and export of Baetic olive oil -also renowned for its high quality- remained at very high levels until the 3rd century and continued to develop throughout the Lower Empire.

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Olive oil, icon of culinary fusion between the New and the Old World

During the colonisation of America, the Spanish introduced olive oil to the new territories, with it being one of the first ingredients to reach the New World. Not only that, but they also brought the olive plants and the production techniques. Its cultivation spread rapidly throughout South America and olive oil became the ingredient that best represented the culinary crossbreeding between the New and the Old World, and a benchmark of what we now call primary globalisation. Francisco de Aguirre de Meneses, the first mayor of Santiago de Chile, travelled to the Indies in 1536 and accompanied Pedro de Valdivia on the expedition that conquered that region (1540), where he ordered the planting of olive trees in Peru, Chile and northern Argentina. From this legacy is preserved the historic four-hundred-year-old olive tree located in the department of Arauco, in the province of La Rioja (Argentina), declared a natural monument.

Established in 1565, the Manila Galleon -a set of ships that crossed the Pacific Ocean once or twice a year carrying goods, spices and treasures between Manila (Philippines) and the ports of New Spain in America, and which gave its name to a trade route that linked three continents for 250 years- was a key player in the Spanish conquest and the olive oil trade. Such trade consolidated Spanish dominance in the region, facilitating cultural exchange and forging an unprecedented global trade network. In 1600, the Dutch attacked and sank the Spanish ship San Diego in the waters of the Philippine archipelago. Four hundred years later, jars of between four and 15 litres containing olive oil were recovered from the wreck. The globalisation of flavours at some point allowed ingredients such as olive oil to leave the holds of ships and take root on Philippine soil in dishes of clear Hispanic heritage that today form part of the archipelago's cuisine.

The conquest of Mexico by Hernán Cortés between 1519 and 1521 was important for the history of Mexican cuisine, as Spanish foods and ingredients such as olive oil, rice, wheat, oats, onion, garlic, coriander, oregano, cinnamon and cloves arrived in the country and immediately began to be integrated into the Mexican diet. The famous Spanish

conquistador brought olive trees with him to the New World, attempting to replicate Spanish cultivation techniques in Mexico. The Aztec codices, documents from the colonial period, mention the introduction of the olive tree and the use of its oil. Although the colonisers initially faced difficulties due to climatic and soil differences, they eventually managed to establish thriving olive tree plantations.

In Peru, the olive tree landed in the hands of the wealthy Don Antonio de Ribera, who transported several selected olive stakes as a precious cargo. His wife, Doña Inés Muñoz de Ribera, Francisco Pizarro's sister-in-law, married to him in second marriage, was the only woman who formed part of the contingent of rough men who travelled with the Extremaduran conquistador from Seville to Panama and later to the land of the Incas on 26 January 1530. Inés, a peasant woman of mettle who became one of the most powerful women of the Viceroyalty of Peru, has gone down in history for having brought to Peru the first wheat seeds -from which the first hosts were made for the masses that began to be celebrated in the Andean country- and olive tree seedlings, establishing herself as a sort of Peruvian Ceres. A cultivated and intelligent woman, Doña Inés, who arrived in Cajamarca in 1532, planted the first olive trees on her hacienda in San Isidro, where the Dominican monks took care of the orchard. It is said that Friar Martin de Porres himself, now a venerated saint, was the one who planted those olive trees that today stand tall and proud.

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The pantry of Isabel the Catholic...

The Simancas Archive contains a handwritten record of the larder, and table service, of Queen Isabel the Catholic in 1490. This document gives an idea of the food that reached a European royal table two years before the great transfer of food between the Old and New Worlds began. The extensive list is made up of flour, sponge cake, wine, vinegar, olive oil, salted fish -probably cod and herring- salt, cheese, olives, almonds, sole, fish patties, pomfret (horse mackerel) and tuna, conger eels, mullet, sea bass, groupers, salmon, needlefish, bonito, squid, sea bream, hake, octopus, pickled fish, lamprey, sturgeon, sorrel, oysters, laurel, honey, grapes and peaches, eggs, meat from peacocks, chickens, rams, goats, pigs and calves, bacon, mustard and lard. To all of these we must add those provided by game, the main protagonist of medieval cuisine: deer, roe deer, partridges, pheasants, quail, rabbits, hares, etc. It is a limited larder for kings, but it contains almost all the products that were then available in Europe. As for the way these foods were cooked, there was

never a shortage of the very popular *manjar blanco* (blancmange), which the queen was apparently very fond of. The recipe -contained in the work *Libro de guisados, manjares y potajes* (*Book of stews, dishes and pottage*) by Maese Ruperto de Nola, the enigmatic cook of King Hernando of Naples- calls for cooking a hen, which is then shredded in eight pounds of goats' milk, eight ounces of rice, half a pound of rose water (juice of rose petals distilled in a still) and a pound of fine sugar. Queen Isabel was also fond of the *manjar real*, similar to *manjar blanco*, but made with leg of mutton cooked in water with saffron to make it yellow and frayed; and of the *mirrauste*, a sauce made with toasted and crushed almonds mixed with breadcrumbs and an ounce of cinnamon, all boiled in water with pieces of roasted pigeons and chickens and served covered with sugar and cinnamon.

... and the favourite dish of Queen Isabel II

As the Spanish saying goes: "*Con gallina en pepitoria, bien se puede ganar la gloria*" ("*With hen in pepitoria, you can win glory*"). We are talking about a classic of Spanish gastronomy that appears in *Don Quixote* by Cervantes and *El Buscón* by Quevedo and has been recognised by the Spanish Academy of Gastronomy as the most traditional dish in Madrid. The word *pepitoria* refers to those stews that are made with all edible parts -including offal- and is a way of cooking different meat dishes, usually poultry such as chicken or hen. A historical recipe whose origin is not very clear -its roots could be Arab or French- and whose ingredients include extra virgin olive oil, saffron, garlic, bread, onion, egg yolk, almonds, white wine, parsley, salt and pepper. This hearty dish of unique flavour and texture reached its peak of popularity throughout Spain in the mid-1800s, during the reign of Isabel II. In fact, it is said that it was one of the Queen's favourite dishes, so much so that the writer and journalist Ramón Gómez de La Serna said that he did not know whether Isabel II "was a queen in *pepitoria* or a *pepitoria* of a queen". A very famous anecdote occurred in 1868, according to the Madrid Academy of Gastronomy. When the Spanish monarch was determined to cross the border by train from San Sebastián, a general exhorted her: "I beg your majesty to reconsider and retrace your steps, for the crown of glory and the laurel of victory await you". To which the queen, with great sarcasm, replied: "Glory for those who want it and the laurel for the *pepitoria*, I am going to France".

Cervantes, olive oil collector for Felipe II

Speaking of Cervantes, the immortal author of *Don Quixote de la Mancha* spent some years surrounded by olive trees when he worked as an olive oil collector for the Spanish Armada of King Felipe II. In *Cervantes en su vivir (Cervantes and his life)*, the biography of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra by Jean Canavaggio, we read: "At the beginning of June 1587, Cervantes was in Seville, after having said goodbye to his wife in circumstances that were not well known. Perhaps frustrated in his literary aspirations, and unwilling to devote the rest of his life to tending his mother-in-law's olive trees and vineyards, perhaps attracted by occupations more in keeping with his desire for independence, Cervantes took advantage of the preparations for the naval expedition against England, decreed by Felipe II, to get a job as commissioner in charge of the supply of wheat and olive oil to the fleet, under the orders of the commissioner general Antonio de Guevara. Provided with this position, he travelled the roads of Andalusia for the requisitions that he had to carry out, very badly received by rich peasants and prebendary canons, even more reluctant after the disaster, in the summer of 1588, of the Invincible Armada". Cervantes, who was imprisoned in the Córdoba town of Castro del Río, describes the landscape of the olive-growing areas like this: "It is a thick, fertile, and partly reddish earth; it stretches out in spacious meadows, rises in hills, and breaks into valleys, arranged as if by nature, as well as by the influence of the sky to raise these trees so fresh, so full, so beautiful, that when they show their green, golden and black fruit, colours that take on the mature and old, and sometimes they are all together, it is one of the most pleasing sights that can be enjoyed".

Catherine de' Medici, a refined gourmand

An overwhelming personality, Catherine de' Medici, one of the most powerful women of the 16th century, was one of the driving forces behind the first gastronomic revolution that laid the foundations for French cuisine. When her husband became King Henry II of France in 1547, an era of splendour at court began. Advised by the army of cooks, confectioners and vintners she brought from Italy, a wedding gift from the Pope and the highest nobility, she organised magnificent feasts and banquets that were not only a way to entertain her husband, but also a way to impress and enhance the monarchy, as well as the best way to keep the nobility busy and distract them from the conspiracies.
The festivities lasted for weeks and included food, music, tournaments, dance, theatre, poetry and even ephemeral architecture. On arrival at the palace of Fontainebleau, she asked the courtiers to organise a different show every day. At her court, ladies and gentlemen sat together and used cutlery: her tableware, with cut rock crystal dishes and vessels, was among the finest of the Renaissance. Before her arrival, the fork was not even known, and she introduced its use after learning about it from Venetian merchants who brought it back from Constantinople. Catherine -who believed in the aphrodisiac power of certain foods- also introduced a taste for pasta in its many forms and presentations, artichokes -popular in Venetian cuisine- or spinach prepared 'Florentine style'. She was also responsible for the arrival at the French court of ice cream, which was eaten as a dessert, the use of eau-de-vie and liqueurs as culinary ingredients and the separation of sweet and savoury flavours in the kitchens of the palaces and castles. Thanks to her, the French discovered dishes such as duck à l'orange, onion soup, chicken in wine, consommé, pheasant with grapes, *vol-au-vent* and puff pastries, as well as sugar sculptures and a myriad of sweets and confectionery. But undoubtedly her greatest contribution to Gallic gastronomy was the use of olive oil, which Catherine brought from Tuscany, and which was used profusely at the luxurious banquets held at the palace of Fontainebleau.

Charlemagne and the Abbey of San Antimo, a tribute to EVOO

Emperor Charlemagne, known as the father of Europe for his relentless drive to expand and unite the territories of the Old Continent, is also credited with a story related to EVOO. On one of his journeys, in the heart of Tuscany, he realised that his army had contracted a strange virus that was making them hopelessly ill. One night he had a vision in which an angel told him to distribute to his men a concoction made with local spices, local herbs, olive leaves and extra virgin olive oil. After preparing the infusion, all of them were healed immediately. In gratitude, in 781 he founded the Abbey of San Antimo, one of whose outbuildings is a small room where EVOO made from early Tuscan fruits is still produced today, to the delight of visitors and parishioners alike.

Napoleon, an emperor of simple tastes

Still on the subject of history's great conquerors, it seems that Napoleon Bonaparte's airs of grandeur and his aggressive expansionist policy did not correspond to his culinary tastes. According to Louis Joseph Marchand, one of his valets, the self-proclaimed French emperor who feared cats "was only fussy about bread and preferred the simplest dishes: lentils, white beans, green beans -which he adored, but was afraid to eat in case he found strings that reminded him of a hair, which always upset his stomach- and potatoes prepared in any way, even boiled or roasted over coals. For his breakfasts and lunches, he preferred a good soup -the hotter the better- and a nice piece of boiled meat to all the complicated and succulent dishes his cooks could cook for him". The dinners were more elaborate, but without sophistication. A slice of Parmesan or Roquefort cheese closed his meals. If there was any fruit, he ate little. He was also not a great lover of coffee, and never drank any alcohol.

But Napoleon's favourite dish -as Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne, his private secretary from 1798 to 1802, wrote- was *poulet* a la Provence: chicken seasoned with olive oil and onions, which he ate almost every day. A recipe that is also the subject of a legend. According to it, Napoleon asked his chef, Dinand, to prepare a meal to celebrate his victory over the Austrians at Marengo (Italy). Since they had requisitioned the Napoleonic army's food supplies, there were hardly any ingredients to satisfy the future

emperor's desires, not even butter! So Dinand sent people to the Italian countryside to find something to prepare the food. They returned with a chicken, olive oil, some mushrooms, tomatoes, eggs and crayfish caught in a local river. Dinand added a few rations of bread, some staples he had on hand (garlic, onions) and some brandy. *Poulet* a la Marengo was born. On his return to Paris, Dinand tried to improve the recipe by using white wine instead of cognac and omitting the crayfish. Napoleon, who was very superstitious, instructed the chef to prepare the dish in the original way, without any deviations.

A real menu and the world's shortest healthy recipe?

Located in south London, Hampton Court is one of the most impressive palaces in England. There is an extensive wing where you can visit the kitchens, and where more than 12,000 meals a day were prepared to feed the entire court -some 460 people-. Several rooms were used for food preparation and cooking. The largest, with a spectacular central chimney, was used to roast whole steers. Every year, 1.3 million logs were burnt on the various fires in the kitchens.
In royal palaces, banquets were an important part of court life. It was not just about eating -the more the merrier- but about displaying the monarch's opulence and power. Exotic foods demonstrated wealth, while the seating arrangements reflected the court hierarchy. As well as chasing skirts, Henry VIII of England, founder of the Anglican church and the most famous monarch of the Tudor dynasty, also loved to eat without measure, a fondness that led to obesity. His courtiers enjoyed a wide variety of food, with freshly butchered and roasted beef and the luxury of being able to choose from a menu of dishes containing around 5,000 calories a day. The Tudor court enjoyed meat on an almost daily basis, which was a privilege at a time when protein usually came from smoked, salted or cured products.

Around 400 courtiers were entitled to two meals a day, served at 10.00 and 16.00: the highest-ranking courtiers ate in the Great Watch Chamber, the lowest-ranking in the Great Hall. A strict set of rules, drawn up by the Lord Chamberlain, dictated where diners sat and what they were entitled to eat. In the Great Hall, diners sat under the 'spies' -carved faces painted on the ceiling- which reminded courtiers and servants not to gossip. For the humblest servants there were few options, and food was part of their wages. Each meal had two courses served in portions that were shared between four people. Diners used napkins to cover their laps and table manners were very important. It was considered impolite to finish everything on the table, especially since others relied on leftovers, which were distributed at the palace gates.

But in addition to meat, royal diners devoured other viands such as citrus fruits, almonds, olives and olive oil from the Mediterranean. Yes, EVOO was also present in the crowded pantries, along with a host of other foods, many of them from far away: sugar from Iraq, ginger from China, spices from Africa and India... The royal garden, on the other hand, was home to rare varieties of fruits and vegetables.

So the Tudors also ate plump, juicy olives, as described in *The Good Huswife's Jewell*, a 1597 work by Thomas Dawson. A cookbook that contains possibly one of the shortest -and healthiest- recipes in history: *Olives and capers on a plate, with vinegar and olive oil*. In that year Elizabeth I, daughter of Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII, reigned, having restored Protestantism and repulsed the Spanish invasion. Elizabethan larders were stocked with olives and capers, but no tomatoes or potatoes. Bananas were a curious fruit that often served to entertain and make people laugh. There was no tea, coffee or chocolate. The part of the book entitled *Sallets for Fish Daies* contains the recipe for this 400-year-old Tudor-style olive and caper salad, which still holds true today. Pitted olives, capers, extra virgin olive oil and white wine vinegar. Pure Mediterranean Diet.

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The unusual beauty rituals of Empress Sissi

Elisabeth of Bavaria, better known as Empress Sissi, was arguably the world's first female *influencer*. Way ahead of her time, the woman who was dubbed "the most beautiful woman in Europe" was obsessed with maintaining her 50-kilogram weight and preserving her famous wasp waist of just 47 centimetres -she was 172 centimetres long-. At a time when cosmetics were unheard of, the penultimate Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary was committed to innovative body care and found gymnastics to be one of her favourite activities. A keen sportswoman -she also practised horse riding, fencing and swimming- Sissi ordered that all her palaces be fitted with backbends, horizontal bars and rings hung from the ceiling, following a pattern of exercises that she copied from circus performers. Her regular gymnastic exercises included the trapeze, weights and skipping rope, with which she finished her daily fitness routine. The constant exercise and dieting kept her looking youthful despite her four pregnancies. As for her diet, she created her own protein diet based on raw meat, chicken broths, venison, partridge and veal, and never lacking in milk at any time of the day. The slender and beautiful empress with long hair was already practising fasting or intermittent eating, which is so fashionable nowadays, by fasting cures to keep the scales under control. She compensated for her cake binges -she loved sweets- with strict diets that she followed with an iron discipline. Among her unusual beauty rituals, one stood out above all others: every night, the empress would take a bath of warm water with olive oil to keep her skin soft and smooth, a treatment that is nowadays applied in spas.

Olive oil to anoint a king

Returning to England, the oil used to anoint King Charles III at his coronation on 6 May 2023 -based on that used at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II seven decades earlier, in 1953, and whose formula has been used for hundreds of years, according to Buckingham Palace- was consecrated in Jerusalem. Made from olives harvested from two olive groves on the Mount of Olives, one at the Monastery of Mary Magdalene and the other at the Monastery of the Ascension, the fruits were pressed outside Bethlehem and the resulting olive oil was perfumed with other essential oils -sesame, rose, jasmine, cinnamon, neroli, benzoin and amber- as well as orange blossom. However, earlier versions included civet oil, from the glands of this small mammal, and ambergris, from the intestines of whales. The cruelty used to obtain it and the need to protect wildlife had raised serious concerns among British subjects, so it was decided that the formula for King Charles's coronation holy oil should not contain any animal ingredients. An oil that "reflects the King's familial and personal connection to the Holy Land and his great care for its peoples," said the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby. What better ointment to welcome a new monarch •

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The Torres Brothers

become one in the name of EVOO

By Alfredo Briega Martín

In *'Torres en la cocina'* (*Torres in the Kitchen*), their popular TV programme, the Torres brothers, Sergio and Javier, explained how to make the most of seasonal produce with original, tasty and affordable recipes for everyone, extracting the maximum yield with the minimum of manipulation. In their open, educational and cultural kitchen, the customer is the main protagonist of their own gastronomic and sensory experience. For them, the dish is language and is the means of communication between chef and dine. A cuisine of values and flavours that combine tradition and modernity, accompanied by their characteristic personal touch and unmistakable creative stamp. A well-matched couple who also answer our questions together and in unison... because these twins look so much alike that they think (almost) the same.

"EVOO inspires us above all to cook, to create"

Hermanos Torres (Sergio and Javier Torres)

Restaurant Cocina Hermanos Torres, restaurant Dos Cielos Madrid by Hermanos Torres and restaurant Eldelmar Hermanos Torres

3 Michelin Stars

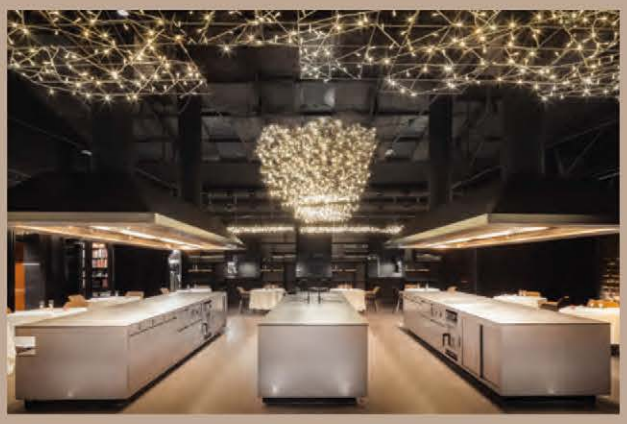
"We have EVOO in our DNA, at home we have always cooked a lot with olive oil"

1 — When did you first try olive oil and what was the experience like?
We carry EVOO in our DNA because in our house we have always cooked a lot with olive oil, both sweet and savoury. The torrijas of Santa Teresa, the anise doughnuts, the creams that our grandmother, who was from Linares -a town in the heart of Andalusia-, used to make for us... it's a memory that has always stayed with us.

2 — Finish this sentence. Olive oil inspires us...
It inspires us above all to cook, to create.

3 — Your favourite dish with olive oil
There are many, but bread with tomato, EVOO and a little *fleur de sel* seems masterful to us.

4 — Dip into it. Your favourite extra virgin olive oil is...
Right now, one from Les Borges Blanques -a small municipality located in the province of Lleida, Catalonia-, a cooperative that is producing a marvellous, brutal EVOO.



5 — What three foods would you take with you to a desert island?
Extra virgin olive oil, salt and pepper.

6 — Which foodie trend do you hate the most?
Fast food, we don't like it and we think it's unhealthy.

7 — What do you like to talk about when you're having dinner with friends?
Food and restaurants, cinema, sports... but also where we would like to go on holiday, family... There are so many topics!

8 — The city you would go to again and again for a meal
San Sebastián (Basque Country, Spain).

9 — A song to cook with
We love music, whenever we cook we always play indie music, rock & roll, classic and modern songs... music helps a lot when cooking.

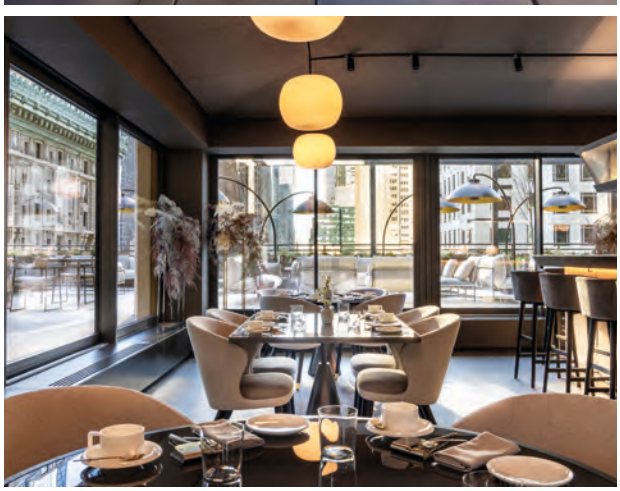
10 — Drink that goes best with your cuisine
Wine, white or red, or even a beer •

The Renaissance of Private Clubs

The new and exclusive temples of fine dining

By Pandora Peñamil Peñafiel

In a world of digital connections, private clubs have re-emerged as an oasis of exclusivity, community and personalized experiences. These spaces, which once symbolized the traditional elite, have been transformed into epicentres of networking, culture and wellness, attracting a new generation of professionals and young creatives. With menus designed by renowned chefs, private tastings and exclusive culinary events, private clubs are redefining dining pleasure. From New York to Barcelona, passing through London, Paris, Mykonos or Rome... welcome to a new concept of hospitality.



NEW YORK
Living for the city

We begin our journey in the heart of Manhattan, where The Core Club is located, one of the most exclusive private clubs in the world, a true haven for those looking for something beyond luxury: memorable experiences. Since its founding in 2005, this establishment has become more than just a networking space, it is an ecosystem designed for the global elite, where art, culture and wellness converge in perfect harmony. But there is one pillar that stands out above the rest: gastronomy.

Located on the top four floors of 711 5th Avenue, The Core Club occupies 18,000 square feet and features another nearly 2,000 square feet of outdoor terraces offering panoramic views of Manhattan and an unparalleled skyline. Also on the 18th floor, restaurant 555 welcomes members to a harmonious and airy space, filled with natural light both from the surrounding terraces with their panoramic views and from an impressive central skylight. During the day, the restaurant features a modern Mediterranean menu, showcasing Italian chef Michele Brogioni's obsession with cooking seasonal produce, with a special emphasis on fresh pasta, as well as raw and fish dishes. As day gives way to night, the restaurant becomes an upscale dining destination, moving

from an á la carte menu to a frequently changing fixed-price set menu, allowing the chef to work even more closely with suppliers to source zero-kilometre products. In fact, the restaurant sources many of its ingredients from local farms, including the organic flour it uses to bake fresh bread. All the cheeses come from Italy, along with the one element that Brogioni's cuisine cannot do without: extra virgin olive oil.

As the Italian-born chef with extensive experience in Michelin-starred restaurants in Italy, Russia and France says, "in Italy, life is centred around the table, where you discuss the important things with family and friends; it's where you close deals, where you create your memories; where you are your best self". "For me, the tables at Core are like those Italian tables, places where members can feel relaxed, comfortable and confident," emphasizes Brogioni, who is also in charge of Culinary Lab on the 17th floor, an intimate 17-seat room that offers dinners by Michelin-starred guest chefs; and Leo's Speakeasy, which serves small plates inspired by global flavours that can be accompanied by a refreshing cocktail made on the spot by one of its mixologists and enjoyed outdoors on one of its spectacular terraces where live music is always playing.

With an annual fee of around $50,000, members of this exclusive club can also enjoy champagne tastings at The Wine Library or taste some of the wines from an immense wine list carefully selected and supervised by sommelier Yannick Benjamin.

The hotel is complete with the highest level of fitness and wellness services, including the *Dangene Medical Spa*, known worldwide as the most advanced skin care equipment in the industry, as well as a 40-person screening room and theatre, an art gallery with temporary exhibits, a state-of-the-art fitness centre and game and coffee bar, meeting rooms and private dining rooms, and luxurious suites available for members and guests.

LONDON
Cradle of private clubs

We landed in the City, where in the 18th century closed clubs for specific groups with common interests began to emerge, such as the famous White's Club (founded in 1693) or the Boodle's Club (1762), both in St. James's Street, which still exist today. These clubs established the model based on exclusive memberships, high dues and strict admission criteria.

Today, private clubs are still an institution in London, but they have evolved to adapt to the demands of the 21st century. This is the case of the Birley Clubs, currently made up of five private clubs, each one of them different from the other and with an absolutely unique spirit: Annabel's, Harry's Bar, George, Bath & Racquets and Mark's Club. The latter reopened its doors in September 2024, after a long renovation. Synonymous with sophistication and exclusivity since its founding as an alternative to the gentlemen's clubs of St James's in 1972, the redesign of the Mayfair institution has been personally overseen by Richard Caring, CEO of the Birley Clubs, who has carefully retained its typically British style while greatly expanding its personalized services.

Entering through the discreet Charles Street door, members -who pay an annual fee of €2,000 if they gain entry, which is a real hassle- are met by the welcoming reception area, enhanced by the classic oak flooring that now runs throughout the club. Works by the old masters synonymous with Mark's Club have been redistributed throughout the house, with the addition of a magnificent painting by

George Stubbs, which occupies a place of honour next to the entrance and flanked by the Mark's Club's beloved clock, an English Fusse from the 1900s.

The new open design of the first floor has turned the adjacent living room into a light-filled sanctuary, without compromising its sense of privacy. An original fireplace uncovered during renovations now anchors the luxurious and comfortable living room, whose cozy sitting area is papered with a unique version of a Morris & Co print that will be familiar to older members. Here, guests can enjoy coffees, teas, juices and a selection of fruits and pastries during the day, along with a menu of classic cocktails in the evenings, including Martinis prepared on a silver tray and Bellinis served in Murano glasses.

