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Nota de Prensa/Press Release

El diario New York Times, en colaboración con la revista Spain Gourmetout, publica un suplemento especial dedicado al aceite de oliva y el vino ecológicos de España, destacando el protagonismo que Aceites Toledo desarrolla en este sector. El artículo completo se puede obtener en la zona de descargas.

The New York Times, in cooperation with the magazine Spain Gourmetour, publishes an special colour suplement on Organic Olive oil and Wine from Spain. The article explores the organic trend in both products, enhancing the leading position of Aceites Toledo in this field, while the writer editor indulges his pen in the humanistic curriculum of Juan Carlos Rubio, eldest son of Juan Rubio Navarro and general manager of Aceites Toledo, who besides his passion for the fine arts is an ornithologist of note.

Say

Cheese!



SPAIN GOURMETOUR

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Wine Magazine



Spain's

ORGANIC

Renaissance

With the flourishing of organic production world-wide, Spain has risen to the top of the organic producers lists. **Peter Stone** puts two of Spain's most popular exports, wine and olive oil, under the microscope, and meets some of the people that are making wine and olive oil greener.



Text
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One of the most innovative changes in Spanish wine and olive oil production in the past couple of decades has been the use of organic methods, eschewing pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, chemical fertilizers and other toxic measures that adversely affect the vegetation and environment. The push toward organic is as much the responsibility of larger corporations as of smaller growers and producers: humble unsung heroes that 'did their bit' when organic was just a catchphrase and not a developed method of production.

Madrid Pioneers

Regarded by many as Madrid province's most distinguished viticulturists, Gosálbez-Orti, have been using organic methods since 1992 when they planted the first vines, making them members of the *avant-garde* of the movement. Their 11 acres of vineyards – located at 2530 feet above sea

level in 25 acres of sandy-limestone-clay soil surrounded by 200 year old olive trees in and around the bed of a tiny river – are a few minutes' drive from the charming little village of Pozuelo del Rey, just 22 miles east of the capital.

Run by husband and wife team Estrella Orti and Carlos Gosálbez, the bodega's dark red intensely flavored Qubél (an Arabic name meaning dome) has won 15 prizes in the past five years, the latest being a bronze medal at the 2007 London International Wine Challenge. They pour the same energy into their work that they put into their previous disparate activities: Estrella as a French translator and mayoress for 12 years of the small nearby town of Nuevo Baztán, where they both live, Carlos (who speaks fluent English) from his time as an engineer and DC3 pilot in Canada.

"The bodega was built in 1999" says Estrella, who controls the marketing and exports side of the business.

"Our first harvest was in 2000, and two years later we pioneered the organic wine market in Madrid province. We now export to the USA, Canada, Japan, Colombia and a number of European countries."