In the background, the dining room and the recently added conservatory form the heart of Mark's Club's gastronomic offerings. Seating up to 26 people, the former is a haven of carefully pressed tablecloths, bespoke formal wear and the finest British cuisine in the heart of London. Several Club favourites, overseen by chef Edwin Ockwell, take centre stage on the menu, such as the Mark's Club chicken pie and prawn curry; while Loch Duart smoked salmon

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and Dover sole are cut up on a trolley in front of diners; and dishes like the Mark's Club salad and Crêpe Suzette are finished at the table. The team's expert sommeliers are available at each and every service to match the dishes with the club's dynamic wine offer, which includes 60 references available by the glass, a carefully selected range of vintage clarets and Italian gems, as well as a growing range of ports and sauternes.

On the second floor, which welcomes us with the game room with a few backgammon pieces that remain untouched since its first opening, is the famous Mark's Club cigar lounge, which includes vintage editions, antique and collectible vitolas whose origins span decades, brands and countries. Guests can also participate in a more relaxed dining experience on the terrace, with an abbreviated version of the dining room menu, from Exmoor Caviar to start and Petit Fours to finish. For those wishing to dine in a more intimate setting, Mark's Club's two private dining rooms have also been completely redesigned, with The Country Room and The Portrait Room each now seating more than 14 guests. Designed for everything from personal soirees to networking events, each space has its own unique appeal, from the floral prints of the former to the old master paintings of the latter.

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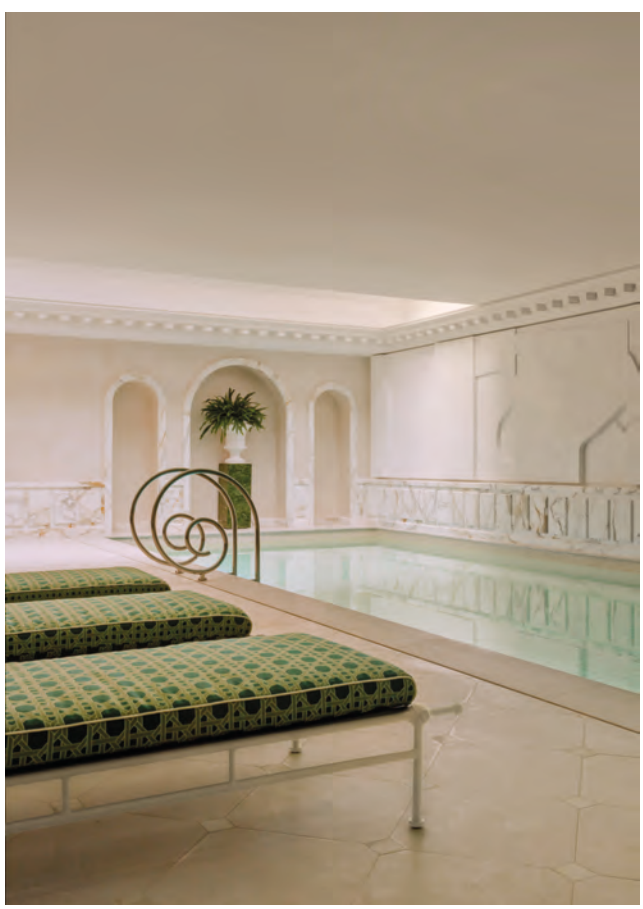
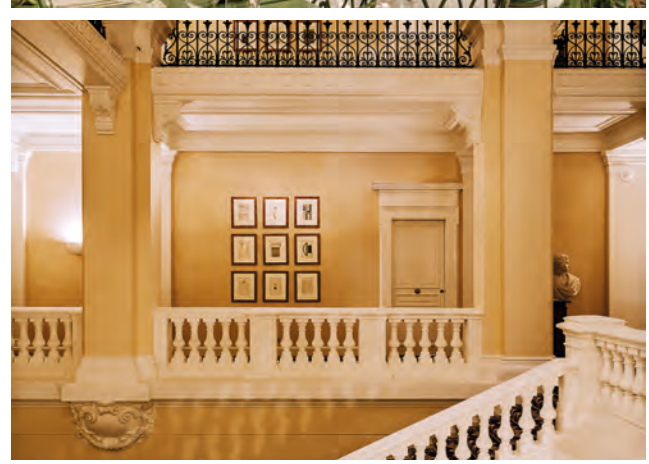
PARIS
Exclusivity in the city of light

We leave the fog of London to be guided by the light of the French capital. Nestled in its walled garden and completely redesigned by the famous Spanish-descent interior designer Laura Gonzalez, Saint James Paris is the only château-hotel in the capital. Both a member of Relais & Châteaux and a private club, this elegant and warm house is a true symbol of the French art of living, and offers 56 rooms and suites reminiscent of a collector's private home. Next to the cozy library-bar, the gastronomic restaurant Bellefeuille is an ode to nature with seasonal cuisine and organic vegetables from the Nonville garden, which has been awarded a Green Star by the *Michelin Guide* in recognition of its commitment to sustainable practices and eco-responsible cuisine. The menu, prepared by Chef Grégory Garimbay, focuses on fresh seasonal produce, including organic ingredients from the club's own farm. The restaurant's nature-inspired ambiance, with garden views and a design that evokes a winter partene, is perfect for enjoying delicate dishes inspired by nature.





When asked if he uses Mediterranean products in his restaurant, Garimbay tells us that he always uses EVOO from Domaine Lessatini, in the south of France, in his creations, as well as an olive marmalade that is served with the cheese. "Sometimes we use Taggiasche oil when we cook fish and make broths and, of course, as a condiment for raw vegetables and salads", adds the chef, who stresses that "extra virgin plays a fundamental role" in the club's cuisine.

To recharge their batteries, members of this club -who pay 10,000 euros per year depending on the type of membership they choose- also have access to a 15-meter swimming pool and the Guerlain spa and its treatment rooms. At once grandiose and intimate, the Saint James Paris combines history, refinement and *savoir-faire* to offer its guests an enchanted interlude in the heart of Paris.

BARCELONA
A Gothic experience

From light... to heat. Barcelona, Mykonos and Rome are some of the cities where we can enjoy Soho House, a chain of exclusive private membership clubs -with annual fees of around 3,000 euros- which opened its doors in 1995 in London, and has expanded globally with more than 30 locations worldwide. Founded by US retail billionaire Nick Jones, its aim was to create a unique space for creatives from the worlds of film, art, fashion and music. The idea was to offer a place for industry members to meet, relax and network, combining luxury with a more accessible and relaxed atmosphere than other traditional private clubs.

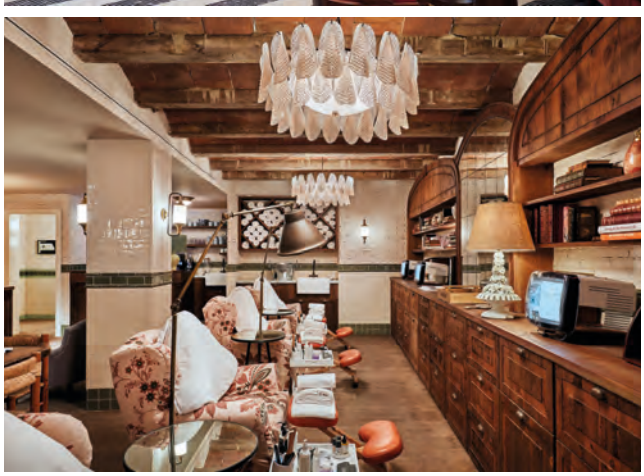
Soho House Barcelona is located in an impressive 18th century building in the historic Plaza del Duque de Medinaceli, overlooking the Port Vell marina. The house has 57 rooms of classic Catalan design, with influences from Gothic architecture and double-height vaulted ceilings, whose bedrooms have a modern yet rustic look, with lots of warm, Mediterranean colours and textiles with traditional Spanish prints. The bathrooms are bright and simple, with local tiles and vintage bronze fixtures. Furnishings throughout the house represent a mix of mid-century European pieces with local antiques and custom designs from the Soho House team.

The gastronomy at Soho House Barcelona stands out for its focus on high-quality Italian cuisine, with Cecconi's restaurant as a key point. Its menu includes homemade pasta, such as tagliatelle, ravioli and gnocchi, made with fresh, seasonal ingredients. Seafood lovers can also enjoy dishes such as sea bream with clams, which highlights the freshness of Mediterranean products, mushroom or truffle risottos, and wood-fired pizzas, which have become one of the restaurant's specialties. For those who prefer meat, the menu presents options such as roast lamb and veal, cooked with traditional Italian techniques, always accompanied by homemade *focaccias* with EVOO. In addition, on weekends, Cecconi's is famous for its brunch, where dishes such as eggs benedict are a highlight.

Located on the fifth floor, The Club Floor is ideal for members to eat, drink, meet, socialize and relax. Open 24 hours, this space features a lounge area and a bar with outdoor seating, with a menu inspired

by the Mediterranean basin, with locally sourced ingredients. The club, which serves breakfast, lunch, dinner and drinks until late at night, also features The Cabin Club, an exclusive space for members' events overlooking the Port Vell marina. On the terrace, The rooftop, overlooking the sea and the city, features a swimming pool with sun loungers, a bar and a lounge area where food is served from breakfast to dinner.

In addition, the club offers a screening room with velvet upholstered armchairs and footrests that screens independent and first-run movies daily for members; the Cowshed Relax Spa located in the lower lobby, available to both members and non-members, whose design is based on a traditional Spanish pharmacy and features four treatment rooms, four manicure and pedicure stations and an indoor pool; the fully equipped Cowshed gym, open to members and hotel guests; a workout studio, House Ride classes, a yoga studio, a steam room, laundry facilities and the House Press juice bar. The icing on the cake? The Green Room, a speakeasy open Thursday to Sunday from 10:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. *Shh.*.

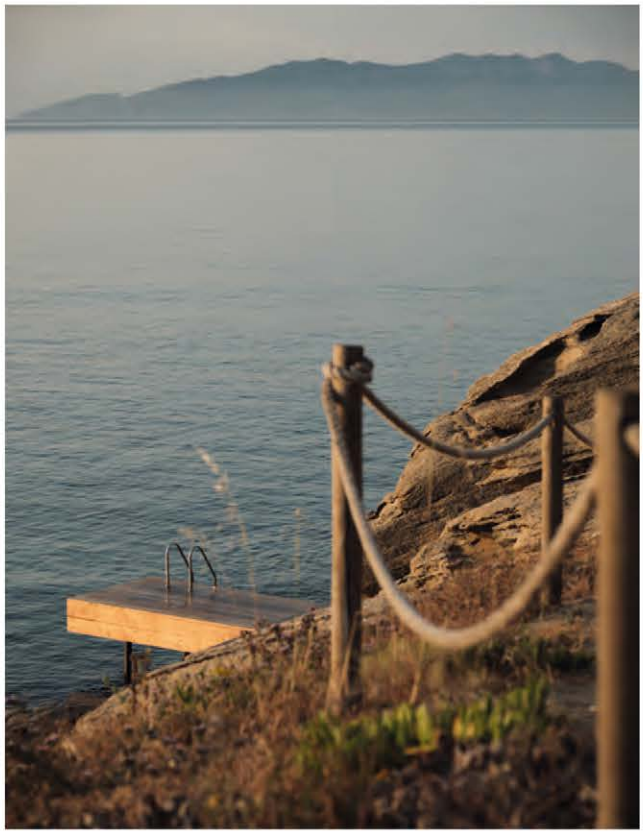


MYKONOS
Beaches with access to VIPs and celebrities

Flying over the Mediterranean and bordering the Aegean we arrive at Soho House Mykonos, which is located in a privileged enclave between the beaches of Paradise and Paraga, offering a perfect blend of relaxed luxury and wellbeing. This exclusive club is part of Soho House's expansion in Greece, transforming the former San Giorgio hotel into a modern retreat with a minimalist and natural aesthetic that highlights the beauty of Cycladic architecture. With just 45 rooms, some of which have sea views and private terraces, guests enjoy an intimate and exclusive ambiance.

The club is designed to facilitate both social interaction and privacy, with spaces such as the outdoor pool, Moroccan-style relaxation areas, and an outdoor gym where wellness activities, such as yoga and therapies, are conducted. The Soho Roc House experience also includes VIP access to the famous Scorpios beach club, known for its zen atmosphere during the day and for being a popular spot for celebrities as night.

A rustic, open-plan restaurant serves homemade, organic Mediterranean food, with a light sand-coloured floor, an open plaster kitchen, wooden shelves, dry stone walls and lounge furniture for relaxing. The menu includes dishes made with olives and EVOO such as raw sea bass, orange wedge, lemon, olive oil and yogurt; charcoal grilled eggplant, hummus, kale, lemon and olive oil; or blackspot seabream, cherry tomatoes, olives, fennel, lemon and oregano.



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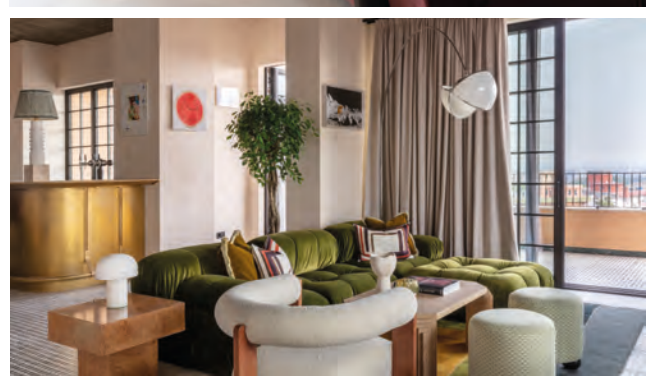
ROME
Infinite nights in the eternal city

We end our trip in the eternal city, specifically at Soho House Rome, the chain's first establishment in Italy, located in the vibrant artistic district of San Lorenzo. The modern ten-story building combines Soho House's signature style with a local touch, incorporating Roman design materials and details, such as its travertine and stucco facade.

The 10th floor rooftop offers 360-degree views of the city, with a pool, bar and two restaurants for members. Both establishments occupy three sides of the rooftop with sidewalks running along the edge of a large mural by artist Gio Pistone painted on the top. Brick tiles, Italian burgundy and green upholstered furniture, garland lights, a pizza oven, lemon trees and a glass curtain hanging over the dining room adorn the selection of Italian dishes prepared at both Cecconi's and House Menu restaurants. In the latter you can taste dishes made with olives and extra virgin olive oil such as burrata, leek confit, pickled tomato and EVOO pesto; spaghetti, burnt yellow tomato, stracciatella, black olives and crusco bell pepper; and paccheri, octopus ragout, cherry tomatoes, basil and olive oil.

We could say that the gastronomy in the world's most exclusive private clubs offers an elite culinary experience that combines creativity, high quality ingredients and a unique atmosphere, where every meal becomes an opportunity to socialize and enjoy the best in a sophisticated environment. You don't believe it? •



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MADE IN ITALY

The Provincial Council of Jaén awards the distinctive "Jaén Selección" 2025 to 6 conventional and 2 organic EVOOs

Oro Bailén, Picualia, Jabalcuz Gran Selección, Señorío de Camarasa, Melgarejo and Dominus Cosecha Temprana; and the organic O.Live Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Oleícola Jaén are the chosen ones

The Provincial Council of Jaén once again recognizes the eight best extra virgin olive oils of the province of Jaén with the "Jaén Selección" label. In 2025, six conventional and two organic EVOOs carry this quality seal: *Oro Bailén,* from Aceites Oro Bailén Galgón 99 (Villanueva de la Reina); *Picualia*, from the cooperative Agrícola de Bailén Virgen de Zocueca (Bailén); *Jabalcuz Gran Selección,* from SCA Sierra de la Pandera (Los Villares); *Señorío de Camarasa*, from SCA Santa Isabel (Torres); *Melgarejo*, from Aceites Campoliva (Pegalajar); *Dominus Cosecha Temprana,* from Monva (Mancha Real); and the organic *O.Live Extra Virgin Olive Oil,* from Hacienda Olivar de Santa María (Linares); and *Oleícola Jaén*, from Oleícola Jaén (Baeza).

The president of the Delegation of Jaén, Paco Reyes, has been in charge of making public the name of these eight extra virgin olive oils, which have been selected in a tasting-competition held at the Cortijo El Madroño de Martos (Jaén, Spain), and to which more than fifty early olive oils from Jaén have been presented. In this event, in which he was accompanied by the mayor of Martos, Emilio Torres; the deputy of Promotion and Tourism, Francisco Javier Lozano; and Brígida Jiménez, head of the panel of this tasting-competition, Reyes stressed that "we chose the Oscars of oil on the planet, since the province of Jaén is the main producer of quality oil in the world". For this reason, he congratulated the oil mills and cooperatives of Jaén "for the enormous work they have done to produce this olive juice, which is more and more appreciated and valued every day". A commitment to quality that "has spread like an oil stain", said Reyes before reading the decision adopted by the tasting panel.

These extra virgin olive oils have been selected among the 55 that this year have been presented to this tasting-competition -40 conventional and 15 organic- by 45 companies located in 35 municipalities in the province. The president of the Provincial Council has explained the novelties of this edition, such as the recognition of two organic oils instead of one, the advance of the dates of delivery of samples or the increase in the number of liters of the homogeneous batch to which the oils belong. "The increase in organic production, the advancement of the date of milling and the need to ensure sufficient production of recognized oils, have motivated these developments that come to recognize the growth and maturity that the sector has shown in relation to the production of early oils," explained Reyes. The president of the Provincial Council also thanked the members of the tasting panel for their work. "I know it has been very difficult to choose the best among the best," Reyes emphasized.

The eight "Jaén Selección" 2025 EVOOs will lead the promotion of extra virgin olive oil from Jaén that the Council of Jaén will carry out in the various tourist and gastronomic actions in which it will be present throughout this year, such as Fitur, Madrid Fusión, San Sebastián Gastronomika, the gala of the World's 50 Best Restaurants, Michelin Spain Gala, Salón Gourmets, Alimentaria or World Olive Oil Exhibition, in addition to other provincial, national and international tourism fairs and exhibitions or the First Olive Oil Festival of the province of Jaén.

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Jaén
PARAÍSO INTERIOR

Jaén selección | 2025

Extra virgin olive oils

Provincial Council of Jaén

The excellence of a region,
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QvExtra! International, the superheroes of EVOO

Doing things right always gets rewarded. Since 2013, more than 2,500 international awards have endorsed the good work of the members of QvExtra! International, an association in defence of quality EVOO that seeks to promote competitiveness among producers of extra virgin olive oil through an unequivocal commitment to excellence as a means of revitalizing the sector.

You might think that QvExtra! is just another association, but it is not. It is a proactive association, aware of quality and health, generous with its members and with the sector, and fun-loving by nature. Although from diverse backgrounds, its members have much in common:

1— They consider that brand creation is a value for their company and for the consumer.
2— They are convinced that having a distinctive seal of quality such as SIQEV serves not only as a self-control system, but also as a sales and differentiation strategy in the market. It should be remembered that SIQEV is the only seal that guarantees a fruitiness of more than 4 in its EVOOs and a natural antioxidant content of 200 ppm, when the community standard does not require anything about these parameters. Therefore, it is the only seal that ensures quality and health in equal parts.
3—They believe that working together for a common future is much more feasible than throwing accusations at competitors.
4— They know that taking care of the antioxidants in EVOO is synonymous with health.
5— And finally, the QvExtra! partner loves to have a good time and meet in pleasant environments, where sincerity is the only thing that matters.

The QvExtra! partner never tires of fighting for what they believe in. They do not accept imposition or give in to those who assure them that something is not possible. They don't complain, they just work and adapt to the demands of the norm. And improves them.

QvExtra!'s member is not selfish and thinks big. Since 2022, despite the fact that no one else had done so and without any financial support, QvExtra! has been forced to fight for a health claim in Europe that could be used on bottles of extra virgin olive oil. We are talking about the first claim related to the health benefits of EVOO, currently under study by the EFSA (European Food Safety Authority). Obtaining it would be linked to the SIQEV seal forever, since more than 500 analyses referring to all the self-control processes of this quality seal were provided in the technical dossier.

This is QvExtra! An inclusive and dynamic association for which nothing is impossible.

At QvExtra! we are delighted to welcome more partners who want to be part of this great adventure. For more information, contact:
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QVEXTRA! INTERNATIONAL

Trendy EVOOs!

Tell me how you dress and
I'll tell you what you're like

1.— In such a competitive industry, how do you differentiate yourself from the rest through your brand image? What are the aspects that make your EVOO unique?

2.— What does your packaging say about you?

3.— Times and consumers change almost daily. How do you adapt to new trends? Have you incorporated any innovations into your company recently?

4.— Health is a topic that matters to us... and extra virgin is health. It can also become a good tool for selling. What role does health play in your marketing strategy?

5.— Finally, what is your best-seller? If you had to choose one product from your portfolio to give as a gift on a special occasion, which one would it be and why?

ALMAZARA LA ALQUERÍA • ALMAZARAS DE LA SUBBÉTICA • ACEITES GARCÍA DE LA CRUZ • MUELA-OLIVES • LUQUE ECOLÓGICO • OLEO QUIRÓS • JACOLIVA • OLIVAPACIOS • LA PONTEZUELA • MOLINO DEL GENIL • LAGAR DO SOBRADO • ORO DEL DESIERTO • SAT SANTA TERESA

Almazara la Alquería

1. — Our main brand, La Alquería, reflects our roots in the Valencian Community, in the province of Alicante: a small rural community of a few houses, made up of one or several families, who were dedicated to exploiting the surrounding land, as well as to livestock farming activities. This is what is generally found in the inland areas of Alicante, which is where we come from, so the brand is firmly linked to our origins. We are a family company linked to the territory from which it comes and all our olive groves are dry land farms, high mountain, in a heroic olive grove that is committed to sustainability with our territory and the people who accompany us in it. In addition, we practice ecological agriculture and regeneration of soils and ecosystems, and we produce oils from native varieties of the Valencian Community, mainly Blanqueta, Alfafarenca and Manzanilla Villalonga, which are only found in our territory. All these aspects make our EVOO different and unique.

2. — We have tried to have a clean, fresh and modern image, but also adapted to the requirements of a quality product such as ours. All our packaging is opaque and protects the product from oxidation and any alteration caused by light or oxygen. Our philosophy is based on clarity, transparency and the transmission of the olive and Mediterranean culture.

3. — At Almazara La Alquería we are aware that the type of consumer has changed and that environmental aspects, CO^2 emissions, transparency, food safety and, especially, health, are now very important. For this reason, we take all these aspects into account when designing our products, producing our oils and, above all, in our crops and the way we handle them in the field. Ecological production, autochthonous varieties, packaging in different formats and materials, almost personalized packaging and shipping services... It's about relating in the best possible way with our fellow travellers, the clients. As for innovations, we have made a firm commitment to incorporate the bag in box packaging of some of our oils for next year because it is a more environmentally friendly packaging, better preserves the product and facilitates its recycling by clients; in addition to having a lower carbon footprint and environmental impact.

4. — For us it is fundamental to have a variety such as the Alfafarenca, which has levels of polyphenols above 700 ppm and the presence of oleocanthal, as well as oleic acid above 70.

5. — Without a doubt, La Alquería Blanqueta Ecológica. When I give EVOO as a gift, I choose two bottles, one of *Blanqueta Eco* and the other of *Alfafarenca Eco*, because both reflect the essence of our territory and our way of understanding life. The Blanqueta represents work: productive, tireless, resistant to drought and always bearing fruit, regardless of the vicissitudes of the year. For its part, Alfafarenca stands out for its resistance to cold, its chemical potential and its extremely high oxidative stability. Both varieties are a symbol of our Mediterranean culture, eternal and with so much history, with a future full of possibilities. Definitively, Mediterranean on all four sides.

www.almazaralaalqueria.com

Almazaras de la Subbética

1. — In a sector as demanding as the olive oil industry, differentiation through brand image and product quality is key. At Almazaras de la Subbetica, more than 60 years of experience endorse our commitment to excellence and innovation. Our essence combines tradition and modernity, without forgetting that the environment surrounding our olive trees is another factor that makes us unique: our olive groves reach in some cases 1,200 meters above sea level and are mainly made up of centenary specimens of the Hojiblanca, Picual and Picudo varieties, cultivated within a traditional framework that respects the balance with nature. The result is an EVOO of exceptional quality, great aromatic complexity and unmistakable flavour that not only reflects our commitment to excellence, but also our passion for the land.

2. — Our packaging conveys our values and our passion for the olive tree and the Subbética region, where every detail is designed to reflect our essence and commitment to quality. A clear example is *Rincón de la Subbética*, whose label evokes the uniqueness of the landscape where our olive trees are born. In addition, it incorporates distinctive marks that guarantee its excellence, such as the SIQEV seal and the PDO Priego de Córdoba seal, symbols of quality and authenticity. In short, our packaging tells a story: the story of a privileged land, a tradition handed down with pride and a product that represents us.

3. — Today's consumers are looking for products that combine taste, quality and health benefits. At Almazaras de la Subbética we are committed to this trend and have developed an innovative solution to meet the demands of an increasingly demanding public. Our latest launch is *Oleo Latte*, an extra virgin olive oil specially formulated to emulsify with milk or vegetable beverages, creating a creamy and delicious drink. This unique combination allows you to enjoy the benefits of extra virgin olive oil while sipping your favourite coffee or tea.

4. — At Almazaras de la Subbética, health is much more than an added value: it is one of the fundamental pillars of our communication strategy. We are convinced that EVOO is not only an exceptional food because of its flavour and versatility, but also an essential ally for well-being. Communicating its health benefits allows us to connect with an increasingly conscious consumer who is looking for products that take care of his health and provide quality to his diet.

5. — Each of our oils is unique and special, but if we had to choose a flagship product, that would be *Rincón de la Subbética*, a gift that is synonymous with quality, tradition and prestige. We are not the only ones to say this; it is backed up by the numerous awards and recognitions it has received, making it the most awarded EVOO in the history of Spain, a reflection of the effort, passion and commitment to excellence that characterizes our cooperative.

www.almazarasdelasubbetica.com

Aceites García de la Cruz

1. — Differentiation, in a market as saturated as the EVOO market, is a key element to position any brand. In our case, we want the product to transmit to the consumer its own personality, a differentiated quality and a sophisticated packaging that generates confidence in the product, our goal is to educate the consumer. The fundamental differentiation strategy consists of combining design, quality and price in order to transmit to the consumer how special our organic extra virgin olive oil is.

2. — With our packaging we try to convey what is inside the bottle, which is a completely natural olive juice that comes directly from the tree. That is why our design is predominated by vegetation, flowers and green branches. With this we communicate to the consumer that we pack nature and that our EVOO has green and fresh aromas and incredible flavours that will enhance the taste of each dish.

3. — The new trends revolve around healthy eating and in this sense EVOO has already demonstrated a great deal about it's worth. Our product portfolio includes flavoured oils with different flavours that make dishes more dynamic, as well as a wide variety of formats, having strongly introduced the bag in box, which is ideal for the preservation of the product.

4. — Health has been our main selling point for years. Olive oil is synonymous with health and wellness, the problem has been how to communicate it. Fortunately, more and more consumers are becoming aware of the benefits of EVOO and it is easier to reach them with this argument. The legal advances that may occur in labelling, in relation to this matter, will undoubtedly help us to reach our target with more force. We must bear in mind that the label is the element that is in contact with the consumer for the longest time and everything we can say about health on the label will be very positive not only for us, but for the sector as a whole.

5. — Our best-seller is our *Master Miller* organic EVOO, the perfect combination of quality, design and price. An excellent oil with an exclusive design that conveys the origin of García de la Cruz, and with a price that allows anyone to enjoy this product.

www.garciadelacruz.com

Venta del Barón

1.— At Mueloliva we understand that extra virgin olive oil is not just a product, but a sensory experience that connects with the roots of tradition and the passion for quality. To differentiate ourselves in such a competitive market, we have focused our strategy on three fundamental pillars: exceptional quality, sustainability and a deep respect for the origin of our products. Our brand, *Venta del Barón*, is a reflection of our history and our commitment to excellence.

2. — The packaging also conveys the exclusivity of our EVOO, positioning our product as a Premium oil, accessible but with a unique character. The elegant design, our characteristic clear cut glass bottle, refined typography and careful choice of materials reflect the quality found inside the bottle, inviting consumers to enjoy an exceptional product that is considered among the best in the world.

3. — Today's consumers are looking for more than just a quality product: they want a complete experience and values that fit their lifestyle, and that's what we try to offer in each of our extra virgin olive oils. To do this, we incorporate technology, sustainability and new experiences to better connect with today's consumers, who value authenticity and seek responsible products that align with their values.

4. — EVOO, with its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties and its ability to improve cardiovascular health, is a true nutritional gem, and our mission is to promote it as an essential ally in a healthy diet. That's why, for us, the first step is to educate consumers about the great benefits of extra virgin olive oil. We have incorporated new ecological oils with which we have managed not only to attract a more conscious public, but also to position our EVOO as an intelligent choice for those who seek to take care of their health without sacrificing flavour or quality.

5. — Our best-seller is undoubtedly *Venta del Barón*, a very complex, balanced and harmonious early harvest Premium EVOO in all its organoleptic attributes. Its uniquely designed packaging and its intense and sophisticated flavour make it a perfect gift for a special occasion as it is a gift that not only conveys the quality and exclusivity of our brand, but also shares a piece of our history, our values and our commitment to excellence.

www.mueloliva.es

Luque Ecológico

1. — Undoubtedly, the packaging is the first thing that the consumer perceives and, therefore, it has to transmit in a clear and impactful way everything that is behind the product (values, mission, philosophy). Care for details (packaging, design, textures, typography...) is what makes your EVOO unique and inimitable: flask model bottle -traditionally used in Spain for wine-, classic label design but with touches of modernity, recognizable corporate colours, genuine paper from sustainable sources and clear information for the consumer, especially related to environmental aspects.

2. — What we want to transmit through the design and packaging elements is the combination of tradition and modernity, quality, environmental respect, innovation, proactivity... When you buy a bottle of *LUQUE ECOLÓGICO EVOO* you should be able to transport yourself to our organic olive grove and feel surrounded by an ecosystem rich in biodiversity and, at the same time, know that it is a product of the highest quality that has been produced in compliance with the most demanding standards of quality and food safety, as certified by the presence of the SIQEV seal. Not forgetting that since 2008 we have been concerned about calculating our carbon footprint and we are committed to reducing it, information that appears on our labelling.

3. — The organic consumer has always been very critical and demanding, which is why we have had to be very alert since our beginnings 25 years ago, such as changing the inner coating of metal containers in 2014 to make them BPA-free. The latest innovation in relation to packaging has been to obtain FSC certified origin for the paper used in our labelling.

4. — Health has always been a key factor in reaching new markets and consumers, but in recent years, in the wake of the pandemic, its importance has increased. Consumers have become aware that food must nourish us in a healthy and safe way and, for this reason, organic EVOO is at the forefront of the market. And we must appreciate the effort made by QvExtra! to make the health claim related to our product clearer and more understandable to consumers, something that will reverberate throughout the sector.

5. — In our case we have a special affection for *LUQUE* *ECOLÓGICO Selección de Familia Picual* EVOO, a classic, because it was the first format that we made in early harvest from farms that have belonged to our family for generations. And, as always, remember... *Take a Walk On The Organic Side!*

www.luque.bio

Oleoquirós

1. — In our case, what we offer as the most positive attribute is the constancy, the homogeneity of the product, maintaining year after year very high-quality standards that make our customers loyal.

2. — For us, packaging is a fundamental element. The design of our iconic 500 ml. cylindrical can was the work of Rufino's mother, Margarita, who simulated in a drawing the falling leaves of the olive tree during the harvest, and the final artwork was created by his sister Natalia and his wife, Rocío. A design that was subsequently awarded a prize at the Biofach trade fair in Nuremberg.

3. — Every year we make changes focused on obtaining products of the highest quality, but the most significant was carried out a couple of years ago with the launch of a range of flavoured products thanks to the incorporation of a very versatile automatic packaging line that has given us the opportunity to expand products and, with them, to access new markets.

4. — Linking EVOO to health in a notorious way that can be reflected in its labelling is undoubtedly the unfinished business of the sector. It is very present in our products, as several of our clients require us to analyse the oleocanthal and polyphenol content of our EVOOs when choosing them for their packaging.

5. — I would definitely choose the set of two 500 ml cans of *Pago de Quirós*, which was designed in-house and is an exclusive format containing an organic EVOO of early harvest of Picual and Cornicabra varieties. A complex, elegant and balanced blend, intensely fruity, full-bodied and persistent in the mouth.

www.oleoquiros.com

Aceites Olivar del Valle

1. — We strive for excellence

Excellence starts with the production of the highest quality extra virgin olive oil. Our olive varieties are grown in ideal conditions that maximize their nutritional profile. We monitor every stage (growing, harvesting, cold extraction) meticulously because our focus is on quality not quantity.

The result is a brand image that stands out for its quality and a design that reflects the passion and dedication that goes into the production of out extra virgin olive oil.

2. — Packaging that tells a story

We use sustainable materials like silkscreen enveloped glass bottles and recyclable labels to luxuriously package our end product. The elegant yet minimalist packaging reflects tradition, innovation, and respect for the environment. The result is that the highest quality extra virgin olive oil we produce is packaged and presented appropriately.

3. —We are always innovating

At Aceites Olivar del Valle, we strive to stay on top of market trends. Recently, we incorporated innovations in polyphenol analysis and highlighted our virgin olive oil's particular benefits on our labels. Customers looking for a premium experience can choose our exclusively packaged personalized batches. A QR code allows the consumer to learn the history of our product, its awards and certifications, and its sustainable production practices. The QR code also exposes some suggested recipes.

4. — A Healthy Product is Our Priority Number One

At Aceites Olivar del Valle, we take pride in producing extra virgin olive oils that are rich in antioxidants. Science has proven that top quality olive oils like ours have natural anti-inflammatory qualities and contribute to cardiovascular well-being. We highlight all scientifically proven attributes via communication campaigns and have won many awards and certifications that confirm the health benefits of our extra virgin olive oils. So when you enjoy the different flavours of our various olive oils you are also benefiting from a multitude of health benefits as well.

5. — A Best Seller

Customers who are looking for a unique sensory profile will enjoy our limited edition *Magnolio 'Cru'*. *Magnolio 'Cru'* is an early harvest extra virgin olive oil made from carefully selected olive varieties. It has a flavour that perfectly balances fruitiness, spiciness, and bitterness. It can be purchased in an exclusively designed bottle as a gift suited for special occasions.

www.olivardelvalle.com

Jacoliva

1. — At Jacoliva we have professionals with a long personal career in the world of design and extensive knowledge of the international market that help us improve our brand image. Our EVOOs are unique because they mostly come from a native variety, the Manzanilla Cacereña, which also provides unique nuances in the preparation of coupages. In addition to this, there are other varieties of our own production, such as Coriana, which we have been offering since 2024.

2. — It speaks of modernity, but without losing our deep roots – three generations of olive growers. It also speaks of a unique natural environment in the north of Cáceres, of the olive oil culture of these poor and mountainous lands, of a rural society with a great olive-growing tradition. We try to ensure that our extra virgin oils reach consumers in the best conditions to share our culinary gems with them, making a prosperous future possible for our land and its people.

3. — E-commerce allows us to reach many homes around the world, which has forced us to greatly improve packaging for home deliveries, protecting the product while communicating with consumers. The traditional market is also a challenge for us, incorporating recycled packaging, maximizing the use of labels made of sustainable materials and trying to achieve the lowest possible environmental impact of our marketing process.

4. — At Jacoliva we have been supporting for many years public and private initiatives related to research on the positive effects of eating with EVOO daily. For example, *El Lagar del Soto* was used in the *April* study published in *Clinical Nutrition*, the official journal of the European Society of Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism. As partners of QvExtra! we support each and every one of the initiatives that the association promotes in this field, trusting that they will have a great impact on the sector in a short period of time. At a regional level, we sponsor health-related initiatives in which we believe that EVOO must be present, such as Congresses, meetings of professionals, etc.

5. — Without a doubt, *El Lagar del Soto*, both with PDO and the BIO version, a unique 100% Manzanilla Cacereña EVOO. And to give as a gift on a special occasion I would choose *MO*, another organic monovarietal Manzanilla Cacereña dressed in luxury packaging that comes from high mountain olive groves and, therefore, very rich in oleocanthal.

www.jacoliva.com

Olivapalacios

1. — At Olivapalacios we differentiate ourselves by the quality of our EVOO and our commitment to authenticity and origin. Our extra virgin olive oil *Palacio de los Olivos* comes from our own olive groves, cultivated with traditional techniques but optimized to guarantee an oil of the highest quality. Our brand image reflects this excellence, being modern but respectful of the olive-growing tradition, which positions us as a reliable reference in the international market.

2. — Our packaging design conveys elegance and purity, two values that define our brand. The bottle, in neutral colors and with minimalist design details, reflects our philosophy of quality and naturalness. In addition, it is a functional packaging that protects the oil from light and air, guaranteeing the preservation of its organoleptic properties. We want the consumer to be attracted by the aesthetics and, at the same time, to understand the respect for quality and tradition that characterizes our product.

3. — At Olivapalacios we are very attentive to market trends and changing consumer needs. Recently, we have incorporated state-of-the-art technology in the oil extraction process, which allows us to obtain a top quality EVOO in a more efficient way. We are also expanding our offer with new varieties of oil in addition to the traditional ones -Picual, Arbosana and Arbequina- to meet the demands of consumers who are looking for gourmet options that are beneficial to their health.

4. — Health is a fundamental pillar of our strategy and EVOO plays a key role in it. We know that more and more consumers are looking for foods that provide health benefits, and extra virgin olive oil is recognized for its antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and cardioprotective properties. That is why our marketing strategy emphasizes not only the quality of the product, but also its health and wellness benefits. This allows us to connect with a public that is more aware of the importance of a healthy and balanced diet.

5. — Our best-seller is undoubtedly the 500 ml. case of the Picual variety. Its elegant presentation makes it a perfect and appropriate detail for any event and celebration. In addition, it is a gift that reflects the exceptional quality and care with which we elaborate our products, ideal for those who appreciate quality gastronomy and the benefits of extra virgin olive oil.

www.olivapalacios.es

Finca La Pontezuela

1. — At Finca La Pontezuela we differentiate ourselves by our genuine passion and unwavering dedication to excellence in every drop of our extra virgin olive oil. Our brand reflects the perfect harmony between quality, tradition and constant innovation that drives our daily work. We believe that EVOO is not just a product, but an experience that connects people to the land, the history and the authentic flavours that we offer in every bottle.

2. — Our packaging is a mirror of the values we hold at La Pontezuela. Elegance and subtlety are combined with a firm commitment to sustainability and respect for the environment. Every design tells a story, of our heritage, which we want our clients to feel before they even try the product.

3. — In a world where tastes and trends evolve at great speed, our ability to innovate is key. We actively listen to our clients to create solutions tailored to their actual needs. 2025 marks the launch of our most innovative reference: the bag in box format for our *Finca La Pontezuela* line. This packaging preserves the quality of the oil better than traditional formats and offers the consumer a more practical, cleaner and more accessible experience. It is a step into the future, designed for those looking for quality without compromising comfort.

4. — Health is not only a sales argument for us, but a commitment to those who have confidence in our products. Each message we transmit highlights the healthy properties of EVOO, from its ability to care for the heart to its role as an ally in the kitchen for a balanced diet. Our objective is to inspire our clients to choose wellness and taste, making extra virgin olive oil an essential element in their lives.

5. — Undoubtedly, *5 Elementos Singulare* is our most precious jewel: a limited edition that encapsulates the essence of five decades of passion and experience. This collectible EVOO not only represents an unparalleled taste but is also a tribute to our heritage. It is the ideal gift for those who value exclusivity and luxury in a product that tells a story of dedication and love for the land. Although our entire range of products is perfect for any special occasion.

www.lapontezuela.com

Molino del Genil / Lagar do Sobrado

1. — Our EVOO is backed by a family tradition that has demonstrated for generations the good work in the field, transferred to the manufacture of oil from the fruit of our own olive groves. Our brand *Molino del Genil* has undergone several changes of image as the company has grown, until now, when we have united our two brands, *Molino del Genil* and *Lagar do Sobrado*, in a more modern design that connects much better with the consumer, achieving a single brand image.

2. — Our packaging responds to a modern design but at the same time traditional, as is this family business that has been growing and at the same time renovating itself with the entry of new generations. We have unified the image of our two brands, which are currently presented in dark glass, PET and bag in box. This last 5-liter format was introduced a couple of years ago in response to client demands in terms of convenience of use and conservation of the product. It should be noted that we use *Tintoretto Gesso Greaseproof* with recycled paper and greaseproof treatment for the labelling, incorporating information for the recycling of the container.

3. — We never stop growing and innovating, and we incorporate the latest advances to our production system. As we have a very high production, we amortize the equipment at a speed that allows us to renew them very often, always incorporating the latest technologies. Thus, we have replaced all the mills with the most advanced models and every year a centrifuge is also replaced. And this year the laboratory has almost doubled in size, with everything necessary to analyse with ever greater precision both the incoming olives and the oils that are produced.

4. — Our company is very clear that EVOO is synonymous with health, so we take the utmost care throughout the production process of our oils, which have analytical values above the average quality standards. Cleanliness in the factory is our best letter of presentation.

5. — The product that best represents us is the gift box, with three 500 ml. bottles, one of each variety we produce: Picual, Arbequina and the coupage of both. It is an ideal gift option because, both for new and veteran consumers, it shows the differences between oils according to the olive variety they come from.

www.molinodelgenil.com
www.lagardosobrado.com

Oro del desierto

1. — We have always wanted to convey an image of tradition, sustainability and commitment to quality. The packaging we use has been changing over time, with cork, then a non-refillable stopper, a dark bottle... But, undoubtedly, our bottle with a metal label is our seal of identity, everyone recognizes *Oro del Desierto* by this bottle that combines everything that our values represent.

2. — Precisely all of the above, a humble and traditional bottle, but at the same time useful, ergonomic and with a captivating image, in a design that combines tradition and avant-garde at the same time.

3. — Two years ago we renewed our logo, as well as the graphic identity of labels, cans and other packaging, modernizing them and making them more attractive, but always preserving the values that have brought us this far for 25 years. We continue to use glass and cans as packaging for our Premium EVOO.

4. — Our EVOOs, being born in a desert and under water stress, are characterized by a very high polyphenol content compared to the average (Arbequina with more than 500 mg./kg., for example, which is usually a variety with few phenols in general, but not here). Obviously, this has its importance in the health properties of an extra virgin, but I think people choose a brand of EVOO more for the enjoyment of its sensory quality and that is the way, excellence in all senses. If it is accompanied by health properties, so much the better; but we are not selling a medicine, but a food of exceptional quality.

5. — Our 500 and 250 ml. coupage with metallic label is undoubtedly our product with the highest turnover, accounting for 50% of total sales between both formats, even more in some markets such as Japan, where 85% of sales are concentrated in this product, or Canada, with almost 95%.

www.orodeldesierto.com

SAT Santa Teresa-Aceites 1881

1. — The image of *1881* is very powerful visually, it always stands out. Our EVOO is a blend of the most important varieties of Osuna (Seville) -Manzanilla, Hojiblanca and Lechín- harvested in the first days of the campaign so that their usual and personal nuances can be perceived with greater intensity, and transfer to the palate notes of fruits, herbs and almonds that define the organoleptic profile of *1881* olive oil. One of the factors that make it unique is the limestone composition of the soil. Aceites 1881 is tradition, flavour and quality in every drop.

2. — It says that, despite being very traditional, we package our oil in a wide variety of formats -polyethylene, glass and cans- and in capacities ranging from 250 ml. to 5 l. In addition, we incorporate several quality seals on the label, since we belong to QvExtra! and we are certified in the Integrated Production by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Andalusian Regional Government with the brand *Gusto del Sur.*

3. — We always try to listen to our clients and offer them what they ask for. The latest has been the launch of a very green and fresh extra virgin olive oil, *1881 Cosecha Temprana*, presented in a 500 ml. Marasca glass bottle.

4. — In our commercial strategy we prioritize the health of our consumers, and we take care of every detail in the process of elaboration of our EVOO in order to obtain a product with a high content of oleic acid and a great presence of polyphenols with high antioxidant power, so beneficial for health. Whenever we show the oil mill or do a tasting, we always emphasize the health benefits of extra virgin olive oil. There are facets of EVOO that are unknown to consumers, who are pleasantly surprised to learn about them.

5. — The most widely sold container is the five-litter carafe for reasons of economy. As a gift I would opt for the *Esencia* set, a green cardboard box containing three 500 ml. can: one of *1881 Alta Selección,* one of *1881 Edición Limitada* (green and fruity coupage) and one of *1881 Esencia* (100% Hojiblanca early harvest).

www.1881.es

Niko Romito

By Pandora Peñamil Peñafiel

and his connection with EVOO, an ingredient that he knows how to elevate to the nth degree

Extra virgin olive oil plays a fundamental role in the creations of Niko Romito, chef of the renowned Reale restaurant (3 Michelin stars) and gastronomic consultant for Bvlgari Hotels & Resorts. For Romito, this ingredient goes beyond the line of seasoning and becomes an essential component that brings depth, balance and authenticity to his dishes. From its innovative use in the artisanal bread that serves as one of the first experiences in Reale, to its application in more complex recipes, EVOO becomes a vital tool to shape a cuisine that perfectly blends tradition and the avant-garde. In this interview, the chef shares his passion for an ingredient that connects him to his childhood memories and is essential to create a cuisine that respects the Italian essence and elevates it to new dimensions. Even his dogs are named *Pane e Olio*!

"I can't remember a family meal without extra virgin olive oil!"

Bread is a dish in itself at Reale. Is the same true for olive oil? Are bread and EVOO the "perfect marriage"?

At Reale, bread is just another dish on the menu and we serve it alone so that diners can focus all their attention on it. It is the result of intensive research on flours, sourdough, fermentation, hydration... I have been researching bread for more than ten years and I am still working on it; it's a great passion. We used to serve the whole loaf, made with solina flour and potatoes, but now, since last year, we serve a slice of bread made with einkorn and ancient grains flour.

Bread and extra virgin olive oil are definitely the perfect marriage. In fact, I'd say it's one of my favourite combinations of all time! At Il Ristorante - Niko Romito, the Italian restaurant I imagined for Bvlgari Hotels & Resorts, we always serve warm bread with extra virgin olive oil from Lazio. Diners, whether in Shanghai or Paris, feel immediately transported to Italy!

What role does extra virgin olive oil play in Reale? Is there a particular dish you like to prepare with this ingredient?

EVOO is a very important element in my dishes. I do not consider it just a condiment, but an ingredient in itself, so I use it with parsimony. I add it to bring a precise flavour to a dish and, therefore, it must be in perfect balance with the other ingredients. For each dish I carefully choose the type of extra virgin olive oil to use. Its range of aromas is very wide, depending on the variety and the producer, going from the freshest herbal notes to the fruitiest or even nuts such as walnuts.

Extra virgin olive oil is also a fundamental ingredient at Laboratorio Niko Romito, my bakery and pastry laboratory, where we produce different products for home consumption. In the *Pandolce* -a leavened cake that I created inspired by *Panettone* but conceived to be healthier and consumed all year round- I use an emulsion of organic almonds and extra virgin olive oil. This makes the dough soft, creamy and light. EVOO is such a versatile ingredient, it can be used for both savoury and sweet dishes!

In your personal life, what does this Made in Italy product mean to you? Do you have any special memories of this food from your childhood?

I can't remember a family meal without extra virgin olive oil! It was always on our table... A thick slice of bread with extra virgin olive oil was -and still is!- one of my favourite snacks. Today, in my kitchen at home, I always have some excellent extra virgin olive oil, some pasta in the pantry, lemons and *Parmigiano Reggiano* in the fridge to prepare a simple but delicious pasta dish whenever I can. I cook the pasta, drain it and season it with raw EVOO, lemon zest, grated Parmigiano and, from time to time, some chili.

When we talk about haute cuisine, Niko Romito's name rings a bell. What would you say to a diner who reduces Italy to pizza and pasta?
Italy cannot be condensed into a single dish! What makes Italian cuisine unique is its rich and diverse heritage of regional cuisines. Each region has its own traditions and flavours. Even if we consider "only" pasta, the variety of forms, recipes and flavours is impressive. Some Italian dishes have become iconic worldwide, but there are many others that remain true hidden gems. I am passionate about Italian tradition and that is why I decided to collaborate with Bvlgari Hotels & Resorts and take my idea of Italian cuisine around

We have done OUR BEST to PLANT the FUTURE

NOVOLIVO

In 2013 San Giuliano started the Novolivo Project: planting more than 600 new hectares of olive groves.

We have cleared and reclaimed much of this sun-kissed land of our Sardinia.

We planted thousands of olive seedlings, applying new agricultural methods, and waited with bated breath.

We involved universities and research centers to experiment with the most innovative agronomic techniques. Along the way, we met many wonderful people.

We have increased energy savings and reduced water consumption.

We eliminated all synthetic pesticides. And we unintentionally created an oasis for animal species.

We have discovered that with patience (a lot, actually), we could obtain an excellent organic extra virgin olive oil that respects the land and our workers.

AGRI COLTURA 100

Finally, we have had the pleasure of being included by Agriculture100 in the list of the 100 best innovative and sustainable farms in Italy.

And now what's next? For the future we still have a lot to do.

SAN GIULIANO ALGHERO

Pride of Sardinia.®

the world, a classic but contemporary cuisine. I let traditions evolve thanks to new culinary techniques and bring a modern approach to them, but always respecting their essence and values. It is a cultural project, not just a gastronomic one.

You are also involved in training through L'Accademia Niko Romito. What advice would you give to any of your students who want to follow in your footsteps in today's competitive culinary world?
Never stop studying, always keep a curious mind, learn from every experience and seek your own path. You need a deep knowledge, but also a great determination. Nowadays, it is not always easy to stay focused on your own ideas, we are constantly bombarded by images and we run the risk of following fashions instead of our instinct and vision.

As executive chef of the most exclusive restaurants of Bvlgari Hotels & Resorts, you offer Italian haute cuisine to diners from all over the world. What are the star dishes of these establishments?
As I mentioned before, this project aims to bring Italian gastronomic culture to the whole world, while redefining the concept of luxury. The "apparently simple" *Spaghetti e pomodoro* or *Cotoletta alla Milanese* are among the most appreciated dishes worldwide, but people also enjoy discovering lesser-known regional recipes. I created *Antipasto all'Italiana* for this reason; it is a selection of eight different specialties, with some classic and timeless recipes and others more seasonal, showing the diversity of Italian cuisine, from the Piedmontese *Vitello Tonnato* to the Neapolitan *Frittatine di Pasta*. It is undoubtedly one of the best-selling dishes as diners love to try different flavours.

If you had to choose a city to live in based on its gastronomy, what would it be?
That's a very difficult question! Tokyo has a vibrant food scene, where you can find deep-rooted culinary traditions and, at the same time, exciting innovation.... There is so much to discover there! Also, I love their approach to food, both from the chefs' side and the diners' side.

There are other cities that I also like, such as Paris, for example, from its bakeries to its historic restaurants, brasseries or the new wine bars... there is so much to

discover! I love Milan, where I always feel at home; Rome, which is my second city... But I can't see myself living anywhere else but Abruzzo. Casadonna and the surrounding mountains give me the peace that allows me to create.

Some critics define your cuisine with terms like "minimalist vision" and "scientific precision". Is there room to let loose and improvise in your restaurants?
The creative process that leads to a new dish always combines intuition, improvisation, technique and knowledge. It is the raw material itself that guides me through the process, and when I start working on a new dish, I never know where I'm going to end up. When a new dish is "born", it can continue to evolve and sometimes a sudden intuition can lead to a change in that dish. But precision is essential in my cooking: precise and intense flavours, precise and unexpected textures, and a precise yet dynamic balance.

You are a lover of art, architecture and design. Which artists inspire you when preparing a menu or a dish?
Inspiration can come from different sources, from a traditional dish, a new technique or a work of art.

I wouldn't say that I have a specific artist that I look to for inspiration, the main source of inspiration for me remains the raw material, especially the vegetable universe...

One artist with whom I had a deep connection was Ettore Spalletti. I have always loved his paintings and had the opportunity to meet him in person. His works look like simple monochromatic paintings, but in reality they are the result of the superimposition of layers and layers of colours, providing a unique texture and depth of colour. I immediately found a connection with my cooking, where I like to focus on a single ingredient, which I transform into different preparations that I then superimpose to create a harmonious set of textures and flavours. Seemingly simple dishes, which hide a lot of complexity.

How would you define the "perfect" diner?
Respectful, curious and intelligent. Someone who does not stop at first impressions, but is able to sense the potential of a dish and reflect on the message it transmits. Having a lot of experience in haute cuisine helps, but it is not necessary to understand my cuisine, which has different reading levels. In fact, I have to admit that I have received very interesting feedbacks even from "novice" diners.

Finally, what menu would you choose for a last supper?
Bread and olive oil, for sure! Then some good anchovies or an excellent *prosciutto crudo*, followed by *ravioli* or *tortellini* handmade in brodo.... I love broths and soups! But I don't like to think of a last supper, let's rather think of an excellent comforting dinner! •

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OLIVE OILS FROM SPAIN

Olive oils from Spain: solid demand at record prices

The work of the Spanish olive oil sector and its continuous promotional efforts have been fundamental to maintain the consumption of Spanish olive oils in a scenario of high prices.

The Organization intensifies its promotional activities in seven priority markets in preparation for the return to normality after two exceptionally short seasons

The Interprofessional Organization of Spanish Olive Oil began its work in the field of promotion in 2008. And it did so with a very clear mandate from the sector: it was necessary to increase the sales of Spanish olive oils in the world, but at the same time generating a greater value. A simple approach that posed a major challenge for a sector that had become accustomed to the convenience of bulk and to leaving the task of delivering its oils to the end consumer to others. For this reason, the problem did not consist exclusively in investing funds in promotion, but in generating an image, a powerful idea to promote among consumers who until then knew little or nothing about Spanish Olive Oils. The aim was to create the concept of Spain as a synonym of leadership in terms of quality in a key food in the Mediterranean Diet.