The Nitty Gritty

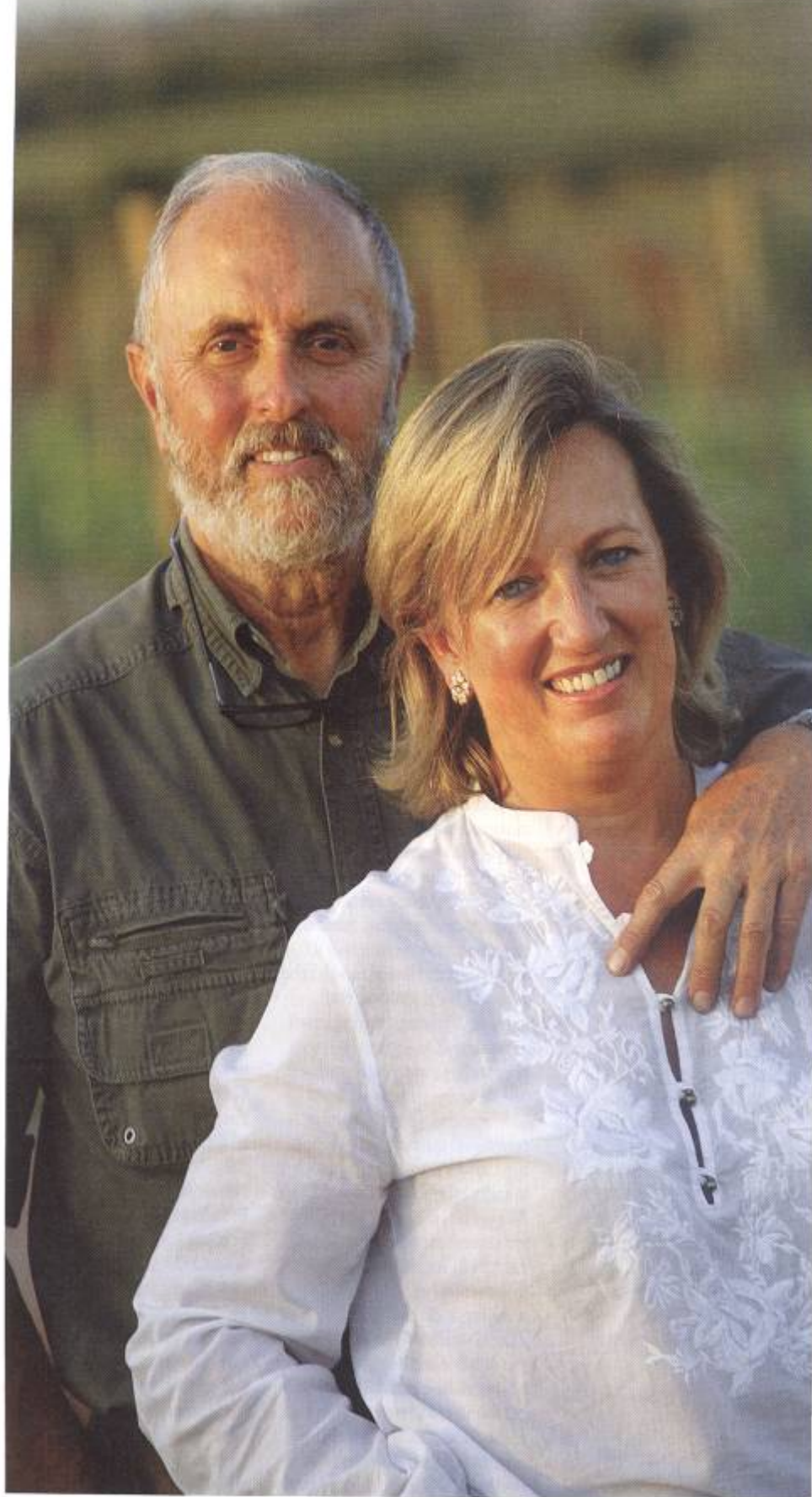
If you want a practical run through the nitty gritty of production, Carlos is your man. "Our wine goes through three key stages," he explains. "First comes the *campo* or vineyard work itself. We have a hard earth that retains humidity – though not excessively – but our small vines thrive in such a soil and are aided by the area's microclimate: dry intensely hot summers and chilly – but not too cold – winters plus lots of strong sunlight, all of which combine to produce highly concentrated fruit. Fertilization is with natural sheep manure: no nitrogen, potassium, phosphorus or the like is needed. No herbicides are used either. Just powdered

sulphur treatment which is less absorbent and less potentially dangerous than conventional injection methods."

"The grapes mature while a team of workers constantly checks them for a variety of factors – appearance, pulp, grapeskin, pips, among them."

"Next comes the *bodega* stage: picking takes place during the first two weeks in September when the grapes are transported in 33 lbs boxes to the bodega itself for the fermentation process. Here they're tested again for yeast content, temperature and sulphur dioxide level. In the fermentation-enhancing *delestage* sequence, performed twice daily, wine is drained and filtered from one tank to another, where it is aired for 2 hours before being returned to the original tank."