Seventeen years later, progress is more than evident. We have managed to double our exports, and we have also managed to dominate the main world markets, where Spanish Olive Oils have increased their presence on the shelves in an ostensible way. The dominance of Spanish companies in the trade flows of this product has become even clearer. But it has been the last two campaigns that have shown us the extent to which promotion is capable of transforming the consumer's appreciation of the product. Because we must remember that 17 years ago we were running the risk of our food becoming just another commodity. Another food with almost no differentiation, where price determined demand rather than quality or origin.

However, the production crisis we have experienced in the last two seasons has shown that the effect on the consumer of the promotion has been even greater than anyone expected. And we can measure that with figures in a fairly simple way. Let's start with the price. If we analyse what has happened to prices in the last two seasons, we observe that the average price reached, at some points in the 2023/24

Nobody would have dreamed of attending these average prices for our oils, but almost none of us would have expected to sell so much oil at these prices

season, 8.50 euros per kilo, which meant price variations close to 180% over the prices recorded in Spain before the production crisis. Nobody would have dreamed of attending these average prices for our oils. But almost none of us would have expected to sell so much oil at these prices. And the truth is that it has sold a lot and well, to the point of practically exhausting the availabilities of olive oils. Most importantly, this is a phenomenon that has been observed in the main markets, starting with Spain, our largest client in the world.

Curiously, last season, when record prices were achieved, closed with an increase of 17.8% over the previous year's figures, with 410,700 tons. However, this figure represents a drop of 18.1% compared to the average of the last four seasons, when they easily exceeded half a million tons. And it should be remembered that in the 2020/21 season, in which the domestic market absorbed almost 600,000 tons, it closed at an average price of 3.8 euros per kilo. Export markets have been somewhat weaker, with total sales of 742,500 tons, practically the same figure as in the previous season. But that's where the similarities end. Sales value jumped almost 60% compared to the 2022/23 year-end data. Specifically, sales of EUR 6,000 million, compared to EUR 3,800 million a year earlier, which was also exceptional. The most obvious interpretation is that the consumer of our olive oils in the world has assumed that he had to pay more -in fact, much more- to continue enjoying a unique food, which they have refused to give up. Thus, the average price at which they were exported exceeded 8 euros per kilo.

The surprising case of the USA

Although it is a remarkable phenomenon as a whole, it is worth focusing on some markets, such as the United States, which has produced some truly surprising figures. In the year in which we have sold at the highest price in this market -at an average of 8.78 euros per kilo- we have achieved an increase in the volume of oil exported of 13.47%, compared to the figures of the previous year. North American consumers have not only paid more for our oils but have also increased their purchases significantly. The USA alone has spent more than 1,000 million euros on Spanish olive oils in the 2023/24 campaign. And this market has left us with another great headline: the price differential between our oils and those of our competitors has been reduced to a minimum at the end of the campaign. According to USA Customs data, the average price difference between our oils and Italian oils in those 12 months narrowed to 16 euro cents per kilo. A year earlier, the difference was 50 cents, while for the 2021/22 campaign it was 81 cents per kilo.

What do these figures tell us about two of the pillars of our industry in the world, our first and third largest clients? That we have made notable progress, positioning our oils in the markets, as we set out to do 17 years ago. We have succeeded in getting consumers to be willing to pay much more to enjoy our food, despite the competition from other vegetable oils that are much cheaper. And this is because consumers have found differential elements (quality, health, taste, etc.) that justify this economic effort. The same can be traced in other important markets such as Mexico, Germany, Australia or Brazil. But, on the other hand, the weakness we have observed in the Asian markets, led by Japan and China, makes us prudent. Now it is time to analyse what has occurred in each market and to draw conclusions and lessons learned. Because in promotion there is always a new challenge. We already know what we are capable of. Now we have to go a little further to continue to guarantee our future.

Photo Credit: Matt Hardy | Catarina Sousa | Ethan Brooke | Master Cowley

Australia's *Olive Routes*

Australia is a vast country, the same size as the USA, defined by a long coastline with narrow coastal zones, then it gets drier towards the centre of deserts. It is along the coastal fringe that the country's oleotourism has developed, radiating from the capital cities of each State. Do you want to discover Australia's Olive Routes? Here we go!

The climate of the southern States of Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, and New South Wales corresponds with that in countries surrounding the Mediterranean where olives thrive. International travellers will most likely arrive by air in Perth, the capital of Western Australia, or Adelaide, Melbourne, Hobart, Canberra, Sydney or Brisbane in the eastern States. In our exploration to seek and enjoy the whole array of olive oils, table olives and associated products, we will suggest tours which start from these population centres. Associated with all the suggested routes are many wineries and local, artisan food experiences, which can be enjoyed along the way. Migration to Australia has come from all parts of the globe and each culture has brought its cuisine which can be found in authentic enclaves and fusion melting points in the large cities and some country towns -Spanish, Greek, Italian, Middle Eastern, South American, African, Indian, Chinese and South-East Asian, just to name a few- it can all be found here!

Migrants from Europe brought the olive tree and there are records of small plantings in and around ports where the first ships arrived. The varieties naturally came from the home countries of the new Australians -mainly Italy and Greece-. The Mediterranean heritage has meant that olive oil and table olives are consumed in abundance with the population having one of the highest per capita consumption of olive oil outside the Mediterranean. Approximately 54,000 tonnes of olive oil are consumed a year with a population of 26 million giving per capita consumption of just over 2 litres. Approximately one third of the olive oil consumed in Australia is produced in the country and the quality is excellent. With the locally produced food, wine, beer, and the friendly Australian people who bask in the southern sunshine, the experiences for the gourmet traveller are diverse, high quality and great value for money.

In consideration of the aspirations of travellers we will categorise them into three groups; those who are looking for recreation, those who have a purpose such as seeking backpacker work or learning about olives, and the third group covering travellers who are on a business trip looking for product or trade. The destinations mainly cover the first group while the second and third group can find more specific information by travelling the routes suggested and looking for enterprises which can be visited by appointment to discuss their particular needs.

Every major city or town has either a tourism or information centre which will provide advice on local olive enterprises and activities, and of course you can search “olive oil” on the internet or any map application for the relevant location.

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Western Australia

One of the first recorded olive groves was planted in the town of New Norcia north of Perth. It is here where we will start our eclectic tour of the regions. In 1846 two young Spanish missionaries from Galicia established the monastery at New Norcia with its magnificent buildings juxtaposed in the Western Australian bush about two hours drive north-east of Perth along the Great Northern Highway. In the springtime, this drive shows the magnificent wildflowers for which the State is famous. Now a Benedictine Community, New Norcia offers a range of experiences from retreats to food and various styles of accommodation. Most importantly you can savour the olive oil from the trees planted at the monastery circa 1850 (for the full offering visit www.newnorcia.com.au). For those seeking a more spiritual activity the Comino Salvado pilgrimage traces the steps of one of the founders of New Norcia.

The region around Gingin, halfway to New Norcia, has numerous large commercial olive groves where visits can be by arrangement.

Heading south of Perth there is the famed Margaret River region which has many food, wine and olive destinations with the full range of accommodation for visits longer than a day. Worth a visit is Olio Bello (www.oliobello.com), an award-winning 320 acre certified organic olive farm. The property features a Mediterranean Cafe, gourmet tasting room, organic beauty, farm store with a multitude of olive derived products, and luxury lakeside glamping. Three hours from Perth the relaxing retreat is also close to the ocean. A little further down the road is Vasse Virgin (www.vassevirgin.com.au) which offers olive oil, artisanal soaps, and do-it-yourself workshops.

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South Australia

It is a long way from Perth to Adelaide, the capital of South Australia. The adventurous can drive across the Nullarbor Plain, the time-poor will travel by air. Adelaide, known as "the city of churches" where many bells toll in the evenings, is the centre of much food, wine and olive activity. There are day or longer excursions to the north to the Barossa Valley and Clare Valley. To the south McLaren Vale and the Fleurieu Peninsula offer food trails and to the east the Adelaide Hills have interesting destinations. The Hills are pockmarked with olive trees which have grown wild, each has a white number painted on the trunk to identify the owner who will tend and harvest it. Woe betide any interlopers who steal the crop! In Adelaide, Rio Vista Olives (www. riovistaolives.com.au) offers at their shop in Glynde a range of extra virgin olive oils produced from their groves in the Adelaide Hills.

In the Barossa Valley near Nuriootpa is Australian cooking icon Maggie Beers's Farm Shop (www.maggiebeer.com.au) where her full range of culinary products, including her extra virgin olive oil, can be found. The farm is the hub of many activities which Maggie has initiated in her lifelong commitment to healthy food.

Kangaroo Island Olives (www.kiolives.com.au) offers farm stays, grove experiences and olive products for sale. The third-largest island of Australia is off the Fleurieu Peninsula and accessible by ferry from Cape Jervis, about one and a half hours drive from Adelaide.

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Victoria

One can drive from Adelaide to Melbourne. The seven hour journey will take you past The Big Olive at Tailem Bend, some major olive groves in the area of Keith and Coonalypn, and smaller ones in the regional towns of Dimboola and Halls Gap near Horsham in Victoria. These groves can be visited by appointment but apart from Hall's Gap in the Grampians there is little for the afficionados and accommodation is sparse.

If you have more time, you can travel the northern route along the Murray River through Berri, Renmark, Wentworth and Mildura before swinging south to Melbourne. The Murray-Darling River complex provides much needed water for the irrigated horticulture industries on the very dry continent of Australia. In Renmark is the historic homestead of the Canadian Chaffey Brothers who designed the Renmark and Mildura irrigation systems. Established in 1880 and called Olivewood, the estate's orchards include one of the first commercial olive groves in the region. The museum (www.nationaltrust.org.au/places/olivewood) has displays from the original olive oil mill.

South of Melbourne the Mornington Peninsula has much to offer in food and wine. The Green Olive at Red Hill (www.greenolive.com.au) is a farm which produces estate wines and olive products, has a restaurant and shop, and offers food experiences including picnics in the grove. Just down the road is the Montalto winery and upmarket restaurant (www.montalto.com.au) which offers its own extra virgin olive oil and for those in need of a bit of exercise and artistic stimulation after lunch there is a sculpture walk. The Cape Schanck Olive Estate (www.capeschanckestate.com.au) offers high quality extra virgin olive oils from Spanish, Italian and French varieties for those wanting to explore the flavours from a different hemisphere and climate to add to their taste memory.

Heading north from Melbourne along the Hume Highway there are exciting regions in the foothills of the Victorian Alps along the King Valley, formerly a tobacco growing area with a rich history influenced by Italian migrants, now renowned for its cool climate wines, with the centre piece being The Olive Shop in Milawa (www.theoliveshop.com.au). The shop has tastings of local and regional olive oils, table olives, and many other tasty foods to fill a picnic hamper or victual a lodge for a week at the snow. Milawa Cheese is based in the town and offers a range of locally made cheese and cheesy lunches. Across the Hume Highway to the west is the town of Rutherglen, the home of Australian fortified wines such as port and muscat. A little further west on the Murray River is Yarrawonga which boasts the enterprising Rich Glen Olive Oil, a family business started in 1998 (www.richglenoliveoil.com). The company now has stores in Yarrawonga, Echuca and one soon to be opened in the tourist town of Bright. Seeking to expand the distribution of their products covering food, homewares, olive oils and skincare, they are worth visiting for those who are potential stockists and for travellers looking for some work. September is the month to travel for those wanting to time their visit to coincide with the major food trade exhibition, Fine Food Australia (www.finefoodaustralia.com.au). The event alternates between Melbourne and Sydney and will be in Sydney in September 2025.

New South Wales

If you continue to drive up the Hume Highway you will arrive in Sydney, the capital of New South Wales, famous for its harbour bridge and uniquely designed opera house. Once you have feasted around the city's eclectic restaurants and bars, lazed on a boat in the harbour, and surfed at Bondi or Coogee beach, you may feel like a road trip up the Hunter Valley, destination Pukara Estate Olive Oil Company (www.pukaraestate.com.au). From Sydney you will travel north along the central coast before you swing inland to enjoy the food and wine of the Hunter Valley. Pukara has three providore stores, the one near Muswellbrook is in the olive grove where visitors can experience Pukara olive oils, table olives, and a range of skincare and food products. The company also has provedore stores in Pokolbin and the city of Newcastle.

For accommodation in the Hunter Valley the traveller may try the luxury villas and a spa at Adina Vineyard and Olive Grove (www.adinavineyard.com.au). In the aspirationally named town of Lovedale, Adina is located about halfway between Muswellbrook and Newcastle. Wine and olive oil tastings are offered and there is an array of lunch and dinner venues close by.

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Tasmania

Tasmania has a healthy food culture and several boutique olive groves producing excellent cool climate extra virgin olive oils. One such establishment is Ashbolt Farm (www.ashbolt.com.au) which produces extra virgin olive oil and elderberry products about an hour's drive north-west of Hobart, the capital city of Tasmania. Ashbolt Farm has a stall at Salamanca Market in Hobart every Saturday from 8.30am – 3:00pm.

Queensland

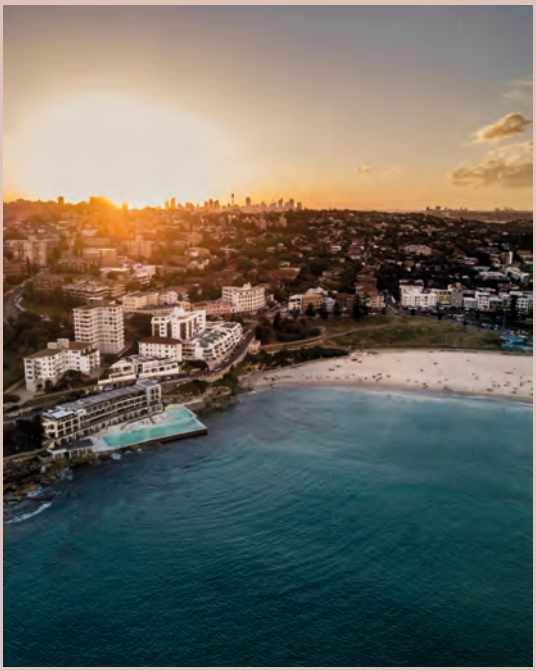
Brisbane is the capital city of Queensland, the State which covers the north-eastern part of Australia, which has a mostly sub-tropical, humid climate not conducive to olive cultivation. However, there are microclimates where olive oil and olive production has been successful on a small scale. Bunnyconnellen (www.bunnyconnellen.com.au) has found one such spot just north of Toowoomba which is around two hours west of Brisbane. The event venue is in the High Country Hamlets Region which offers multiple activities of a physical nature such as hiking, and for those seeking a more hedonistic experience; food, distilleries, and wineries. Bunnyconnellen offers on site and nearby accommodation.

Significant in the Australian Olive Industry and also situated just north of Toowoomba is The Olive Centre (www.theolivecentre.com) in Carbalah. A major supplier of equipment and services, the centre has extensive information helpful to olive industry aspirants and supply chain suppliers and can be contacted online.

We wish you have a happy and productive visit to the Australian olive industry destinations!

By Simon Field

Founder of International Extra Virgin Olive Oil Savantes (www.savantes.org), olive farmer, and author of *Fruity, a Little Bitter and Spicy – A producer's view of the global olive oil industry, African Olive,* and the *Savantes Complete Olive Handbook – olive oil and table olive production to sales* (all available on Amazon) •



The 1,001

uses of the olive tree

By Cristina Revenga Palacios

Furniture, beauty and personal care items, perfumes, infusions, sports flooring, car parts, pillow stuffing and even cell phone cases. The olive tree and its elements -its wood, its flower, its leaves and the olive stone- offer us an infinity of uses that attest to the magic that surrounds this infinite tree. Join us on this journey as we discover the 1,001 lives of the olive tree.

The Romans already said of this tree: *olea primum ómnium arborem est*, something like the olive tree is the king of all trees, since it represents immortality and with it they marked the conquered territories.

In addition to its delicious extra virgin olive oil, we can take advantage of the olive tree for everything. As they say in Spain, *"del cerdo, hasta los andares"*, which means that absolutely nothing is wasted from this animal, and the same happens with the olive tree. Wood can be used to make furniture that lasts almost forever: tables, chairs, sideboards, kitchen or bathroom countertops, stair treads, parquet flooring, coat racks, headboards and even lamps. It is also commonly used to make kitchen utensils, due to its high resistance and antibacterial properties, or to create sculptures and decorative figures. In turn, thanks to their hardness and immense beauty, many other small objects are manufactured, such as office pens, ballpoint pens or letter openers, in the stationery segment; shaving sets, facial cleansing brushes or mirrors, as beauty and personal care products; bracelets, necklaces and rings, as jewellery accessories; photo frames, chess boards, hourglasses, ashtrays, key rings, musical instruments, etc., are also produced. And the possibilities are endless. In fact, smartphones can also be protected with cases made of olive wood, a vintage yet cool option for those who value design above all else.

In addition, olive wood from pruning is ideal for stoves and fireplaces due to its high calorific value, providing a large, lively flame that is very resistant and generates a low amount of ash. Did you know that this type of firewood offers a really delicious taste and smell to barbecues and roasts? If, on the other hand, you are more of a spoon person, the stews or broths will be much tastier if you cook them with the fire of this firewood.

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» *Olive leaf*

The truth is that the curiosities surrounding another of the components of the olive tree, its leaves, are also infinite and very interesting. Evergreen, silvery-green, soft and beautiful, olive leaves are recognized for their multiple properties and health benefits. Olive leaf tea, for example, is one of the most common and traditional infusions consumed in Mediterranean villages. For centuries, it has been used to treat conditions and diseases such as the common cold. Research shows that olive leaf constituents -mainly oleuropein- can have positive beneficial effects on ailments such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Moreover, a hydrogel based on olive leaf extract has recently been developed for the treatment of ulcers and wounds that are difficult to heal, protecting them and stimulating their healing.

But what many people don't know is that olive leaves are also good for animals. This is the case of sheep, since incorporating olive leaves into their diet provides them with an additional benefit as they are carriers of crucial bioactive compounds, such as phenols, tocopherols and carotenoids, improving the yield, antioxidant capacity and fatty acid profile of the cheese made from the milk of this endearing mammal. Curious, isn't it? Well, it also provides important benefits for our pets. In this sense, olive leaf extract is ideal for all dogs as a food supplement, especially to promote their cellular protection and strengthen their immune system. In turn, the strong antioxidant power of this product, which is due in particular to oleuropein, its high chlorophyll content, as well as the large number of secondary plant substances it contains, have a positive effect on the puppy's organism during the growth phase. It should be noted that oleuropein can also be used as a natural antioxidant in the feeding of white pigs, acting as a substitute for other chemical additives and improving the quality of the meat.

In addition, the incorporation of olive leaf extracts into the diet of Atlantic salmon has shown a marked improvement in aquaculture sustainability by increasing disease resistance. Isn't that mind-blowing?

As if this were not enough, olive leaf extract is an ingredient widely used in cosmetics and personal care products such as regenerating masks for face and neck, facial and hand creams, shampoos, and even hair dyes, providing strength to the hair and ensuring a professional coloration. Our teeth can also take advantage of all these benefits, since it is also used as a component of toothpaste, protecting them against cavities, or mouthwash, ideal for healthy teeth and strong gums, with a high purifying, antiseptic and antimicrobial component.

And from ingredient for cosmetic products... to vehicle parts. In fact, a large automobile company has explored the use of olive branches and leaves discarded during olive harvesting for use in the manufacture of more sustainable vehicle parts. The use of olive residues to manufacture these parts significantly reduces the amount of plastic used to produce them, contributing to cleaner air in the harvest area by avoiding burning as a method of waste disposal. Thus, the company's engineers have developed prototype footrests and trunk parts from olive tree waste, demonstrating that these parts are robust and durable and evaluating their mass use in order to help manufacture its next batch of electric vehicles.

Do you want to know another peculiarity of olive leaves? According to Spanish scientists, they contain hairs that have the effect of umbrellas that protect them from water and sunlight. These investigators have been able to characterize in detail the particularities of olive leaves at the eco-physiological level to survive in extreme conditions.

Of course, we do not forget its flower, of white colour and incomparable beauty. It is delicate and is characterized by its small size, grouped in clusters of 10 to 40 flowers. But what is most striking when you see the olive trees in bloom is their soft, delicate and slightly sweet aroma that has inspired the creation of the Spanish perfume *RAPA*.

» *Olive pit*

We end our journey with the olive pit, an extraordinary ally for sustainability. Scientists, engineers, renewable energy experts, architects and designers, among others, have studied its multiple singularities for the creation of various materials and products thanks to its capacity to generate energy. Thus, this biofuel is of excellent quality and high performance, and is increasingly being used for thermal purposes, progressively replacing coal and heating oil. It is also a very economically advantageous alternative, making it ideal as a fuel source for boilers and stoves. Large energy companies have even made biofuel for airplanes from olive pits, together with used oil and other waste. Amazing!

Among other energy curiosities from olive pits, we can also highlight the production of barbecue briquettes, which have a high calorific value, are very easy to ignite, do not generate smoke, flashes or bad odour and, in addition, emit less CO_2 than the usual lump charcoal during combustion. The ash generated after combustion can also be used as fertilizer. Undoubtedly, a sustainable option for our summer barbecues!

Another of its interesting uses is as a construction material, with several research projects focused on the utilization of olive pits. Thus, it has been used as cladding for kitchen and bathroom furniture and for the manufacture of mortar bricks in facades. These bricks increase their insulating capacity, which reduces the heating and air conditioning consumption of homes built with them. It also opens up a wide world of possibilities in the development of packaging, testing its use in the manufacture of organic bioplastics such as trays, plates and flower pots or in the creation of active packaging for better preservation of fruits and vegetables.

Still not surprised enough? We discover another ingenious use of this part of the olive fruit. In the food industry, there is an innovative product, olive flour, created by extracting the seeds from the stone itself. Rich in fibre and antioxidants, its texture and aroma make it a gourmet experience, healthy and nutritious, often used as a complementary ingredient to other flours, with or without gluten. Do you dare to complete your recipes with a few touches of this healthy flour?

We continue with another curious initiative -and we have already had a few!,- which is its use for the development of sports surfaces, from soccer or rugby fields to paddle or basketball courts. Its manufacturers opt for this material to replace the recycled tire granulates commonly used to fill synthetic turf of this type. This is a fabulous initiative, as from 2030 the marketing of synthetic infill material for artificial sports surfaces, such as the rubber granules commonly used in artificial soccer pitches -those little black balls contained in artificial turf- will be banned.

If you think that's not enough stories, wait until you hear this last one: can you imagine sleeping every night on a pillow stuffed with olive pits? Well, now it is possible. The fact is that plant-based fillings for pillows, cushions or thermal bags for therapeutic purposes have been used in different cultures for centuries. Specifically, these pillows with charred olive pits are very original and very beneficial to health, providing a peaceful and restful sleep thanks to its ergonomics, adapting to the contours of the head and neck and encouraging the muscles to relax during sleep. In addition, they are perfectly ventilated, since the size and shape of the bones allow air to pass through, significantly reducing perspiration. Undoubtedly, a revolution to achieve the relaxation and rest we so desire. If you suffer from muscular pains, a very effective remedy to relieve them are also the thermal bags with olive pits, which can be heated in the microwave or cooled in the freezer depending on the type of ailment we have. At this point, we can only ask ourselves: is there a more generous and caring tree?

Illustrations by Freepik

The Olive Tree

around the world

By Alfredo Briega Martín

Emulating Jules Verne, photographer and landscape artist Eduardo Mencos, accompanied by historian, writer and journalist Charles Quest-Ritson, set out to travel around the world with the olive tree as the protagonist. An exciting 15-year journey through 26 countries that narrates the history of mankind through the millenary tree and its fruits, highlighting its multiple connections with history, mythology, religion...

Mallos de Riglos (Huesca), Spain.

With more than 200 spectacular photographs accompanied by detailed texts, *The Olive Tree: Around the World* explores the multiple representations of the olive tree and its different peculiarities: from its origin and subsequent domestication, through its different meanings throughout history or its importance in the Bible, to the most innovative methods of cultivation and cloning; without forgetting its prominent role in the Mediterranean Diet and its different uses. In short, a long and exciting journey whose objective is to offer a vision of the olive tree impregnated with beauty, poetry and infinite curiosity. Here, we review with Eduardo Mencos the anecdotes of an unrepeatable trip.

EUROPE

Day 19
Ibiza

Spain, the undisputed world leader in olive oil production, has an enormous olive heritage in the form -among others- of thousand-year-old olive trees that are silent witnesses of the passing of time and of the different civilizations that have been delighted with their fruits throughout history.

The Sénia Territory, made up of 27 municipalities located at the meeting point of the Valencian Community, Catalonia and Aragon, boasts the largest concentration of millenary olive groves in the world -more than 5,000-, FAO World Agricultural Heritage since the end of 2018. This is the case of the generational tree of the Peset Celma family, in Traiguera (Castellón), in the Bajo Maestrazgo region, more than 1,700 years old.

Peset Celma family, Traiguera (Castellón), Spain.

"It is moving and emotional to think that this olive tree was planted by a Roman citizen and that today, 1,700 years later, it is the home of three generations of the same family. It is, without a doubt, the tree of resilience and resurrection," says Eduardo Mencos. A little further north, in Los Mallos de Riglos (Huesca), grandparents teach their grandchildren to prune, with olive trees, witnesses of time and powerful family ties, coloring this grandiose natural monument with green.

On the Can Milá estate, near Sant Carles de Peralta (Ibiza), the *Olivera de España (s'Olivera de n'Espanya)*, with its more than 10 meters in diameter at the base of its trunk, is one of the most majestic and long-lived trees in the country, a true living monument included since 2001 in the catalog of singular trees of the Balearic Islands to guarantee its protection. "One of the things that moves you most about a monumental tree -Mencos confesses- is the tremendous sensation of fragility and the passage of time, which these silent giants witness immutably."

Eduardo Mencos inside the Olivera de España, Sant Carles (Ibiza), Spain.

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Europe's northernmost olive trees

It could be said that in Italy the olive tree culture is more deeply rooted than in any other country in the world. The *Riviera degli Olivi* in Lake Garda is home to Europe's northernmost olive trees, centuries-old trees of native varieties that thrive in an area particularly suited to their growth and development.

South of Sicily, the centuries-old olive trees on the island of Pantelleria -known for its capers and muscatel grape wines- creep up the volcanic slopes and are pruned to a height of about 120 cm. to protect them from the incessant winds, and to harvest them you have to bend over or get down on your knees. Locals claim that the olives are from a unique variety, brought by the Arabs, the Greeks or even the Phoenicians; DNA analysis certifies that it is the popular and widespread Biancolilla variety from western Sicily.

Meanwhile, the traditional cultivars of Puglia are home to centenary and millenary specimens that are said to be up to 3,000 years old and stand out for their majestic bearing and beauty. Here, the magical olive trees are covered with lime to disinfect them and repel insects. Decked out in their white dress, these magical dancing olive trees become the most vivid expression of the *Pugliese* territory and landscape.

Lake Garda, Italy.

Island of Pantelleria (Sicily), Italy.

Puglia, Italy.

Nets for fishing olives

As in Italy and Spain, olives and olive oil are an essential part of Greek cuisine. The Greeks never tire of extolling their olive oil, praising its flavour and quality, its health benefits and multiple culinary uses. Today, olive trees are present almost everywhere in Greece and it is difficult to imagine a landscape without them.

On the island of Paxos, in the archipelago of the Ionian Islands, about 7 kilometres south of Corfu, olive trees -some of them gigantic- bathe in the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea. As in other parts of Greece, the farmers let the olives fall from the towering olive trees and, like patient fishermen, they are collected with nets from time to time.

Island of Paxos, Greece.

Rochers des Pénitents (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence), France.

Glory in the hands

It was the Phoenicians who brought the olive tree to the south of France, a land not very conducive to its cultivation. Today, the economic importance of the French olive grove is insignificant, but its landscape is a symbol of the beauty of the Mediterranean coastline, with an abundant presence in its national painting. Artists such as Monet, Degas or Matisse succumbed to the spell of light playing with the shapes and colours of the olive trees of Provence, which draw a certainly captivating landscape.

In an ancestral pact with time and tradition, the monks of the Ganagobie monastery, in the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence department, continue to cultivate and care for their olive trees as they did centuries ago. In the background, the spectacular Rochers des Pénitents recall the story of monks turned to stone as a punishment for having watched a procession of beautiful Saracen women.

In Croatia, whose high-end EVOOs of limited production have won important international recognition, the cultivation of both traditional and native varieties and cultivars imported mainly from Italy has proliferated. Eduardo Mencos visited the island of Pag, on the eastern part of which plants do not grow because of the salty wind that lashes the island. To the west, however, life springs up and olive trees and wild olive trees, grafted since the 19th century, thrive among the rocks.

A family experience

In Albania, the communist dictator and former Prime Minister Enver Hoxha, convinced of an imminent invasion of the country by both the West and the USSR, sowed the olive groves with bunkers -a total of 173,371, built from 1968 to 1983- giving free rein to a delirious obsession -or paranoia-.

In this country with a long olive-growing tradition -dating back to the 4th century BC- where brides' veils are blessed with a wreath of olive branches to wish them happiness and prosperity (probably as a vestige of the Ottoman era, when all weddings

were commemorated by law by planting ten olive trees), the cultivation and care of olive groves -sometimes only one tree per family- is a deeply rooted family experience. Each tree, each olive grove, is a treasure, an experience in which the whole family is fully involved.

"Here, olive trees are registered and identified with badges, and even marked to be assigned to one son or another, a practice passed down from generation to generation that is also repeated in Croatia," says Mencos.

In fact, in Palikesht there is a 2,500 year-old giant that can hold up to 30 people and gives away 1,500 kilos of olives per year. A prodigious being who, why not, could have been contemplated by Alexander the Great himself.

Olive groves planted with bunkers, Albania.

Preza, Albania.

Palikesht, Albania.

Sfax, Tunisia.

Sahara Desert, Tunisia.

Siwa Oasis, Egypt.

Bechmizzine, Lebanon.

NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Olive growing has experienced remarkable growth over the last century in North Africa and the Middle East, where it is governed by traditional practices and abounds with cultivars unknown in Europe. In Morocco, Tunisia -a role model- and Syria it is widespread, but the olive tree is also present in Egypt, Algeria, Palestine and the coasts of Libya. The Middle East, where olive trees were first domesticated, Lebanon and western Syria enjoy a Mediterranean climate that is perfect for olive cultivation.

In the area of Sfax (Tunisia), trees are grown in large plantation frames in order to sustain themselves. Under its long shade, the women prune and fertilize the trees and collect their fruit with nets. In the Sahara, the olive tree fights against all threats -goats, camels and the desert itself- and survives protected as if it were an immense treasure. In the inhospitable Negev desert in southern Israel, where it hardly ever rains, Palestinians care for their olive trees as if they were their own children.

Most of the countries of North Africa and the Middle East have large desert areas in their hinterland with nothing but oases. But oases are real concentrations of biodiversity. One of the most remote and fascinating places in Egypt is the oasis of Siwa, where olive trees have been cultivated since 500 BC and their indigenous cultivars form an exceptional ensemble. Being below sea level -despite the 350 kilometres that separate it from the Mediterranean coast- the trees receive water from countless springs.

The spirituality associated with the olive tree also extends to its wood. Today, olive wood is widely used in Christian countries to make crucifixes and images of Jesus, Mary and the saints. And it is because the olive tree takes advantage of everything, everything is virtuous. Its wood, antibacterial, durable and aromatic, can also be used to carve a gospel passage.

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ASIA

Arbequina and - - -

In China, where the olive tree survives in extreme conditions defying the monsoon climate and grows in new and previously unexplored territories, the olive sector is growing year after year and it is not unreasonable to think that one day it could become a major player in the international market. China's Sichuan province is, after Longnan prefecture in Gansu, the country's largest producer of extra virgin olive oil, a food associated with a healthier lifestyle, which has stimulated its demand. Both regions enjoy a -surprisingly- Mediterranean climate ideal for olive cultivation.

With extreme differences in soil and climate, olive trees in Iran survive and have adapted to diverse habitats. Most Iranian cultivars (70%) are used for table olives and, until recently, olive oil was only used to make soap.

But if there is one country that has recently invested more than any other in olive growing, it is Saudi Arabia, a perfect blend of tradition and modernity, where government-backed investments have given rise to large plantations in the north of the country -most of them high-density or hedgerow, with the presence of many Spanish varieties, especially Arbequina-, near the border with Jordan. In the Al-Jouf region, where the olive tree has conquered the desert, the first olive trees were planted in 2007 and in 2018 it was already listed in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the largest olive farm in the world, with some 20 million olive trees today.

Taleqan, Iran.

Sichuan, China.

Al-Jouf, Saudi Arabia.

SOUTH AMERICA AND NORTH AMERICA

According to tradition, the first olive trees to arrive in South America were brought to Lima in 1560 by Antonio de Rivera, either directly from Spain or via Mexico. At the end of the 16th century, olive trees were cultivated in Peru, Chile and Argentina. Most of these early plantations were owned by landowners with a taste for olives or by missionaries who needed olive oil for sacramental uses. The first olive tree was planted by the Dominican Saint Martín de Porres in 1637, the first mestizo saint of the Spanish territory in America. "A 10-hectare forest in the center of Lima that remains in the most sought-after area of the city as a real jewel, something frankly striking", says Eduardo Mencos.

In the Atacama Desert -the most deserted place in the world, where we find olive trees dating back to the 17th century- and Tacna (Peru), olive trees grow even though rainwater never falls from the sky. Few things are as exciting as contemplating from an arid and bare hillside in Chile or Peru an oasis of intense green where olive trees shelter other crops. "The river of life brings water from the Andes, which brings life to the lands where it rains the least in the world, and olive groves are also part of this thread of life," assures Mencos.

In the valley of the Ilo River, near the Equator, there is a permanent cloud called "*La panza de burro*", formed by the stagnant humidity coming from the sea that maintains moderate temperatures, which makes possible the practice of olive growing.

And from South America to North America. In Mexico -the only country in the world in whose national anthem the olive tree is mentioned- the first olive trees were brought in 1531 by the missionary Friar Martín de Valencia. In the mission of San Francisco Javier de Viggé-Biaundó (Baja California) there is a huge example planted by Jesuit missionaries around 1700. For Eduardo Mencos, "in spite of its youth -less than 300 years old-, this species of immense cephalopod is perhaps the most extraordinary specimen I have discovered in this 15-year long journey. The secret of its monumental size lies in the fact that an irrigation ditch irrigates it throughout the year."

The Olive Grove Park in San Isidro (Lima), Peru.

Valley of the Ilo River, Peru.

Mission of San Francisco Javier de Viggé-Biaundó (Baja California), Mexico.

day 97
taste evoo

AUSTRALIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

At the end of the 18th century, the first European settlers arrived in Australia and soon after, the first olive trees were planted near Sydney. In the *Aussie* country, where there are strict phytosanitary regulations on the transport of plants, the olive tree is not very well received as it is considered an invasive alien species and a threat to biodiversity because it competes with the native flora. It is quite a spectacle -and an experience that sticks in the memory- to observe the most emblematic animal of the country jumping between the extensive olive farms -mainly intensive and hedgerow plantations- with the Grampian mountains in the background, becoming just another inhabitant of the olive groves.

And we end our trip in South Africa, "one of the few countries where you can see black people picking olives," says Mencos. The Western Cape province has a Mediterranean climate that is perfect for olive growing. Labor is cheap and the demand for jobs is huge. Thus, in places like Stellenbosch, Zulu women pick olives one by one, perched on the tree, and crush them on their face as a moisturizing cream, reminding us of the universality of the olive tree and its many applications •

Victoria, Australia.

Stellenbosch (Western Cape), South Africa.

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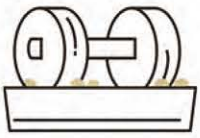

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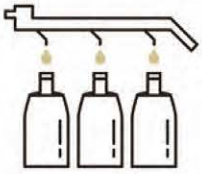

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Healthy EVOO Calendar

A superfood for every month of the year

By Cristina Revenga Palacios

In ancient times, and in the field of medicine, olive oil was in great demand as a body moisturiser and ointment to heal wounds, reduce fever and soothe colic. Since time immemorial, this juice has continued to treasure unique health benefits that seem to exert a powerful -almost magical- effect on our organism. Here is an entertaining calendar in which you will discover some of the many healthy benefits supported by multiple studies and research from around the world. Let's go!

Illustrations by Carmen Bernáldez and Freepik

JANUARY

The first month of the calendar is always filled with uncertainty about what the rest of the year will bring. It symbolises the beginning, the newness... and it is a time of new desires and new goals: to practice more sport, to travel to beautiful and interesting destinations, to start a new hobby or to lose weight and follow a healthy diet after a Christmas holiday full of copious meals with family and friends. And what better resolution for the new year than to consume more extra virgin olive oil, the king of the Mediterranean Diet! A diet rich in healthy fats, such as extra virgin olive oil, helps to control our weight, as demonstrated by the PREDIMED Study, the largest trial ever conducted on nutrition and cardiovascular prevention. The results of this study showed that the Mediterranean Diet enriched with EVOO reduces the risk of suffering a myocardial infarction, cerebral vascular accident or death due to cardiovascular causes by up to 30%. The second phase of the study, PREDIMED Plus, has shown that a lifestyle based on the low-calorie Mediterranean Diet and physical activity greatly improves quality of life. It also sheds light on the long-term importance of weight loss on the incidence of diabetes, some cancers, dementia of different origins and many other diseases associated with obesity and metabolic syndrome. The importance of consuming this superfood has also been highlighted in the CordioPrev study, which has shown for the first time that the Mediterranean Diet rich in extra virgin olive oil prevents the recurrence of cardiovascular accidents. Is there any doubt that the famous 'January slope' will be more bearable with a few good extra virgin olive oils in our pantry?

FEBRUARY

As we all know, February is, par excellence, the month of love and friendship as Valentine's Day is celebrated all over the world on the 14th of this month. Over the years, this date has also adopted nicknames such as Valentine's Day or the Day of Love and Friendship, but... what is the origin of this celebration? The story goes back to 3rd century Rome under Emperor Claudius II the Gothic, who forbade young men to marry so that they would have to join the army. A young priest named Valentine opposed the emperor's decree and began to secretly perform marriages between young lovers. Upon learning of this, Claudius II the Gothic sentenced Valentine to death on 14 February 270, on the grounds of disobedience and rebellion. In this way, this event became the patron saint of lovers, a special date on which, today, we celebrate love and we have special moments with our partners and friends.

It is just as important to take care of oneself on the outside as it is on the inside. This is, at least, what several studies show that love, like extra virgin olive oil, directly influences the health of our heart, reducing the risks of suffering from cardiovascular diseases and helping to extend our life expectancy. The bonds of affection we maintain with our partner, friends and family improve blood pressure, reducing anxiety levels and even helping us to significantly improve our response to treatments for various illnesses. So, cheer up and take advantage of this magical date to bring out your sweetest side and surprise your loved ones with a very healthy gift: a good extra virgin olive oil. However, if you are a talented chef, you can also succeed with an original recipe in which EVOO is the main ingredient.

MARCH

After leaving behind a season of short, cold and dreary days, in March we celebrate the arrival of spring. The good weather is approaching and the days are getting longer, which invites us to finally enjoy outdoor activities. This time of year is traditionally identified with a rise in average temperatures, the thaw, the flowering of plants, the awakening of hibernating animals and the return of migratory species. In its essence, it symbolises renewal, transformation and rejuvenation; and although the earth is clothed in a blanket of beautiful colours and the fields are full of life and activity, the arrival of spring often brings with it the appearance of a slight feeling of general tiredness, fatigue, concentration problems, difficulty in falling asleep... We are facing spring asthenia, caused by a series of stimuli that our body receives at this time of year: more daylight hours, longer days or changes in routines.

To counteract it we can do sport, go for walks and follow a healthy diet, such as the famous Mediterranean Diet enriched with EVOO, which will help us to maintain constant levels of energy and vitality thanks to the oxygenation of the body and the supply of all the necessary nutrients. Any doubt that extra virgin olive oil is the superfood of the 21st century?

APRIL & MAY

As spring reaches its peak, many suffer from the dreaded seasonal allergies. Sore throat, itchy eyes, nasal congestion, sneezing or headaches are some of the symptoms that our body experiences as a reaction to foreign external agents -such as pollen- and that make this time of the year difficult for us. Didn't you know that certain components of EVOO could alleviate these symptoms? In fact, recent research has revealed that hydroxytyrosol, a polyphenol found in olive oil that has been widely studied for its anti-inflammatory activity, may play a crucial role in reducing allergic reactions. But there is much more...

Just as in autumn, it is also common in spring to experience seasonal hair loss, which is more abundant than usual. Environmental factors characteristic of spring such as changes in temperature, increased daylight hours, time variations and the consequent alteration of lifestyle habits lead to a series of hormonal changes that favour excessive hair loss at this time of year. And of course, our precious liquid gold also provides multiple dermatological benefits for hair care. Thus, it is able to strengthen the hair follicle, controlling hair loss because, thanks to the vitamin E and polyphenols it contains, it helps to keep hair stronger from the root and less brittle. In addition, through vitamin C, it contains repairing properties that moisturise and stimulate collagen synthesis. Applied directly, olive oil has been shown to improve its aesthetic qualities, particularly in terms of shine and softness, and has a nourishing effect on the skin of the scalp. Undoubtedly, an important complement to shampoo in our hair care routine.

JUNE, JULY & AUGUST

Summer is finally here and with this season we feel closer to the sun, the warmth, the holidays... which for many people means happiness, disconnection and relaxation. Among the highlights of the summer period are increased exposure to sunlight, which can have a positive impact on our mood, as well as enjoying more leisure time with family and friends. It is also a great opportunity to relax, recharge your batteries and disconnect from the stress of everyday work; or to spend more time outdoors, reading a good book by the sea or enjoying a good bread and EVOO in the moonlight on an evocative starry summer night. This time of the year is characterised by a general increase in temperatures, which makes it essential that we adapt our eating habits with cooler, lighter and simpler recipes where we cannot miss a product as healthy and nutritious as extra virgin olive oil, which helps to reduce our blood pressure and improve our lipid profile by increasing good cholesterol and reducing bad cholesterol. It is also an excellent source of antioxidants such as vitamin E and polyphenols, which protect against oxidative damage caused by the sun and high temperatures.

It should also be borne in mind that in places with greater exposure to the sun, the use of EVOO reinforces skin protection, helping sunscreens to better absorb UVA rays thanks to its antioxidants. However, it is also necessary to follow certain rules to ensure that the product retains all its properties at high temperatures. In this case, to protect it from heat, it is best to keep it stored in a cool, dark place where you avoid direct sunlight and remember to always cover it after use. Now all we need to do is pack our suitcases and set off to discover a place where oleotourism is practised. Are you up for it?

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SEPTEMBER

September, like January, can be a challenging month, as it often marks the end of the summer holidays, which can lead to nostalgia for the return to our daily routine, some stress and a slight feeling of unease. EVOO, as well as being a great ally for repairing the skin after the intensity of the summer sun's radiation -remember that it is one of the most effective natural oils for improving skin hydration due to its ability to form a protective barrier on the skin- is a food to be taken into account when it comes to providing our organism with the necessary resources to improve our state of mind. In fact, according to a study by the Wake Forest School of Medicine (North Carolina, USA), following a Mediterranean Diet can help reduce the physiological effects of stress and promote healthy ageing.

The same was corroborated in pregnant women in another study led by Spanish researchers which concluded that the EVOO-rich Mediterranean Diet is associated with a significant reduction in stress and anxiety during pregnancy. In short, consuming this juice during pregnancy is beneficial for both the foetus and the mother. In fact, it has also been shown to improve not only the health of pregnant women, but also that of children during their first two years of life, reducing the risk of hospital admissions by up to 25%. It also increases the level of phenolic compounds in breast milk, so its effect can cross the placental barrier to reach offspring, and may even help children maintain a healthy weight. Because extra virgin olive oil plays a fundamental role in children's nutrition and protects them from numerous diseases. In addition, during complementary feeding, the use of EVOO promotes bone development, the central nervous system and many other metabolic functions. Before the change of season, a curious fact: did you know that September is the month with the most births of the year?

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER

When autumn arrives, temperatures start to drop, the first rains appear and the forests change their colours, offering beautiful landscapes of red, copper and yellow tones that precede the fall of the leaves of the trees. But it is in this season of colours and flavours that the first colds of the season usually arrive. Therefore, improving our immune system with a healthy diet bathed in EVOOs made from the first olives of the new season will be key to combating the viruses that take over our bodies.

Let's remember that extra virgin olive oil is a source of vitamin A and E, which strengthens our immune system, improving our defences against infections. Regular consumption provides extra protection against colds and flu, and can even reduce the duration of COVID symptoms. At this time of year, low temperatures also increase skin irritability, but extra virgin olive oil provides countless benefits thanks to its powerful moisturising active ingredients and its topical antioxidant effect, improving the symptoms of diseases such as atopic dermatitis or psoriasis. In addition, variations in the weather at this time of year can affect the joints of people with rheumatic diseases. For example, in patients with rheumatoid arthritis it is recommended to follow the Mediterranean Diet rich in EVOO for its benefits in inflammation and pain. Numerous *in vitro* and *in vivo* studies confirm that extra virgin olive oil and its polyphenols can improve the symptoms of immune-mediated inflammatory diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis or lupus.

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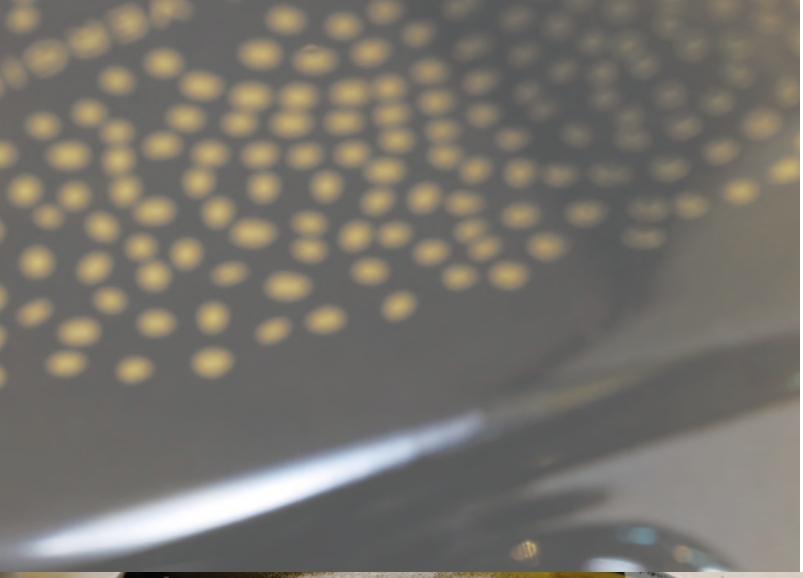
DECEMBER

The term December comes from *decem* (ten), since in the early Roman calendar December was the tenth and last month of the year. Originally, in Rome, the year consisted of 304 days divided into ten months, the first of which was March and the last December. According to tradition, this primitive system was modified by King Numa Pompilius around 700 BC, who added the months of January and February. Well, it is in December when the winter solstice arrives in the northern hemisphere and it is time to say goodbye to the year. These days we are flooded with intense emotions and we tend to take stock of what we have experienced in the previous months. It also coincides with Christmas, one of the most special and eagerly awaited dates for children -and not so children- and one in which EVOO plays a special role, and which cannot be missed at our Christmas celebrations or as an ideal gift for our loved ones. It is a gourmet product with infinite possibilities in the kitchen that also contributes to our wellbeing by providing powerful natural antioxidants.

Did you know that the health benefits of vegetables are enhanced when they are cooked with EVOO? Specifically, a study led by the University of Barcelona evaluated the effect of extra virgin olive oil on the bioactive compounds in tomato, onion and garlic, ingredients traditionally used in the preparation of *sofrito*, one of the key culinary techniques in the Mediterranean Diet. According to the researchers, *sofrito* contains 40 different phenolic compounds and a high content of carotenoids, and its consumption is associated with an improvement in cardiovascular risk parameters and insulin sensitivity. The main result of this research was that cooking vegetables with EVOO favours bioactive compounds, such as carotenoids and polyphenols, which are present in the vegetables and greens in the *sofrito*, to move towards the extra virgin olive oil, facilitating the absorption and bioactivity of these compounds. Moreover, we must bear in mind that, with the olives just harvested, Christmas is the best time to share the freshness and infinite aromas of extra virgin olive oil, a versatile superfood as a dressing, for frying, in desserts and even in cocktails... even more so at this time of year when we want our preparations to be tasty and perfect. *Cheers!*



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By Alfredo Briega Martín

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An authentic luxury trip through the Peruvian Andes

Nº 3245

Inaugurated in 2017, the Belmond Andean Explorer is the first luxury overnight train in South America. On an exclusive and vibrant one or two-night journey through the Peruvian Andes, the tour allows you to enjoy breathtaking scenery, sophisticated Peruvian cuisine and all the comforts on board. The journey begins in Cuzco, the ancient capital of the Inca empire, and crosses the majestic Andean plains to Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world, ending in the volcanic 'White City' of Arequipa, with its Baroque architecture and UNESCO World Heritage Site. The routes *Peruvian Highlands*, *Andean Plains & Islands of Discovery*, *Spirit of the Water* and *Spirit of the Andes* -all the tours are led by a professional guide- connect the jewels of the southern part of the country and are designed to reveal the beauty and cultural richness of the Peruvian Andes, capturing its essence and grandeur to guarantee an unforgettable experience. Depending on the itinerary chosen, passengers can discover natural wonders such as the floating islands of the Uros -extraordinary artificial islands created from carefully woven reeds that are constantly renewed- or the enigmatic caves of Sumbay -home to the rock art of the first inhabitants of the Peruvian highlands over 8,000 years ago; traverse deep valleys and high mountains to watch camelids grazing on the vast plains of the highlands; or indulge in fascinating stargazing and constellation watching, appreciating the beauty of the universe from the Andes.

The elegant decor of the sleeper cabins -Suite, Twin or Bunk, with private bathroom with shower and large panoramic windows- are designed to provide maximum comfort and sophistication with touches of traditional Peruvian design, hand-woven fabrics and soft textures, creates a cosy and relaxing atmosphere, with the option to install on request an oxygen system to facilitate acclimatisation to the high altitude. The Picaflor spa car offers a wide range of exclusive treatments -massages and facial therapies with local and Germaine de Capuccini signature products and ingredients- to relax on board; while the Llama and Muña restaurant cars offer in an intimate and refined atmosphere -where soft colour palettes and luxurious leather textures harmonise with fine handcrafted woodwork- dishes prepared with fresh, seasonal local ingredients that combine traditional flavours with modern, avant-garde techniques to create a unique culinary experience. Because high-level gastronomy plays

an important role in Andean Explorer. Here, every meal prepared by the chefs is a celebration of the most authentic and exquisite Peruvian flavours. And extra virgin olive oil has its deserved place, of course. The train uses a local brand of EVOO called *Dei Olei-Amancay* -greenish yellow in colour, slightly bitter and pleasantly spicy, with a mild herbaceous and fruity aroma, and clear vegetal nuances on the palate- produced in Tacna, a city in southern Peru that accounts for 60% of the country's olive production.

For its part, the observatory car allows you to enjoy breathtaking panoramic views at 4,000 feet and breathe in the Andean air from its open deck as the meandering route winds through a magical and ever-changing landscape. A space with large windows and an open-air platform that allows you to connect with nature and the environment, ideal for photography lovers. Finally, in the lounge car or piano bar, live music is combined with premium service in elegant interiors and comfortable lounge areas in which to sip a *pisco sour* or any of the gourmet craft cocktails inspired by Peruvian gastronomy by expert mixologists, in a perfect setting to relax and socialise with other travellers. The travel experience can be further personalised by booking one or more full carriages and enjoying an exclusive service tailored to the needs of the group.

BRITISH PULLMAN

A timeless journey through Great Britain

Nº 9711

Restored to their former glory, British Pullman's eleven art deco carriages promise luxury, glamour and a dash of adventure on an unforgettable journey through the picturesque British countryside. A star of the silver screen, this elegant luxury train from London's Victoria Station has housed royalty, transported statesmen and survived the bombings of World War II. Each carriage -Audrey, Vera, Minerva, Perseus, Phoenix (Queen Elizabeth's favourite), Cygnus (redesigned by film director Wes Anderson as if it were the set of one of his films), Gwen, Ibis, Ione, Lucille and Zena- has its own personality and a fascinating story to tell. Old-style marquetry, vintage lighting, traditional upholstery, brass luggage racks, fine porcelain tableware... this 1920's train exudes a passion for preserving history. *The Garden of England*, *A Moving Murder Mistery*, *Historic Oxford*, *The Golden Age of Travel by Steam*, *Champagne Afternoon Tea*, *The Great British Sunday Lunch*, *Historic Bath*... the options for unforgettable experiences and destinations such as Kent, Oxford, Bath, York, Canterbury, Chichester, Buckinghamshire or Winchester are manifold. Vibrant cities, ancient castles, palaces and stately mansions, famous sporting events such as Royal Ascot, etc. Immersive tours -courtesy of Private Drama Events- combine luxury, comfort, glamour and a touch of adventure (*A Moving Murder Mistery*), as well as offering the chance to experience London's first cabaret on rail (*The Carriage Club*). In doing so, the train draws inspiration from both the London cabaret scene of the 1930s and the intriguing plots of Agatha Christie.

If the iconic sumptuous lunches, with updated recipes and regional delicacies, celebrate the best of British cuisine, British Pullman's on-board dining rivals that of London's finest restaurants.

The team led by chef Jon Freeman -accompanied by the Michelin-starred chefs who regularly appear to prepare them- who took up the challenge and joined British Pullman almost two decades ago, reinterprets the classics by serving British dishes with an innovative twist, with cuisine based on local, seasonal ingredients and inspired by the landscape and attractive menus -including vegetarian ones- that celebrate the culinary traditions of the towns and villages through which this luxury train passes: baby heirloom carrot mille-fuelle with brightwell ash, hazelnut and lovage oil, parsnip and williams pear soup with longhedge farm lager rarebit, braised suffolk shorthorn beef with oxtail tart, celeriac, confit shallot gravy and farleigh damson baba with warm spiced damsons, chantilly cream and a sloemotion damson gin liquer coulis... Chef Freeman's passion for sustainable agriculture and his passionate championing of local produce from the farms and fields the train travels through define British Pullman's culinary and gastronomic identity.

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GOLDEN EAGLE

A cultural and culinary odyssey along the Silk Route

Nº 7541

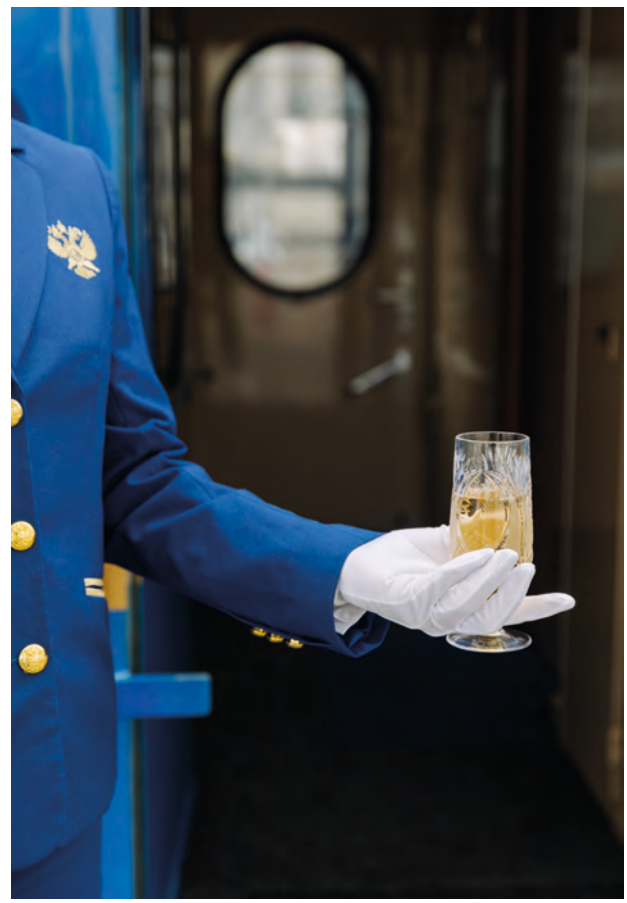
On Golden Eagle, Golden Eagle Luxury Trains' flagship train, you can choose from three cabin categories -Imperial Suite, Gold Class Cabin and Silver Class Cabin- with private bathrooms, five-star service and all the latest state-of-the-art amenities. This operator, which offers unique experiences in different locations around the world, distinguishes itself by combining gastronomic tourism and cultural immersion with luxury travel, reflecting the rich culinary traditions of its destinations and guaranteeing a gastronomic journey as memorable as the landscapes that can be seen from the windows of its trains. A celebration of taste, quality and sophistication in a relaxed atmosphere where a casual dress code applies throughout the journey. The company offers an immersive exploration of each region's rich gastronomic heritage through four Central Asian itineraries via the iconic Silk Road and the legendary landscapes of the 'Five Stanes', being the only company to operate in these remote destinations.

Ranging in length from 8 to 16 days, the journeys in Golden Eagle's Silk Road collection -*Republics of the Silk Road*, *Jewels of the Silk Road*, *Caspian Odyssey* and *Treasures of Uzbekistan*- allow you to discover the cradle of civilisation in the lands where great religious and political ideologies were born, while also providing a feast for the senses. Through cooking classes led by local expert guides where traditional dishes are prepared and ancient recipes and culinary techniques are shared, passengers gain valuable insight into how this historic trade route has evolved into modern cuisine as we know it. And every bite reveals a hidden story of the rich cultural tapestry that binds these historic and little-travelled regions together.

As part of their all-inclusive package in Uzbekistan, passengers participate in an interactive masterclass on *plov*, the national dish of this former Soviet republic, followed by a traditional lunch. This dish, deeply rooted in the country's history, reflects the rich cultural influences of the Mediterranean, Chinese and Russian traders who traversed the Silk

Road and is a clear example of its culinary heritage. In the historic city of Bukhara, travellers will enjoy a traditional Uzbek barbecue: marinated meats, grilled over an open flame, capture the essence of Uzbekistan's vibrant street food culture, where centuries of spice trade have shaped the local palate. Switching countries, in Kyrgyzstan, passengers attend a hands-on class focusing on the making of *borsook*, a fried bread with deep cultural and spiritual significance, in an experience that provides insight into the country's culinary rituals and the role of bread in its social and ceremonial practices. And in Tajikistan, travellers visit the opulent Kohi Navruz Palace in Dushanbe, once the largest tea house in the world, enjoying a guided tour followed by a tasting of locally brewed teas and traditional cakes to experience on-site the tea culture that has been an integral part of the Silk Road for over 5,000 years.

If we stop at the different tours, *Republics of the Silk* traverses the magnificent 'Five Stanes', a fascinating mosaic of countries united by a shared history of Sovietisation but deeply proud of their unique identities. An incredible 14-day adventure to discover the breathtaking beauty and rich cultural heritage of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan: from the magnificent mosques and bustling bazaars of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to the breathtaking green expanses and ethereal, tranquil landscapes of Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. *Caspian Odyssey* is an epic 16-day journey -by train and private jet- through the mysterious lands of the Caspian Sea, from Armenia to Kazakhstan, against a magnificent backdrop of majestic medieval cities, stunning archaeological architecture and palatial Islamic masterpieces. Finally, over 11 days, *Treasures of Uzbekistan* follows in the footsteps of Alexander the Great and some of history's most nefarious dynasties through the treasures of Uzbekistan, once a key cultural crossroads of emerging empires that today still shines as the jewel of Central Asia. A country of contradictions and imposing culture where the palatial grandeur of Islam clashes with the mud-walled houses and monoliths of the communist regime.



ROYAL SCOTSMAN

Discovering the indomitable spirit of Scotland

Nº 6557

At Waverley Station, the unmistakable sound of bagpipes greets passengers as a whistle blows to signal the start of their adventure and glasses of whisky clink together in a toast to the wonders that await them. Welcome aboard the Royal Scotsman, the exclusive luxury sleeper train exploring the Scottish Highland. The overwhelming bounty of the wild nature and rugged landscapes of ancient Caledonia serve as inspiration for the elegant Edwardian interiors -suites, double and single cabins, with mahogany marquetry, unique tweeds and traditional tartan furnishings- where the Grand Suites, lush and decadent, represent a new vision of luxury, local craftsmanship and Scottish splendour. The Dior Spa Royal Scotsman carriage, entirely dedicated to wellness, is a unique rail spa with relaxing Highland-inspired beauty rituals that pays homage to designer Christian Dior, a lover of Scotland. It has two lacquered treatment rooms and offers three unique treatments provided by holistic experts tailored to the specific needs of each client.

There are plenty of activities to make this Scottish adventure in nature unforgettable. Rafting on rivers and lochs, a session of golf in Perthshire, a refreshing swim in the cool waters of Drumintoul Loch, forest walks or salmon fishing on the River Spey. Learn about the making of Scotch casks at the country's most revered whisky distilleries or enjoy an evening of stargazing in the Cairngorms with expert astronomer Steve Owens.

On board the Royal Scotsman, culinary delights are served in the two dining cars, Raven and Swift, decorated with Scottish thistles, mahogany panelling and traditional marquetry. Scottish ingredients and produce are the stars of the show, from breakfast through to dinner, accompanied by a wide selection of hot drinks, wines, spirits and over 50 malt whiskeys. The on-board gastronomic offer includes full Scottish breakfast, two-course lunch and three-course dinner with cheese board, coffee, tea and *petit fours*. Executive chef Mark Tamburrini's haute cuisine is an ode to authentic flavours and fresh seafood, a blend of tasty seasonal produce freshly sourced from the best local suppliers with a contemporary twist: wild halibut, hand-dived scallops, Aberdeen Angus beef... "Cooking on board is a pleasure; most of the kitchens are closed to nature, but we enjoy the incredible views", he says. After dinner, the Observation Car offers lively entertainment with local musicians and performers joining the train, combining sweet, slow traditional Gaelic songs with lively folk tunes.

As for their routes, the options are multiple and depend on the number of nights on board: *A Taste of Scotland with Tom Kitchin*, *Taste of the Highlands* (two nights); *Western Scenic Wonders*, *Wild Scotland*, *Essence of Scotland* (three nights); *An Epicurean Highland Adventure*, *Scotch Malt Whisky Tour*, *Scotland's Classic Splendours* (four nights); *Clans, Castles and Isles*, *Grand Taste of The Highlands-Westbound*, *Grand Taste*

of The Highlands-Northbound (five nights); *Grand Western Scenic Wonders-Northbound* and *Grand Western Scenic Wonders Westbound* (seven nights).

Epicurean Highland Adventure is a gourmet adventure featuring the landscapes of the Highlands and the best of Scotland's produce, a unique culinary journey by celebrity Scottish chef Lorna McNee and Coinneach MacLeod, author of Scotland's best-selling cookbooks. From masterclasses and guided tastings of wine -by L'Art du Vin- and whisky to seafood in the bay, a barbecue in the Cairngorms with food writer and food anthropologist Ghillie Basan -with a food and whisky pairing- and a sumptuous gala dinner prepared on board by chef McNee to mark the end of this unique culinary journey. Lorna is currently head chef at Glasgow's Cail Bruich restaurant which, just five months after joining the team, was awarded a Michelin star in 2021. Meanwhile, Coinneach MacLeod, the Hebridean baker, is the afternoon tea host, sharing with passengers culinary stories inspired by family recipes, Scottish flavours and the myths and legends of the Hebrides.

A Taste of Scotland with Tom Kitchin (two nights) is an exciting Highland journey that takes in the rolling hills of Perthshire or the rural beauty of the Cairngorms National Park, as well as spectacular panoramic views on the way south through Aberdeenshire and Angus. Hosted by chef Tom Kitchin -Scotland's most famous culinary star- founder of The Kitchin, Edinburgh's flagship restaurant, where the *'From Nature to Plate'* philosophy reflects his passion for the freshest and best quality Scottish produce, this on-train dining experience includes two barbecue dinners and a barbecue lunch created and hosted by Kitchin, a masterclass on organic and biodynamic wines, visits to Rothiemurchus Estate -a beautiful natural setting in the heart of the Cairngorms- and Benromach Distillery, and traditional jazz music on board. Tom Kitchin's cooking shows both his training with some of the world's best chefs and his proud Scottish heritage, of whose larder he is a great admirer, with barley, venison and fresh lobster among his favourite ingredients. His mastery elevates the pig's head to sublime heights; always under the premise that nothing should go to waste.

✦· DANUBE EXPRESS ·✦

The irresistible vintage charm of the golden age of rail travel

Nº 864

The Golden Eagle Danube Express is a luxury hotel on wheels offering unique and exclusive journeys that combine iconic European cities with breathtaking scenery. In addition to its luxurious Superior Deluxe and Deluxe Class cabins with all the comforts to relax and enjoy the scenery, with private bathrooms and large windows, full-length wardrobes, wood panelled walls, matching fabrics and brass fittings, the train has a Lounge Car Bar -the real social heart of the Danube Express- and a first-class restaurant car where you can sample the expertly prepared dishes of the executive chef and his on-board catering team, always using the finest ingredients -locally sourced wherever possible-. In the Bar Lounge Car, the tour manager organises the programme of activities: passengers receive daily printed itineraries throughout the tour detailing train arrival and departure times, the latest weather forecasts for the next destination and information on the next day's excursions and activities. In addition, the bar and restaurant cars host a variety of activities such as language classes and interesting talks by expert speakers on local history and culture. In the evening, the sound of the piano accompanies the passengers and the bar remains open until the last customer retires to rest.

Golden Eagle believes that gastronomy is at the heart of culture, which is why culinary excellence is one of its hallmarks. With extensive international experience -many of them have worked in Michelin-starred restaurants- the team of chefs, with Ramon Batta -one of the great figures of the new generation of chefs who have revitalised the Hungarian gastronomic scene- as head chef of the Danube Express and Rebeka Krupa as head pastry chef, sources from local markets and draws inspiration from regional recipes and gastronomic traditions to create a symphony of flavours that elevate the cuisine to another level. The

Danube Express dining experience -buffet breakfasts, lunches and dinners- reflects the gastronomic essence of the countries it travels through, not forgetting international cuisine and vegetarian and other dietary options. Meals are complemented by a careful selection of wines from around the world by Golden Eagle Luxury Trains founder Tim Littler. Regarding the use of olive oil, Ramon Batta says, "we pride ourselves on using only the finest ingredients and, in the case of extra virgin olive oil, we rely on Foufas Bros, S.A., whose EVOO from their family estate in Doliana, Greece, a guarantee of quality since 1960, enhances the flavour of many of our dishes, ensuring an authentic Mediterranean dining experience for our guests". Batta adds that "olive oil is an integral part of our culinary philosophy, especially in the *Balkan Explorer* programme, where Mediterranean cuisine is a key influence. From preparation and cooking to the final presentation, this exceptional ingredient is used in all our menus, offering our guests an authentic taste of the regions we visit".

Its travel catalogue proposes, among other things, an eight-day tour of the most classic and charming Christmas markets in Central Europe -Budapest, Vienna, Salzburg and Munich- through the majestic snow-capped Austrian Alps. The experience, steeped in glamour, nostalgia and romance, includes a grand welcome dinner at the iconic Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace in Budapest, a magical concert of Viennese Christmas songs and a romantic ride in the traditional 'Fiaker' (horse-drawn carriage) along Vienna's grand boulevard, a traditional Pirker gingerbread tasting session in front of the iconic St. Stephen's Cathedral, a tour of the DomQuartier -the UNESCO-recognised cultural highlight in the heart of Salzburg- and a visit to the world-famous, centuries-old Marienplatz Christmas market in Munich.

Balkan Explorer begins in Venice and ends in Istanbul, the jewel of the Byzantine Empire, on a 12-day route rich in historical significance that spans nine countries and delves into the fascinating narratives and intricate cultural identities of the iconic Balkan region. The cuisine includes a wide variety of Mediterranean-style dishes, such as fresh salads, aromatic soups and handmade pastas incorporating herbs such as coriander, sage, basil and mint, as well as top-quality seafood, including locally sourced crabs and fish.

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✦· ROVOS RAIL ·✦

Memories of Africa

Nº 329

Rovos Rail is a privately owned railway company operating from Rovos Station in Pretoria, South Africa, and promises great adventures on a variety of luxury train routes across the southern African continent, from South Africa to Namibia and Tanzania. Since its creation in 1989 -in 2024 it celebrated its 35th anniversary- its tailor-made train safaris through the heart of Africa -from 48 hours to 15 nights- combine grandiose landscapes with the glamour and excitement of the golden age of leisure travel, with a wide variety of excursions, from safaris to cultural, historical and recreational outings -even golf courses-. "From the beginning, it was important to us that this was not just a train journey. We wanted our guests to get to know a little bit about this country, its history and culture and, of course, to experience our magnificent wildlife", says Rohan Vos, owner and CEO of Rovos Rail. "Travelling with us is not about the destination, in fact that doesn't matter, but about the pleasure of the journey itself", he adds.

The beautifully reconstructed wood-panelled trains, which can be pulled by diesel or electric locomotives, each carry up to 72 passengers in 36 superbly appointed suites and are also available for hire, while the Event Train can accommodate up to 250 guests and is particularly suitable for daytime travel. Each train has accommodation cars, restaurant cars, a lounge car, a small souvenir shop, a smoking lounge and an observation car with an open-air balcony. There are three types of accommodation on board the train, all with their own private bathrooms: Royal Suites, Deluxe Suites and Pullman Suites. The ticket price includes all meals and beverages -alcoholic and non-alcoholic-, excursions outside the train, room service and a limited laundry service.

Meals are prepared by an enthusiastic team of chefs using fresh local ingredients and specialising in traditional dishes, served in one sitting in the dining cars and complemented by a selection of fine South African wines. "At Rovos Rail we serve a wide variety of food because we have different international and local customers", explains Rovos Rail head Chef Maryke Reuvers. "Some customers prefer more exotic foods and others want to experience local cuisine. It's about finding a balance to accommodate all the different nationalities that travel with us". And what

presence does olive oil have in the menus? "Many of our vegetarian dishes are of the Mediterranean type. We use olive oil in our salad dressings and marinades for grilled meats and vegetables, and also offer it as a condiment for all meals if a guest requests it. They all have the option of enriching and improving their dishes with olive oil when it is offered at meals".

The travel offer includes *Durban Safari* (two nights), *Cape Town* (three nights), *Victoria Falls* (three or four nights), *Golf Safari* (nine nights), *Namibia Safari* (11 nights), *Southern Cross* (11 nights), *African Collage* (12 nights), *Copper Trail* (14 nights), *African Trilogy* (15 nights), *Dar es Salaam* (15 nights) and *Trail of Two Oceans* (15 nights). As an extension of the Rovos Rail brand, the company has opened two luxury accommodations -both equipped with six suites- facing the sea in the affluent area of St. James, located on the southern peninsula of Cape Town, with magnificent views of the False Bay coastline and the fishing village of Kalk Bay. Individually decorated with beautiful floral fabrics and warm colours, Persian rugs and English and South African antiques, St. James Manor Guesthouse and Homestead Villa offer guests a relaxing getaway with easy access to the town centre and vineyards on one of the most beautiful coastlines in the Western Cape.

TRANSCANTÁBRICO

A true luxury hotel on rails in the North of Spain

Nº 4168

Imagine a luxury hotel on rails that transports you to the nostalgia and charm of 20th century trains, but with 21st century technology and comfort. The Transcantábrico Gran Lujo, managed by Renfe, which runs through the wonderful landscapes of the Spanish Cantabrian coast, is comfort, glamour, gastronomy, culture, relaxation and fun. We are talking about the first tourist train in Spain and the first in the world in narrow gauge, which was a challenge, a risky and innovative bet in the Spanish railway scene by recreating the atmosphere of the trains of the Belle Époque. For its construction, old cars were rescued and remodelled -some of great historical value- that were stored in various workshops and hangars. More than 1,500 trips and 61,000 passengers endorse the trajectory of one of the most renowned luxury tourist trains in the world and a benchmark for rail tourism in Spain, a different way of travelling through various areas of the country with maximum comfort. Those who board its carriages take a journey back in time to the 1920s, when the original historic 1923 Pullman carriages circulated for the first time. Today, these are its salons, authentic jewels of the railway-historical heritage, specially decorated and equipped for this train, including a panoramic glass salon. Together with the spacious Gran Lujo Suites -decorated in wood, distributed in a living room, bedroom with double bed and private bathroom, equipped with the latest technology and adorned with exclusive details-, they make up an authentic five-star hotel on wheels, with attentions and comforts that satisfy the most demanding expectations. The current composition of the train is seven sleeping cars, four lounge cars and one kitchen car. Its maximum capacity is 28 seats distributed in 14 spacious and luxurious double suites that can also be used in triple rooms.

The entire train, both the rooms and the common areas, are connected internally, allowing the free movement of passengers. In these common areas, breakfasts are served daily à la carte and lunches or dinners prepared by the chef. The bar car remains open from early morning until dawn and there is a 24-hour customer service on call. The tearoom or panoramic car, the bar, the restaurant lounges or the pub car, where parties, music or live performances are held every night, complete a wide range of luxury offerings. The Transcantábrico stops overnight and spends the night in one of the central stations along the route. Some train customers are grateful for the chance to enjoy a restful sleep, while others appreciate the possibility of going out at night.

Travellers can enjoy days that combine rest, leisure, culture and exquisite cuisine, which is undoubtedly a differentiating value. In fact, this last aspect is one of the aspects that train customers value most. The trip on the Transcantábrico Gran Lujo is also a tour of the best gastronomy of Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria and the Basque Country, territories with a renowned culinary tradition, accompanied by the best wines from the wine Protected Designations of Origin of northern Spain. On board, one of the two meals of the day is usually served, as well as à la carte breakfasts. The other meals of the day are served in the most renowned restaurants in the areas through which the train passes. Local products and local specialities are present throughout the journey, making each day start in a different and original way, also at the table. A signature cuisine in which extra virgin olive oil, a true jewel of the Mediterranean Diet, occupies a prominent place. Before the start of each season, a careful selection of the extra virgin olive oils that will accompany the exquisite menus served during the trips is carried out. Each variety is carefully chosen to complement the dishes prepared by the chefs on board, who, committed to quality and authenticity, create recipes that represent the best of regional and national cuisine. From mild and fruity oils to those with more intense and bitter notes, each EVOO offers a great diversity of aromas and flavours and is a key piece in creating an unforgettable

gastronomic experience for passengers. The selection of juices -from the brands *Rincón de la Subbética* (Hojiblanca variety), *Oleo Cazorla* (Royal variety), *Elizondo Nº 3* and *Tierras de Canena* (both of the Picual variety)- is based on their origin, quality and ability to enhance the culinary creations prepared daily on board. This careful selection ensures that each menu is a journey of flavour through the most iconic regions of the country, since the experience of travelling on the Transcantábrico goes beyond the journey: it is an immersion in the culture, art and gastronomy of Spain, where olive oil plays a leading role. "The choice of olive oil is not a minor detail", says Ramón Celorio, responsible for gastronomy on board. "It is an essential element that highlights the flavours of our dishes and reflects the rich gastronomic heritage of Spain".

In addition to accommodation and food, the Transcantábrico offers on-board activities, guided tours, tickets to monuments and shows, a multilingual guide throughout the journey and luxury buses to facilitate travel on some visits and excursions that run parallel to the train. The first trip of the Transcantábrico was made at the end of July 1983 between León and Matallana de Torío. The name of the train was inspired by the work of the same name by the Leonese writer Juan Pedro Aparicio, which recounted a journey by the Hullero, the old passenger train that ran daily between León and Bilbao along the historic La Robla line, originally created to transport coal from the Leonese and Palencia basins to the Bilbao steel factories. Currently, the Transcantábrico Gran Lujo offers 8-day/7-night trips between San Sebastián and Santiago de Compostela - in both directions - and shorter 4-day/3-night routes that start in Oviedo and end in San Sebastián, or between Santiago de Compostela and Gijón.

✦· VENICE SIMPLON-ORIENT-EXPRESS ·✦

A decadent journey to the 1920s aboard an icon of art deco design

Nº 097

An international leader in exclusive hotels, trains, river cruises and safari camps in incredible destinations around the world, Belmond's story began in 1976, when it was given the keys to the legendary Cipriani hotel in Venice. A year later, the company began assembling carriages for the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express train, inaugurated in 1982 to transport intrepid travellers to Venice. An icon of art deco design, this famous luxury train offers an unforgettable journey through time, taking its passengers to the most fascinating cities in Europe on fifty routes: Paris, London, Budapest, Prague, Vienna, Istanbul, Venice, Rome, Amsterdam, Brussels, Genoa, Florence, Verona... With its polished wood, fine fabrics, sumptuous upholstery and vintage fittings, the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, which has a long history of hosting celebrated parties and fascinating guests (including spies, authors, ambassadors and royalty), epitomises the glamour and elegance of the Golden Age of rail travel. The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express carriages, created between 1926 and 1949 and restored by hand, reflect the style of those previously introduced in the US by George Mortimer Pullman, whose name remains synonymous with luxury rail travel. Each carriage has its own incredible story, as revealed by the panels at the end of each one. Sleeping Car 3309, for example, was left abandoned in a snowdrift for 10 days in 1929, an incident that inspired Agatha Christie's most famous novel, *Murder on the Orient Express*. Meanwhile, the Sleeping Car 3425 is famously associated with King Carol, who escaped from Romania with his mistress aboard the train in 1940. And sleeper car 3544 went from transporting the rich and famous on *Le Train Bleu* to being used as a wartime brothel.

While the romantic Historic Twins Cabins allow you to admire the scenery from plush banquettes and the elegant Suites offer additional space to relax, the exquisite Grand Suites -Paris, Istanbul,

Vienna, Budapest, Prague and Venice-, with refined fabrics and finishes, intricate wood panelling and hand-blown Italian crystal sinks, exude an air of sumptuousness and grandeur worthy of royalty. Special mention must be made of the Suite L'Observatoire, a moving work of art the size of a train car with a level of detail never seen before created by the French street artist and photographer Jean René (JR). Inspired by astronomical observatories, it includes numerous wonders to discover, spread across the secret tearoom with fireplace and miniature train model, the library with hundreds of works by Gallimard and the private marble bathroom.

Gastronomy is one of the main protagonists on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express. The winding mountain valleys of Austria, the epic rolling hills of Tuscany or the gleaming vineyards of eastern France all deserve an accompaniment in keeping with their splendour. Local delicacies and specialities, such as Brittany lobsters or Provençal tomatoes, are served in the restaurants of the three dining cars, each with its own personality. Chef Jean Imbert combines the rich heritage of the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express with his own passion for fresh, seasonal produce, bringing to each menu a new level of culinary perfection. Imbert consolidates existing relationships with local producers and forges new connections with specialized artisans along the route to transform the best local ingredients into original menus as the seasons change. "I want to create beautiful moments in the kitchen that complement the train, which is the real star", he says. "Its unique legacy is something we proudly respect, while developing a new style to captivate a new generation". The opulent and decadent three-course lunch, afternoon tea, extravagant dinners, midnight brunch in bar car 3674 -lobster rolls, truffle club sandwiches and champagne-... all evoke the majesty of the golden age of rail travel. The Champagne Bar allows you to relive the Roaring Twenties, while the classic Bar Car is the perfect option to relax and socialize with the rest of the passengers while the waiters mix delicious cocktails -negronis, martinis, spritzes, sours- to the sound of the baby grand piano •

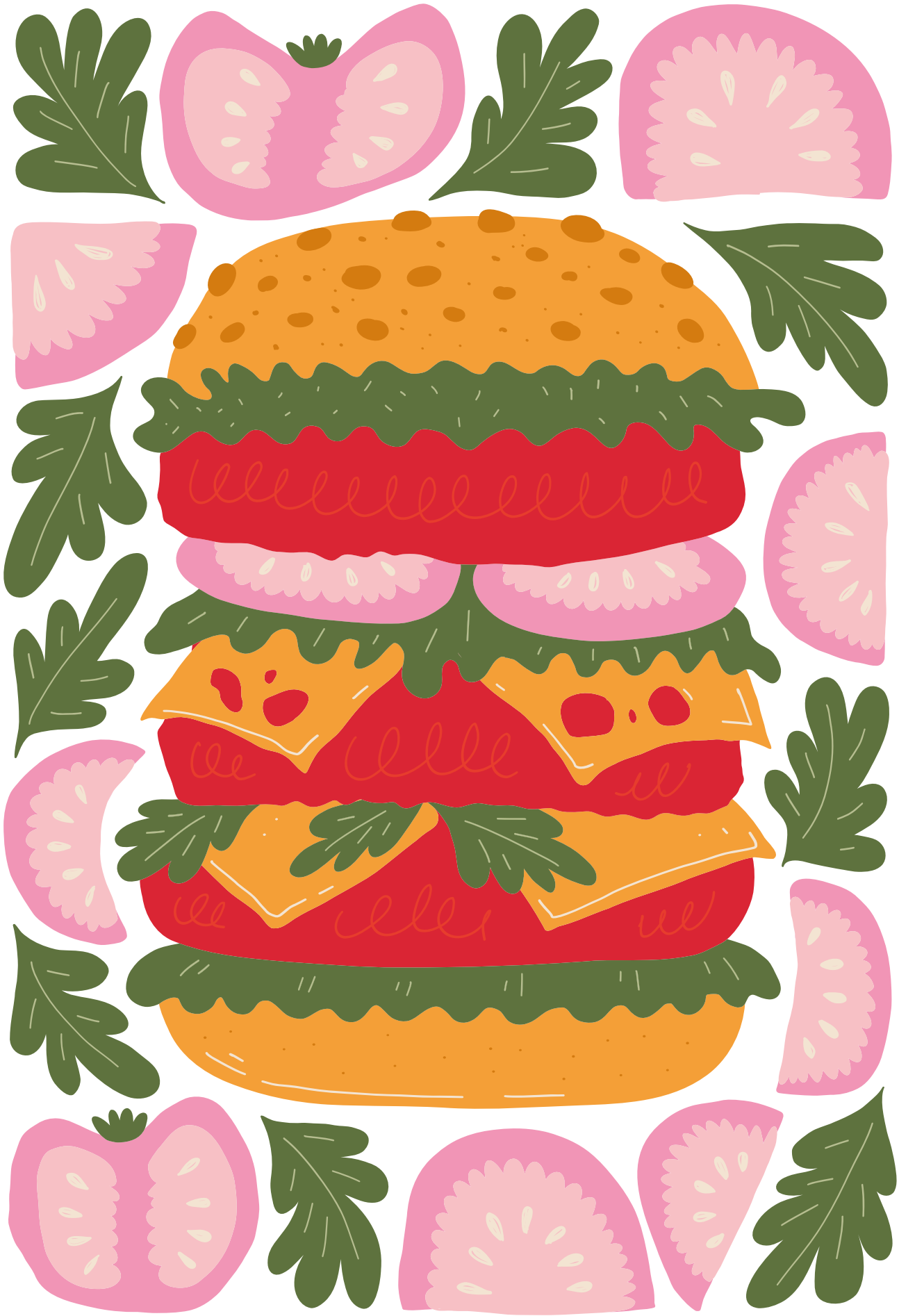

Illustration by Freepik

Healthy fast food

The rise of fast food chains that put EVOO at the centre

By Pandora Peñamil Peñafiel

Fast food is reinventing itself in line with the changing tastes of new consumers: healthier, more sustainable and tastier. Chains such as Sweetgreen, Flax & Kale, Springbone or SaladStop! are setting trends by integrating extra virgin olive oil as a pillar of their gastronomic proposal, combining the Mediterranean flavour with the practicality of fast food. From fresh salads and nutritious bowls to comforting soups, these establishments offer a culinary experience that prioritizes high-quality ingredients, speed and well-being. Are we facing the future of healthy fast food?

Sweetgreen (USA)

Sweetgreen, the American fast casual restaurant chain that serves healthy food on a mass scale, announced in late 2023 that it was beginning to use extra virgin olive oil on all of its menus packed with fresh vegetables, grains and proteins. Since then, EVOO has been incorporated into Sweetgreen's menu to enhance its dishes: from hot bowls prepared on a bed of cereals, to salads topped with abundant proteins and roasted vegetables. The North American company -which has more than 200 restaurants in the US- has highlighted that, since its founding, Sweetgreen has prioritized high quality, local and minimally processed ingredients. Now, by using EVOO, it continues to fulfil that commitment, giving customers the confidence that all ingredients, down to the cooking oil, meet the brand's highest sourcing standards, it has highlighted. "Reimagining fast food goes beyond the kitchen and starts with a robust and transparent supply chain. By partnering with suppliers and producers we trust, we take into account how each ingredient is prepared, right down to the oil it is cooked in", Nicolas Jammet, co-founder of the company, said.
Sweetgreen has stated that it carefully selects its partners for their shared commitment to sustainable agriculture and quality ingredients. In this regard, the chain has detailed that Sweetgreen's EVOO supplier is Bari Olive Oil Company, one of the oldest olive oil companies in the US, in operation since 1936. This extra virgin is produced in California, using organic and sustainable practices. Additionally, Sweetgreen is also introducing Texas Olive Ranch EVOO at its 17 locations in the Texas market.

Leon (UK)

Founded in 2004, Leon is a healthy fast food chain from the United Kingdom with a strong Mediterranean inspiration, whose *leitmotiv* is to offer fast food that is not only tasty, but also good for your health. It highlights its focus on fresh, natural and, in many cases, organic ingredients. Their menu includes vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free and low-sugar options, with dishes such as Moroccan meatballs, sweet potato falafel, fresh salads and baked potatoes. The chain has locations in several cities across the UK, including London and Manchester, and also offers delivery options. In addition, Leon is 100% compliant with its sustainable mission, using recyclable packaging and collaborating with suppliers who share its sustainability values.
The use of extra virgin olive oil in Leon is essential to achieve healthy food. Inspired by the Mediterranean Diet, they incorporate this juice in several of their dishes to take advantage of its nutritional benefits. This is the case of salads, baked vegetables, quinoa or rice bowls and the sauces and vinaigrettes with which they dress their hummus and *wraps*.

Flax & Kale (Spain)

Flax & Kale is a Spanish healthy food brand that combines culinary innovation with a strong focus on sustainability and well-being. Founded by Teresa Carles Healthy Foods, Flax & Kale has become a benchmark in the world of healthy eating, offering *flexitarian* options, that is, mainly based on vegetables but with some fish options. Their motto is *"Eat better, be happier, live longer"*, and in their cuisine olive oil plays a central role, both for its nutritional properties and for its ability to enhance the flavour of their dishes. Being a brand committed to health and sustainability, the use of EVOO is not only aligned with its philosophy, but also reinforces its Mediterranean identity.

Some of the dishes in which extra virgin olive oil shines are *Avocado Toast*, where EVOO is essential for the dressing that balances the softness of the avocado with the toppings, creating a delicious and nutritious mix.; the *Mediterranean Bowl*, a complete and healthy dish that combines fresh vegetables, hummus and a delicate touch of olive oil, intensifying the natural flavours of each ingredient; the *Healthy Pizzas*, which achieve an exceptional finish with a splash of EVOO, enhancing the texture of the dough and the selected ingredients; and the *Gourmet Salads*, which stand out for their dressings made with extra virgin olive oil as a base, maintaining fresh, balanced and healthy flavours.

SaladStop! (Singapore, Philippines, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea and Thailand)

In Asia, some healthy fast food chains have started using extra virgin olive oil on their menus, especially in countries where this product is well known for its health benefits. SaladStop!, originally from Singapore, is a healthy fast food chain specializing in customized salads, wraps and bowls with fresh and nutritious ingredients. Here, clients can choose from a variety of options, including protein bowls, gourmet salads and wraps that cater to various dietary preferences. The chain stands out for its use of fresh and sustainable ingredients, which has made it a very popular option for young people among healthy fast food alternatives in Asia. In SaladStop! extra virgin olive oil is mainly used in dressings, and some of the dishes where this ingredient can be found are salads and customizable bowls, where clients can choose from a range of olive oil-based dressings such as Tahini and Smoked Pimento.

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Tender Greens (USA)

Tender Greens is an American restaurant chain that has become famous for offering fast, healthy food focused on fresh, local, high-quality ingredients. Founded in 2006 in Los Angeles, California, this chain has grown rapidly, establishing itself as a popular choice for those seeking healthier alternatives in the world of fast food in the USA. At Tender Greens, extra virgin olive oil plays a key role in several of its dishes, providing flavour, texture and healthy benefits. Among the featured dishes that incorporate it are the *Grilled Chicken Caesar Salad*, a lighter and healthier version of the classic Caesar salad, where grilled chicken is accompanied by fresh vegetables and a creamy dressing based on extra virgin olive oil; the *Harvest Bowl* of quinoa, kale, roasted sweet potato and grilled chicken with a honey mustard vinaigrette, whose main ingredient is olive oil; the *BBQ Chicken Salad* with barbecue chicken, fresh vegetables and a light vinaigrette dressing with EVOO; the *Mediterranean Steak Salad* with beef, fresh vegetables and chickpeas, dressed with an extra virgin olive oil vinaigrette, herbs and lemon; the *Vegan Power Bowl* with vegetable protein, quinoa, roasted vegetables and a creamy tahini and olive oil dressing; and the *Grilled Chicken Sandwich*, with its grilled chicken and fresh vegetables that is prepared with olive oil to give it juiciness and an exceptional flavour, perfectly balancing all the ingredients.

Springbone Kitchen (USA)

As young professionals who started their working lives in New York, co-founders of Springbone Kitchen -a New York-based healthy fast food chain focused on providing nutritious, natural, comforting food with a special emphasis on bone broth- Sam Eckstein and Jordan Feldman recall how they struggled to find time to prepare healthy, nutritious, home-cooked meals for everyday meals. They obsessively searched for the best delivery options, but always ended up disappointed. Even the so-called healthy restaurants did not serve the simple, healthy, additive-free food they so craved. They knew it could be done better. That's why in 2016 they set up Springbone, which today prides itself on offering simple but nutritious food "that tastes and feels like it was made at home". With a menu of truly delicious bone broths and bowls that are gluten-free and made with 100% grass-fed meats, their philosophy is based on "feeling good about what you eat". Springbone was one of the first restaurants to speak publicly about choosing not to use any fat other than EVOO. "Since our inception, we have never used seed oils and proudly cook with only extra virgin olive oil," says Feldman. "EVOO plays a fundamental role in all our dishes, but I think the best example would be *Grandma's chicken with rice*, where the chicken, broccoli and Brussels sprouts are roasted separately with extra virgin olive oil, and our famous spicy red pepper sauce that is used as a base in several dishes and is also made with extra virgin olive oil," stresses the co-founder of the chain.

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Wild & The Moon (France, Netherlands and United Arab Emirates)

Nowadays it is fashionable to cook with EVOO in France. Olive oil has seen a remarkable rise in popularity in recent decades, driven by the growing interest in the Mediterranean Diet and its health benefits. We can see this at Wild & The Moon, a chain of restaurants based on Parisian brasseries that promotes a healthy and ethical lifestyle, focusing on organic, seasonal and plant-based ingredients. The chain distinguishes itself by offering gluten-free, dairy-free and vegan options, with an eye toward nutritious and delicious dishes ranging from bowls to smoothies, juices and pastries. In addition, Wild & The Moon promotes conscious eating, supporting a sustainable and cruelty-free approach, where olive oil is an essential ingredient in dishes such as the *Orange & Olive Oil Cake*, the *Grilled Vegan Burger*, the *Soup of the Day* -finished with a splash of EVOO- and the salads.

In short, more and more healthy fast food chains are betting on EVOO, an ingredient that is not only delicious, but also super nutritious. From salads to pizzas and bowls, extra virgin olive oil is becoming the perfect ally to offer quick but healthy options. Establishments around the world already incorporate it, betting on quality and flavour in each dish. We can firmly state that the future of fast food is green and healthy, like EVOO! •

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Palazzo di Varignana,

a historic resort aimed to spread the culture of EVOO

By Alfredo Briega Martín

A story of hospitality, nature, culture, gastronomy, wellbeing and good taste. This is how one could define the Project of Palazzo di Varignana, a historic resort surrounded by the silent magic of the Bolognese hills and immersed in the gentle landscape of the Emilia-Romagna region, which has its own brand of products, a philosophy that draws on values such as tradition, territory, excellence and health.

The hotel project of Palazzo di Varignana was born in 2013 with the restoration of the Palazzo Bargellini Bentivoglio, the real heart of the resort, an ancient rural castle with four traditional towers dating back to 1705, which has been renovated while respecting the charm of its history. The rest of the buildings around it, with wide green spaces, ornamental gardens, parks and avenues -with centenary olive trees from southern Italy-, water fountains and spectacular views, form a small contemporary *borgo* built in stone in harmony with the landscape and surrounded by nature that is a sustainable example of hospitality, wellbeing and good taste. In essence, the heritage of the Italian way of life.

The complex, which overlooks its namesake town, houses 150 spacious and comfortable rooms and suites -ranging from 23 to 76 m², the most luxurious with garden, terraces and patio- in contemporary style, six independent villas, a country house, five restaurants -*Treno Reale* (*carrozza ristorante*), *Il Grifone*, *Aurevo*, *Trattoria Le Marzoline* and *Gingko*-, bars, a 4,000 m² spa with 7 outdoor swimming pools, a fitness centre, sports courts, a modern conference centre and event spaces -as a curiosity, in 2023 the first edition of the Concorso d'Eleganza Varignana 1705 was held, a competition of antique and classic cars organised by the Palazzo di Varignana with the participation of internationally renowned car collectors-. In its elegant rooms and suites, natural elements blend with precious handcrafted materials in large spaces with an enveloping luminosity, becoming intimate and almost familiar spaces, sublimated by the aesthetics of the warm-toned furniture and objects. A few steps from the resort, the charming villas -*Amagioia*, *Rio Rosso*, *Pergola*, *Tamburina*, *Colombara* and *Santa Maria Maddalena*-, offer a holiday in total privacy

and relaxation, amidst infinity pools and large gardens, some with wonderful views of the rows of olive trees and stretches of vineyards that outline the hills of Varignana.

The country house *Oliveto sul Lago* was born from the recovery of an old residence destroyed by the fighting during the Second World War and preserves the charm of tradition combined with a refined style in the creation of each space. A suggestive avenue of cypresses and olive trees leads the guest to the house, situated on the top of a gentle slope overlooking the Varignana valley and opening onto one of the most spectacular olive groves of the Bologna hills. The large outdoor garden offers a space of approximately 200 m² in natural travertine stone for outdoor events for up to 110 people, an infinity pool overlooking the valley and a private parking area. *Oliveto sul Lago* has 12 rooms, 11 of which are spread over two floors of the main building and one inside the villa's former

private chapel, which has been transformed into a particularly charming suite with a private garden and whirlpool bath. All rooms on the ground floor have a patio with a pergola, while those on the upper floor offer a small terrace overlooking the garden or the hills, from which to enjoy the spectacle of the sun rising or setting behind the valley. In addition to weddings, it is possible to organise private events, small conferences and corporate meetings, as well as participating in wellness programmes designed for those who wish to relax body and mind, with wine and extra virgin olive oil as the main protagonists. The restaurant, nestled in the hills and surrounded by olive trees, offers the opportunity to savour the local cuisine made exclusively with products and raw materials from zero-kilometre grown in the Palazzo di Varignana.

The *Varsana* spa is an oasis of health and wellbeing that finds its greatest inspiration in nature, offering its guests a true immersion in the land thanks to the water, facial and body treatments -including the *Varsana SPA* cosmetic line, created in 2021, based on products rich in antioxidant and soothing properties grown on the estate, such as pomegranate, extra virgin olive oil, saffron and sangiovese- and personalised rituals. A multi-sensory experience in search of true wellness of body and mind, including a traditional tour -with a special sound pool where you can immerse yourself in the splendid classical notes of the Varignana Music Festival, the musical event held every summer at Palazzo di Varignana- 7 outdoor pools and the private *Ars Vivend*i spa. Palazzo di Varignana offers various health and wellness retreats that follow the philosophy of the *Acquaviva Method*, created by Dr. Annamaria Acquaviva, scientific director of the resort, a transformative journey of 3 to 7 nights or more to reach the maximum potential of psychophysical well-being and discover a new form of beauty through cutting-edge treatments that aim to stimulate metabolic activity, support the immune system, combat oxidative stress and promote rest.

The *azienda agricola* Agrivar in Palazzo di Varignana, with 650 hectares of land, was founded in 2015 with the aim of transforming the beauty of the natural landscape into a resource not only for contemplation, but also to recover ancient indigenous crops and create a true model of circular economy in which the land of the farm produces most of the food used in the restaurants and in the resort. The commendable

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vocation for recovering ancestral varieties of olive trees that today extend over 242 hectares has made it possible to produce an extra virgin olive oil of the highest quality that has won awards and recognitions all over the world.

The hotel project of Palazzo di Varignana was born in 2013 with the restoration of the Palazzo Bentivoglio, an ancient villa dating back to 1705

The story of Palazzo di Varignana is one of recovery and regeneration: of historic buildings, of abandoned rural land and farmhouses, of crops that had been lost and which, thanks to a major renovation project, have once again outlined the surrounding landscape. Recognised as 'Best Immersive Experience' and 'Best Hotel for Weddings, Parties and Celebrations' in the Condè Nast Awards for Excellence 2022 and 2024, the resort offers leisure, relaxation, sport, personal care, natural products and gastronomic excellence.

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The gastronomic proposal of Palazzo di Varignana aims to spread the culture of EVOO

The return of noble olive growing

In 1821, the Jesuit priest, historian and naturalist Gioan Ignazio Molina, known as Abbé Molina, wrote in his *Memorie di Storia Naturale*, after tasting an olive oil from Varignana "of excellent flavour and far superior to those commonly sold", that "may God once again restore the neglected cultivation of the olive tree, which in former times dressed and embellished our mountains with so much profit". Various studies and historical research have revealed that olive trees were cultivated in Varignana from Roman times until 1700, when it was interrupted by the so-called *Little Ice Age*. Since 2015, 400 years later, the Palazzo di Varignana has recovered the oldest varieties of olive trees to repopulate the hills and produce a top-of-the-range extra virgin olive oil through an ambitious agronomic project that has allowed large tracts of wasteland to be reclaimed. Major drainage and reclamation works, ditch cleaning and rainwater regulation have reduced hydrogeological instability with the aim of revaluing this area, making it the scene of a new renaissance.

Palazzo di Varignana today extends over 650 hectares of agricultural land from which high quality zero-kilometre products are produced, covering a large area of the hill south of the Via Emilia, in the village of Varignana, in the municipality of Castel San Pietro Terme. In addition to the 242 hectares of olive groves, there are 57 hectares of vineyards where mainly native grapes are grown, as well as 3,000 metres of orchard, one hectare of almond trees, a strawberry tree, an apple, pear, apricot and cherry orchard, 4,000 metres of goji cultivation, a terraced orchard with 42 different aromatic herbs and a very original and unusual saffron production.

All these local and natural products, from innovative cultivation techniques wisely combined with artisan expertise, as well as forming the basis of the cuisine offered within the resort, have given rise to a line of products under the *Palazzo di Varignana* brand that includes five types of EVOO -three monovarietals and two blends- and another five types of wine, jams and fruit juices, saffron pistils, goji berries and salts flavoured with medicinal herbs. A refined line of teas, a carefully selected range of fine Italian artisan chocolate and a line of local artisan honey complete the catalogue.

The connection with the territory and history that characterises the products of *Palazzo di Varignana* is represented by the symbol of the brand itself, inspired by the Roman coin found in the nearby archaeological site of Claterna, an ancient Roman city whose greatest splendour dates back to the 1st century BC, when it was densely populated and in full economic and productive expansion. The coin features two famous faces: Octavian on the obverse and Caesar on the reverse.

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Love for the land, nature and the olive tree

The love for the land and the passion for beauty, nature and the olive tree of the founder of Palazzo di Varignana, Carlo Gherardi -who also owns a valuable and eclectic private art collection within its premises- is the basis of this unique project based on the recovery of indigenous cultivars and the protection of the environment: more than 160,000 trees from which excellent and balanced monovarietal oils of powerful structure, intense taste sensations and great aromatic complexity are obtained. Each year new hectares of olive groves come into production, defining a path of excellence in which each cultivar expresses its own identity, resulting in a different oil each season, making up a palette composed of various shades of green and olfactory nuances ranging from medium to intense fruitiness.

The proximity of the olive groves to the mill allows for immediate milling of the harvest and an integrated supply chain that is managed by the staff of Palazzo di Varignana. Milling is carried out in a continuous two-phase cycle, with a modern plant equipped with systems of reduced oxidative impact at low temperature in order to process each variety of olive at a specific temperature to enhance its fruitiness, or to control and modify the amount of polyphenols and, therefore, the intensity of bitterness and/or spiciness.

The range of EVOOs produced at Palazzo di Varignana consists of three monocultivars that faithfully reflect the uniqueness of the territory: *Vargnano Brisighella PDO*, made from green olives of the Nostrana di Brisighella variety; *Claterna Biologico*, an organic EVOO from the Ghiacciola cultivar, one of Emilia-Romagna's most representative indigenous varieties; and *Stiffonte*, a monocultivar of Correggiolo, an ancient variety of Tuscan origin that has found a favourable environment for its cultivation in the hills of Emilia-Romagna.

The *Blu* and *Verde* blends -the latter organic- are made from a blend of different cultivars to achieve an original expression of flavours and aromas, each with its own personality and organoleptic characteristics: Corno Leccio, Correggiolo and Leccino in the case of the former, and Maurino, Grignano and Frantoio in the case of the latter.

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The gastronomic proposal of Palazzo di Varignana, directed by the chefs Roberto Cortesi, Alessandro Gabrieli, Marco Leandri and Francesco Manograsso, aims to spread the culture of extra virgin olive oil, offering an immersive 360° experience that starts from the cultivation and continues inside the resort. In addition to tasting the different EVOOs through tasting courses, the menus based on extra virgin olive oil offered in restaurants and banquets allow you to discover the relationship between oil and food, between cuisine and matter; while the spa's oleocentric treatments and massages transfer the natural values distilled by the earth and the olive tree to the dimension of sensual pleasure and beauty treatments and care.

As for the winemaking and oenological project, which took its first steps in 2016 and is currently directed by oenologist Umberto Marchiori, began with the planting of some vines indigenous to the area, such as Sangiovese. In addition, Pinot Noir was added to make the desire to produce a *blanc de noir* sparkling wine using the classic method a reality. Today there are 57 hectares of vineyards in the process of conversion to organic, located in an exceptional natural amphitheatre between ravines and hills full of olive groves, in an ideal environment for viticulture thanks to the particular microclimate due to the moderate altitude and the orography of the area.

The semi-underground cellar of Palazzo di Varignana (1,100 m^2 of space built according to the canons of semi-underground architecture), the flagship of the project, uses concrete tanks for the vinification of still wines, while stainless steel tanks were chosen for the production of the sparkling wine. The barrel room is kept at a constant temperature of 14°C and houses, under its imposing red brick vaults, the French oak barrels for the refinement of the more structured reds where the young wines rest and refine to reach the right level of maturation and thus become the best expression of the *terroir*. The terrace overlooking the vineyard invites you to lose yourself in the landscape of Varignana, among the Emilia hills, while the "*Esperienze in cantina*" programme allows you to enjoy sensory tastings of the estate's delicious wines -*Pinot Nero IGT Rubicone*, *Sangiovese Superiore Romagna DOC*, *Chardonnay IGT Rubicone*, *Villa Amagioia Blanc de Noirs* and *Villa Amagioia Blanc de Blancs*- accompanied by a selection of cheese boards, cured meats and typical products of the Emilia-Romagna area.

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The Orto Giardino of Rio Rosso

In 2016, the Palazzo di Varignana acquired the nearby *Orto Giardino* of Rio Rosso: 7 hectares of land reduced to an impenetrable forest, transformed with an agronomic design into one of the most beautiful and productive orchards in the area. On the south-west side of the farm, a network of country lanes leads through almond trees with two late varieties (*Prunus dulcis soleta* and *Lauranne*) and a goji plant (*Lycium barbarum*). To the east, a century-old olive tree crowns the terraces used for growing aromatic and medicinal herbs. At the foot of the slope, two paths fork off, offering the possibility to see unusual fruit species, varieties of table grapes and numerous varieties of forgotten fruits (such as *Giuggiole* or *Biricoccolo*), as well as old varieties of apple and pear trees -some dating back to the 18th century-. A collection of small fruit trees, elderberry woods and a hazel forest complete the cultivated areas before reaching the wooded and pollution-free area typical of the Emilian hills.

Adopt an Olive Tree

The project 'Adopt an Olive Tree' of Palazzo di Varignana aims to bring ancient olive varieties back to life where the preservation of the environment and protection of the territory history has already seen them flourish, offering the possibility to share the responsibility of an ethical choice. Adopting an olive tree allows you to share your passion for caring for the land and to give the gift of one of the most precious and healthy foods in existence. Planting a tree is always a gesture of love and hope for the future that requires shifting one's gaze from the present to a distant horizon. Agronomists, botanists and experts in olive growing are involved in a project that implies the issuing of the *Passaporto di Varignana*, a certificate that records the history and characteristics of the tree, from age to cultivar, and makes it possible to follow the evolution of the olive tree -to which the adopter's desired name is assigned- and to obtain a series of benefits linked, among other things, to the future litres of EVOO obtained. A sustainable and responsible way of showing love for nature and olive oil, the preservation of the environment and protection of the territory •

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Philippe Starck

The visionary who has turned EVOO into a monumental work of art and sustainability

By Pandora Peñamil Peñafiel

The avant-garde French designer Philippe Starck -Grand Prize for Industrial Creation, Red Dot Design Award and Excellence in Design Award, among many others- culminated at the end of 2024 his monumental tribute to EVOO with his latest creation, the design of LA Almazara, the world's first signature oil mill in Ronda (Málaga, Spain). A surreal work of art in which design, sustainability and spirituality merge to perfection. For Starck, olive oil is an essential element that connects human beings with nature, a product that is essential for life. We talked about extra virgin, creativity and emotions with this genius of design... and ecology.

"There are four essential elements in the relationship between human beings and nature: oxygen, water, salt and olive oil"

›› A couple of decades ago, when packaging was not yet given the importance it deserved, you designed the first signature EVOO bottle. Now you have just signed the world's first signature oil mill... Is Philippe Starck and olive oil a history of love?
I am passionate about human beings, our evolution as an animal species and our connection with nature. There are four essential elements in the relationship between human beings and nature: oxygen, water, salt and olive oil. The first two are indispensable for survival; the last two are indispensable for living.

When Perico -Pedro Gómez de Baeza, entrepreneur, culture lover and promoter of LA Organic-, an extraordinary man, asked me to work with him on his olive oil project, I felt very honoured. I accepted immediately and only set two conditions: that the olive oil we produce must be organic -otherwise it should not exist- and that I could design a bottle and packaging that would offer a real service, keeping the precious olive oil away from the light and temperature of the outside world. For LA Almazara, the approach was exactly the same, centred on respect. I created a monolithic red block that would honour and protect our sacred olive oil.

For 20 years, LA Organic juices have received numerous awards, including the award for the World's Best Ecological Olive Oil. This means that it was, and still is, a good product, made with intelligence and honesty. Honesty is one of the most important parameters for me; it is the only way to provide a lasting service that is good for both humans and nature.

›› Do you like this food? Do you remember when you tasted Spanish olive oil for the first time?
I have always been a big consumer of olive oil but, like everyone else, I choose the one I like, which should always be organic, regardless of where it comes from.

For decades, Spanish olive oil did not get the respect it deserved. People did not know that Spain is the largest producer of olive oil in the world. The first time I tasted Spanish olive oil, I sensed that it was something pure. Then I tasted it in a salad, with a little salt. I liked it so much that, through LA Organic and now LA Almazara, I wanted to show everyone what Spanish organic EVOO really is.

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›› Let's go back to LA Almazara... What did you want to transmit with its design?
LA Almazara is like Andalusia: rigorous, real, exaggerated, extreme, timeless, strong, surreal, spiritual and passionate. It is both the oil mill, the minimum tool, and a monumental temple dedicated to the eternal glory of olive oil, which houses just the essence of its function through the radical elegance of passion, to which we add some symbols that reflect the Spanish and Andalusian culture.

My job consists of creating extraordinary places, where people can feel more sensitive, more passionate. LA Almazara is, above all, a functional building that provides a service to the community and even to humanity, honouring and protecting the olive oil. But it is also a great slap in the face that awakens, shakes, animates and moves us. I want visitors to go home saying that this experience has changed their lives, that they now demand more creativity and emotion.

›› In it we find references to artists of great personality such as Picasso or Goya... What other artists inspire you and why?
In LA Almazara everything is symbolic, a surrealistic language that speaks of opera, of the impossible that becomes possible. Wherever you look you find a fertile surprise, a mental game to illuminate eyes and minds.

I am not interested in art or artists *per se*, but I am moved by their strange little music, their poetry. I have always admired inventors and scientists, especially the former, such as Ptolemy and Eratosthenes who, using a camel, a well and a 30-centimeter pole, were able to measure the size of the Earth with an error of only 4%. That's true and inspiring creativity for me. That is why I chose to add references to some of the great Spanish and Andalusian minds: the Renaissance painter Francisco Goya; Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí with his 1929 film *An Andalusian Dog*; the Andalusian matador Pedro de Barberana y Aparregui; and Abbas Ibn Firnas, the Ronda scientist and inventor of the flying machine.

›› LA Organic Experience has been promoting oleotourism for several years. Do you think oleotourism is sufficiently known and practiced around the world?
Since its inception, LA Organic has innovated, producing EVOO in the same way a cellar master would produce fine wines. We invited Michel Rolland, one of the most respected French winemakers, to collaborate with us.

Today, with LA Almazara, the first oil mill designed by a known creator, LA Organic continues its pioneering (re)invention of oleotourism, and I am sure it will foster development worldwide.

Robert Doisneau. *La línia de la sort: Pablo Picasso a Valauri*, 1952.

Francisco de Goya. *El aquelarre*, 1798.

"The olive tree, its fruits and its oil are sacred and belong to the collection of the history of humanity"

"LA Almazara is a great slap in the face that awakens, shakes, animates and moves us"

Daniel Yampolschi. Plaza de España, Seville.

First Prize
Mario Solinas 2024

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›› You are also responsible for the interior design of numerous restaurants around the world. What is your favourite food?
I consider food to be fuel for our brain. It helps us to function, to create, to love. This is why we have to be very careful and eat as healthy and organic as possible. I eat what is real, natural, fun and local, no matter where I am. I always like honest products that allow us to eat with a cheerful elegance and without dying, which is already a lot!

›› You define yourself as an ethical and humanist designer. The olive tree has been on this planet for 8,000 years, embracing the entire Mediterranean basin and transmitting purity, essence and quality. Is the olive tree the most symbolic and inspiring tree that exists?
The olive tree, its fruits and its oil have always been respected and probably always will be. They are sacred and belong to the collection of the history of humanity. LA Almazara is a tribute to this respect for olive oil, born of all the civilizations that have preceded us.

›› If you consider the most cutting-edge words today 'transmission' and 'heritage', how do you think the consumers of the future will view your designs?
I consider that at birth each person signs a contract with their community, their family, their civilization and their animal species. This contract can take many forms, but the basis is that we are here to help each member of our community and evolve our species as a whole. So, obviously, the role of each person is a political, social and human role. For a designer, it is more vital, not because we are designers, but because we are producers of ideas and concepts that finally materialize.

Design was born in the 19th century, a century of materialism in which the premise was to *cosmeticize* the material in order to make it more wearable. Today, and in the future, longevity is, and will be, key. We must choose or create the best product, intelligent and honest, made with the minimum of material and, of course, sustainable and that provides the best service throughout our life, before we can pass it on to our children and grandchildren.

I have always dreamed of a "future market of non-products for non-consumers", as I just want to be good and give back to my community. The only thing I'd like people

to remember me in the future as a bit *cuckoo* but honest guy that every day woke up and tried to find something to improve the quality of our evolution and, at his level, he succeeded.

›› You have always shown your preoccupation with sustainability and bio. Do you feel that citizens today have really taken that path or is it more posturing? How do your works contribute to a more sustainable world?
The ecological dimension has always been present in my work. This has always been a strong conviction, because I understood the importance of ecology at the age of seventeen, when I met in Formentera an American who called himself an ecologist. He explained everything to me. Since then, I have become an active, political and high-tech environmentalist.

As a creator, I always try to go to the minimum of everything, fighting trends, looking for new technologies and pushing the creation of innovative

materials such as bioplastics and 3D molded plywood. I call it economy, that is, producing the best service with the least amount of energy and materiality. For me, this is an economic and especially ecological evidence of modern times, and the only guarantee of a timeless product or project.

As consumers, there are some really easy tasks that we should do every day. When we are about to buy something we should ask ourselves, "Do I need it?". And 80% of the time, the most honest answer will be no. The other way is a little more radical but it boils down to the same thing. Let's apply a 10% discount on everything: let's buy 10% less yoghurt, 10% less clothes, 10% less everything. It's an absolutely invisible gesture on a daily basis, it probably won't change your life, but it could change the world.

›› Many of your designs are like a dream, but what does Philippe Starck dream about?
Peace.

The renowned French designer has opted for a minimalist and timeless design, without superfluous details or coatings, capturing only the essential with rigor and clarity

LA Almazara

Welcome to the world's first signature oil mill

LA' ALMAZARA

In mid-October 2024 LA Almazara of LA Organic opened its doors in the heart of the Serranía de Ronda (Málaga, Spain), a unique and immersive space that celebrates the magic of extra virgin olive oil while reflecting the passion and respect for the tradition, culture and nature of Andalusia.

Designed by Philippe Starck and located in the middle of nature, 2.5 kilometers from Ronda, LA Almazara is an avant-garde project that fuses tradition and architectural innovation, a habitable work of art where every detail has been conceived to be functional and impactful and that promises to become a global reference point. In the words of Philippe Starck, "LA Almazara is an unusual, amazing and miraculous place where the visitor can enjoy a powerful and radical experience that challenges and transforms. It is an accumulation of mysteries where the crystallized respect for olive oil, born of all the civilizations that have preceded us, is mixed with emotion".

A unique and immersive space that aims to highlight the culture, history and tradition of one of the flagship products of Spanish gastronomy, EVOO, reinventing the concept of oleotourism and contributing to the cultural and economic development of the region. The oil mill includes a working oil press, a museum, a restaurant and a tasting and events area.

Minimalistic and timeless design

The renowned French designer has opted for a minimalist and timeless design, without superfluous details or coatings, capturing only the essential with rigor and clarity. A monolithic red cube, with a huge steel bull horn and a gigantic eye cast in concrete spewing black smoke. The eye, to illustrate the vigilance of the great Andalusian surrealist artists; the smoke, as a thought or a look. In its interior we find surprises and homages. Thus, a monumental half olive is embedded in the rusted steel wall and a metal pipe penetrates the building without ever leaving it. A huge figure with no head and no identity, but with a plane made entirely of bits and pieces, and yet

one of the first to fly. Pieces of wood. A giant estoque and an equally enormous portrait of its visionary promoter, Pedro Gómez de Baeza -who died before seeing his dream come to fruition- whose legacy will always live on in this innovative oil mill.

The inner shadow is suddenly dazzled by a rectangle of light that extends onto a terrace suspended by huge metal chains. This opening to the outside becomes a frame for the mythical image of the landscapes of Ronda and Andalusia, inviting visitors to discover this exceptional natural environment. In the same way, the sculptural objects created by Philippe Starck and scattered throughout the olive groves are mental games that awaken the intellect and intrigue the viewer. "*Always respectful and sacred, almost religious, with the addition of intelligence and emotion, LA Almazara is a great slap in the face that awakens, shakes, enlivens, moves and pays tribute to the olive and its oil*". Word of Philippe Starck.

THE UNCOMFORTABLE COLLECTION

By Alfredo Briega Martín

Greek architect and designer Katerina Kamprani has reinvented the mundane, transforming everyday objects into thought-provoking works of art that are as bewildering as they are amusing.

Balancing humour, art and design, her series *The Uncomfortable* is a collection of familiar household objects that have been altered just enough to make them uncomfortable or even impossible to use. Through playful settings, Kamprani challenges our assumptions about design and purpose, sparking curiosity about everyday tools whose utility we often take for granted.

After studying Architecture at the National Technical University of Athens, Katerina Kamprani's journey towards "uncomfortable" design with its own personality began in 2008, during her postgraduate studies in Product Design and Interactive Systems at the University of the Aegean, where, in an attempt to redefine her career, she delved into the concept of User Experience (UX), focusing on creating products that were intuitive and enjoyable to use. The idea of prioritizing ease and functionality triggered an unconventional inspiration: Kamprani was fascinated by the challenge of reversing these principles. She found humour in the idea of making everyday objects deliberately awkward and uncomfortable, and enjoyed the mental exercise of reimagining familiar objects in absurd and counterintuitive ways. This change of perspective laid the groundwork for *The Uncomfortable*, her personal project started in 2009, in which she transforms simple designs into playful critiques of utility. "I hope that this project will stimulate an observation of the complexity and depth of interactions with the simplest objects around us," she maintains.

By deconstructing the invisible design language of our domestic reality, *The Uncomfortable* modifies fundamental properties of simple everyday objects making them deliberately uncomfortable and challenges our expectations of functionality. Breaking away from established conceptual models leads to an appreciation of convention through defective design. The semiotics of the original object is maintained, but the observer is deceived when they try to simulate its functioning, subverting expectations and giving these everyday objects a strange, absurd and often surrealistic quality.

Creativity, imagination and humour, lots of humour

Side rocking chairs, tilted and hooped chairs, brooms that look like brushes, double champagne glasses, wine glasses with side openings, elongated cups and engagement mugs -the most difficult piece to manufacture-, mailbox-shaped teapots, open-front rain boots, absolutely disruptive cutlery -spoons, forks and knives-, impossible concrete umbrellas, introverted watering cans that look at themselves -or that refuse to do their function-... the collection is not to be missed. Creativity, imagination and humour to rethink the role of design in our daily lives. "I really like humour as a creative outlet," says Kamprani. "I also use it as a defence mechanism, it makes me feel good. I enjoy surrealism and the absurd. For me it's just another way of thinking; it can be more liberating than logic. There is no concept of right or wrong, so the possibilities are endless!"

The Uncomfortable modifies fundamental properties of simple everyday objects by deliberately making them uncomfortable and challenges our expectations of functionality

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TENUTE DONNA VITTORIA

Since the release of *The Uncomfortable*, Katerina Kamprani's work has gained international recognition, becoming a viral phenomenon since 2013. Her extravagant creations and designs, at once puzzling and comical, have appeared on the covers of books, newspapers and magazines around the world, and even in commercial advertising campaigns, conveying the value of creativity and innovative thinking. The images have also been used as educational material to help explain design terms to children and students alike.

In 2017, her subversive 3D virtual models were fabricated as physical prototypes for her first solo exhibition at Zagreb Design Week in Croatia, allowing visitors to experience the "awkward" items in person and appreciate their detailed craftsmanship. Subsequently, her work has appeared in several group exhibitions throughout Europe, including the NRW-Forum in Düsseldorf (2022), the Cité du Design in Saint-Étienne (2021) and the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie in Paris (2019). Each exhibition has presented its unique approach to functional design to the public, attracting the interest of designers and non-designers alike.

"Make your own Uncomfortable Object"

Kamprani is also dedicated to sharing her innovative perspective through lectures on *The Uncomfortable* -at institutions such as TEDx in Poznan (Poland) and Syros (Greece)-, online talks -mainly aimed at art, architecture and graphic design students- and workshops around the world. The latter, called "*Make your own Uncomfortable Object*", encourages participants to break away from traditional design principles and explore creativity from a practical approach. Through her talks, Kamprani delves into the concept of "uncomfortable" design, offering insight into her creative process and the philosophy behind her work.

What makes the Athenian designer and architect's work so intriguing is her clever blend of humour and insight. By rendering familiar utensils unusable, Kamprani sheds light on the assumptions that guide designers in creating functional objects. Her work raises the question: what happens when practicality is deliberately sacrificed? These utensils, though

impractical, force us to reflect on the intricate relationship we have with the tools that are part of our daily lives, to "rethink our relationship with the world around us," in her own words.

In short, *The Uncomfortable by Katerina Kamprani* is a great tool for creative thinking, a celebration of discomfort, frustration and fun. Through her intentionally flawed designs, she forces us to look at familiar objects in an entirely new way, appreciating the delicate balance between form and function. Her capricious approach encourages us to laugh at discomfort and, perhaps, also to find beauty in it •

What makes the Athenian designer's work so intriguing is her clever blend of humour and insight

BIBLIOTHÈQUE

By Alfredo Briega Martín

As a starter, a gastronomic journey through the culinary diversity of the five continents, aimed at the youngest. Here are the 130 best recipes from the Italian restaurant group Big Mamma and more than 150 recipes for one of Italy's most cherished culinary traditions, pasta. For the second course, an exquisite collection of regional delicacies from Iran, displaying a dazzling tapestry of textures, aromas and unique ingredients. And for dessert, an exploration of the birth and origins of cooking, essential to understanding where we come from and our food. A menu as exquisite as it is evocative.

The Book of Pasta

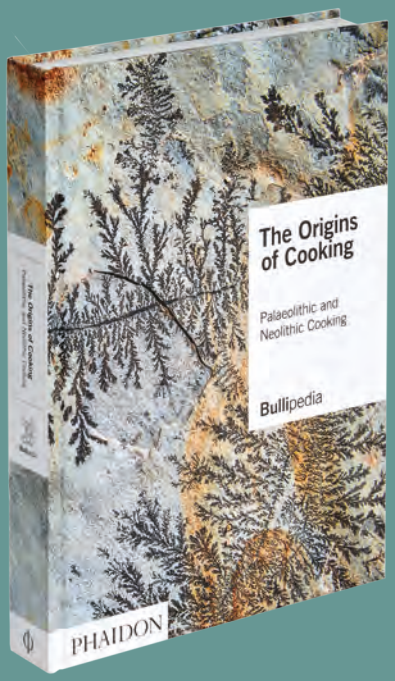
For over 147 years, Barilla has not only championed the joy of pasta, but also the importance of cooking with quality ingredients, fostering a gastronomic culture around the world. Created in close collaboration with this world-renowned brand present in more than 100 countries, *The Book of Pasta* brings together more than 150 recipes from one of Italy's most cherished culinary traditions, demonstrating how delicious, innovative and multifaceted this iconic food can be. This elegant volume is a celebration of pasta, its history and the creativity unleashed by the recipes devised by the chefs of Academia Barilla, the company's culinary centre dedicated to the promotion of Italian gastronomic culture. Organized into five chapters, the recipes range from contemporary creations to well-loved classics, incorporating a wide variety of pasta shapes -up to 30- ingredients, preparation methods and moods. The book also includes texts on 15 ingredients that go perfectly with pasta, providing additional information on how to create countless delicious dishes. With a bold, innovative design that alludes to Barilla's distinctive blue packaging, *The Book of Pasta* perfectly represents the culinary spirit, passion and history of the brand, inviting novice and professional cooks to explore the tremendous versatility of pasta.

The Book of Pasta
By: Academia Barilla
Publisher: Phaidon Press

Big Mamma Cucina Popolare

Founded in 2013 by Victor Lugger and Tigrane Seydoux, the Italian restaurant group Big Mamma burst onto the London dining scene in early 2019 with the opening of Gloria, the 1970s Capri-style *trattoria* in the heart of Shoreditch. Following the success of its first opening in London, the owners opened Circolo Popolare, a sunny Sicilian-style *trattoria* in Fitzrovia, in June of the same year. The Big Mamma team also has eight restaurants in France, including La Felicità, a nearly 5,000-square-meter food market in Paris. *Big Mamma Cucina Popolare*: *Contemporary Italian Recipes* features the Big Mamma team's 130 best recipes -simple techniques spiced with inventive touches- from delicious, easy-to-prepare and imaginative versions of true classics like *La Gran Carbonara* and *Tiramisú*, to some of today's most creative Italian recipes like P*izza Nera con Cozze* and *Sfoglia Lasagna*. With a design based on Fima Deruta's brightly coloured hand-painted ceramics seen in restaurants, the book includes well-loved dishes from Gloria and Circolo Popolare, as well as tips from Big Mamma's chefs, with chapters on antipasti, Italian salads, pizza, fresh pasta and risotto, main courses, desserts, brunch and cocktails. A vibrant, exciting and contemporary version of the Italian tradition.

Big Mamma Cucina Popolare: Contemporary Italian Recipes
By: Big Mamma Team
Publisher: Phaidon Press



The Origins of Cooking

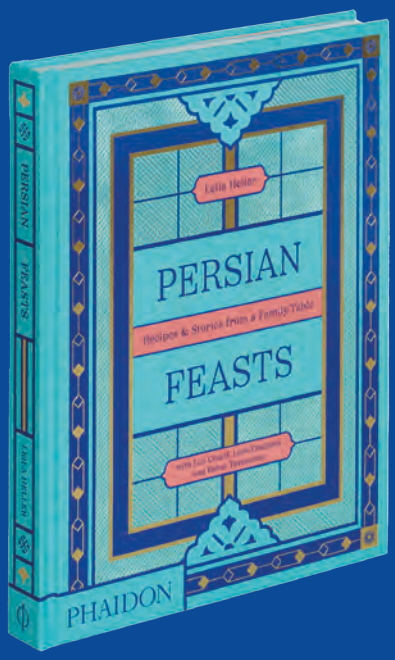
Ferran Adrià's latest title, *The Origins of Cooking: Palaeolithic and Neolithic Cooking* -the third in the Bullipedia collection developed by the elBulli Foundation to trace the history of the haute cuisine sector in Western society- is an exploration of the birth of cooking, essential to understanding where we and our food come from. The prestigious chef has always been fascinated by going back to the origins of things. "We cannot understand our contemporary experience if we don't look at when, how and where it all began," he argues. Working with a team of archaeologists, anthropologists, historians and chefs, Adrià has reconstructed the history of our relationship with food. Aimed at both professionals and amateurs in the food industry who want to learn more about the history of food, the book discusses four essential stages. The first is the period before the appearance of fire in the Palaeolithic, when cooking consisted of small transformations of basic products. The second stage begins with the discovery of fire and the creation of a wide range of techniques without which cooking would be inconceivable today. The third stage arose when nomadic hunter-gatherers began to modify their habits, giving rise to a completely different way of life, raising animals and cultivating plants, marking the beginning of the Neolithic period. The final stage begins with the invention of ceramics, which brought with it all kinds of tools and containers that would forever revolutionise the way we cook and eat, laying the foundations for the haute cuisine restaurant thousands of years later •

The Origins of Cooking: Palaeolithic and Neolithic Cooking
By: Ferran Adrià and the elBullifoundation
Publisher: Phaidon Press

Persian Feasts

From Shiraz in the south to Tabriz in the north, *Persian Feasts* is an exquisite collection of Iran's regional delicacies and a dazzling tapestry of unique textures, aromas and ingredients by Leila Heller -born in the hills of Tehran and settled in New York- and co-authors Lila Charif, Laya Khadjavi and Bahar Tavakolian in honour of Heller's late mother, Nahid Joon. With a hundred or so dishes photographed especially for the occasion -all taken at home with Heller's stunning crockery- this volume blends seamlessly with intimate stories of family, history and tradition with the country's rich culinary culture, which dates back 5,000 years and features a wide variety of dishes and recipes, including multiple stews, saffron-infused rice dishes and succulent kebabs. Organized by type of food -appetizers and side dishes, soups and stews, meats, poultry and fish, rice dishes, chutneys and jams, drinks and desserts- each recipe includes an introductory note that allows for a greater understanding of its cultural and personal relevance; while the book is also interspersed with three essays by art historians who provide historical accounts of Persian cuisine and culture that broaden the scope of the work. *Persian Feasts: Recipes & Stories from a Family Table* exudes the warmth of the region's renowned cuisine and hospitality, including in its final part six menus set for various festivities such as Nowruz, the celebration of the Persian New Year. Finally, an extensive appendix provides basic Iranian recipes and a complete list of herbs, spices, seeds, essences, molasses, and teas commonly used in Persian cuisine, plus a text on traditional medicinal properties.

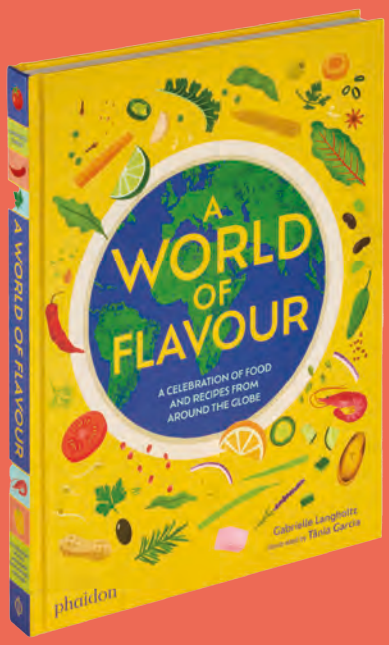
Persian Feasts: Recipes & Stories from a Family Table
By: Leila Heller & Lila Charif, Laya Khadjavi and Bahar Tavakolian
Publisher: Phaidon Press



A World of Flavour

Throughout history, food has been one of the most powerful and dynamic expressions of cultural identity. It has also functioned as a unifying force, constantly transcending geographical boundaries through immigration and innovative culinary combinations. In *A World of Flavour*, prizewinning author and editor Gabrielle Langholtz explores and captures the culinary diversity of five continents in a luxurious volume packed with fascinating facts about food from every corner of the globe, delicious illustrations by Tania García, and more than 40 authentic recipes from around the world, with step-by-step instructions and three levels of difficulty. The work serves as compelling evidence of the food's enduring influence and global reach, bringing together a collection of recipes ranging from Vietnamese *pho* and Mexican *salsa verde* to Italian *focaccia* and Nigerian *jollof* rice. Organized by continents, each country has a specific section offering an overview of its culinary culture, ingredients and regional flavours. Aimed at budding chefs ages 7 and up, the book begins with a section on vocabulary and key cooking skills, maintaining an accessible tone while encouraging children to become fully involved in the cooking process.

A World of Flavour: A Celebration of Food and Recipes from Around the Globe
By: Gabrielle Langholtz
Publisher: Phaidon Press



Aires de Jaén: *tradition, innovation, excellence and cutting-edge technology*

By Alfredo Briega Martín

A symbol of excellence in the production of extra virgin olive oil, Aires de Jaén is an exemplary family company that in its 60 years of history has always demonstrated that respect for tradition is not at odds with innovation and the latest technology, and that commitment to quality can be the driving force for sustainable and responsible production.

"Its commitment to quality and innovation is reflected not only in the incorporation of cutting-edge technology, but also in the expansion of its facilities and the continuous improvement of its processes"

The current is the fourth generation of Aires de Jaén, a producer and bottler of extra virgin olive oil that began its journey in the olive sector 60 years ago, in 1965, and has managed to preserve the essence and value of its roots, transmitting from generation to generation the knowledge and secrets of the culture of the olive tree while adopting the most advanced technologies in the sector. The result of the wise combination of a deep olive-growing tradition with a firm commitment to innovation and excellence is a magnificent EVOO that reaches the tables of consumers all over the world, representing the best of the Andalusian olive grove.

Located in one of the most important olive growing regions in the world, Aires de Jaén has positioned itself as a true benchmark in the production of high quality EVOOs, combining tradition and technology in perfect harmony. Each season represents a complete 360º production cycle in which every detail of the process is taken care of, from the cultivation of the 200 hectares of olive groves at the Badenes Estate, to the milling process in the oil mill located in the heart of this estate, to the bottling of the juice obtained on the premises. This approach allows exhaustive control of the quality and traceability of the product, ensuring that each bottle of your EVOO retains all the sensory and nutritional attributes that make extra virgin olive oil such a highly valued and appreciated product.

Each bottle of *Aires de Jaén* is a reflection of its passion for the Jaén olive grove and its commitment to the well-being of consumers, as well as a sensory experience that allows those who enjoy it to connect with the land and history of Jaén. Its unequivocal commitment to authenticity and quality has earned it the trust of consumers and recognition in both domestic and international markets.

Aires de Jaén and Pieralisi, the perfect tandem

With more than half a century of experience in the sector, Aires de Jaén continues to evolve to meet the demands of a constantly changing market. Its commitment to quality and innovation is reflected not only in the incorporation of cutting-edge technology, but also in the expansion of its facilities and the continuous improvement of its processes to adapt to new trends and remain at the forefront of the industry.

In its commitment to achieve excellence and meet the highest standards of quality, Aires de Jaén has recently made a significant investment in state-of-the-art technology. In collaboration with Pieralisi, the company has incorporated new machinery in its processing plant, optimising every step in the extraction of liquid gold. A fruitful union that began in 2018, when the production of EVOO began at Badenes Estate, and which in the new 2024/25 campaign has resulted in the start-up of a new extraction line.

If we look at the Pieralisi machinery installed in the oil mill, they are 60 CV mills with pre-installation of a cleaning and cooling system adaptable to a listello sieve, a system patented by the Italian firm. The shredding units feed a three-shaft mixer (8000 l.) and, once the optimal coalescence is obtained, the new *SPI 65.2* decanter is fed from the mixer to perform the appropriate separation of phases. Equipped with a hydraulically driven Rotodiff secondary motor, this decanter provides the oil mill with adequate production flexibility without compromising quality or yield, allowing premium quality batches to be milled in less time without altering the fruitiness of the final product.

> ***The investment in this new state-of-the-art technology not only responds to the need to improve production efficiency, but also to Aires de Jaén's commitment to sustainability***

Finally, the oily must is conveyed to a vertical *Marte* separator, which cleans the oil without adding water before it is sent to the winery. This vertical centrifuge incorporates Pieralisi's self-cleaning CIP system, which saves time and costs by eliminating the daily disassembly and cleaning tasks required during the campaign.

A second extraction line consisting of a three-shaft mixer and the *SPI 555* decanter ensures that not a drop of the precious juice is lost, especially in the early stages of harvesting, where this operation maximises the quality of the second centrifugation oil when no temperature is applied in the mixing.

The investment in this new state-of-the-art technology that combines quality, extractability and profitability not only responds to the need to improve production efficiency, but also to Aires de Jaén's commitment to sustainability. The innovations introduced reduce energy consumption and minimise the use of natural resources in the extraction process, in line with the company's environmental values. This sustainable approach not only benefits the natural environment, but also reinforces the social responsibility of Aires de Jaén and its commitment to the future of the olive industry •

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