"Lastly, comes the *crianza* or aging stage, when the wine is put into French oak wood barrels. Regular microbiological analyses are carried out and the barrels



Estrella Orti and Carlos Gosálbez, the couple behind Qubé



are turned once or twice a week to make sure the lees don't stay continuously at the bottom.

It's important to extract the maximum number of 'good' polyphenols (natural chemical compounds that determine aroma, color, flavor and tannin content) during the bodega stage, and use them to extend the life and quality of the wine in this final *crianza* stage."

Qubé's various *crianzas* are made mainly with locally grown Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Tempranillo grapes, and sometimes with a Garnacha variety which they transport from Cenicientos in the far south west of Madrid province not far from the Gredos mountains of Ávila. Alcohol strength ranges from 13.2° to 14.5°. "All our Qubé range have a guaranteed Vinos de Madrid Designation of Origin and an ecological certificate," says Estrella. "Currently we produce 14,000 bottles a year, but we aim to increase this soon to 30,000."



For the Love of Wine

Further west, the Lobecoscope vineyard in the Montes de Toledo follows the guidelines of biodynamics – a term signifying “life and energy” pioneered by 1920s Austrian agricultural guru Rudolph Steiner – which respects the powerful influences of lunar phases, harnessing elemental forces such as water and air, and focusing on the soil, climate and character of the land to produce distinctive regional wines that will express the *terroir* (or *terruño* in Spanish) in which the vines grow.

“Ours is a true labor of love,” says Granada-born Flequi Berruti, who runs the vineyard with four other young enophile associates: Javier Castro Burgos, who like Flequi, is a viticulturist and sommelier; Mario López and Fernando Soto who are also both viticulturists; and Barbara Díaz de Sonseca and Sonia López who are enologists and

sommeliers. Sonia’s family owns the country home where they decided to start the business five years ago and every weekend they take a one and a half hour drive out there from Madrid, where Flequi is the director of Cavinsa SL, a prestigious wine distributor, to carefully nurture their haven.

“It’s been hard work, building the bodega with our own hands, hoeing the earth and revitalizing the withered 50 year old vines that were already there. Despite the old vines, the area had no real wine tradition before we arrived,” says Flequi.

The vineyard is located on north-facing slopes near the village of San Pablo de los Montes in a sandy-chalky soil that’s scattered with stones, metals and silica. Here the climate is continental, with bitterly cold winters, dry hot summers and a notable swing between day and night temperatures. Flequi’s biodiverse methods include allowing other plants and vegetables to grow around the

vines and olive trees, encouraging – rather than destroying – ‘beneficial’ insect life and using natural fertilizers to maintain essential minerals in the soil instead of extracting them. One such method is to plant legumes or pulses, which produce nitrogen that feeds the earth naturally, between the vines. Another is to seed the compost with a mixture of herbs and plants, from valerian to nettles. Two separate preparations are gently sprayed on the vines: one made from cow manure, the other from powdered quartz to enhance light and warmth. Both are initially stored underground in *cuernos de vaca* (cow horns) for several months, then extracted, mixed with water in a bucket before manually spraying it on the vines.

Local wildlife, also essential to the balance of the environment, has increased since they started up thanks to their rejection of toxic chemicals and there are now more than 40 species of birds in the area compared with

around half a dozen when they started. Lobecoscope has its own well, so that during periods of drought they have sufficient water to prevent the vines from dehydrating, and at pruning time Flequi pays strict attention to the waxing and waning phases of the moon and their differing effects on the grapes.

“We go for quality, not quantity,” says Flequi. “Fewer grapes with more intensity of flavor.” The varieties are 90% Garnacha, 5% Tempranillo, 5% Cariñena plus a small amount of Airen, and the vineyards red full-bodied (14 °) Ziries and Navalegua wines, stored in French oak barrels before bottling, currently retail at around €13 (\$17.5) and €6 (\$8.25) respectively. “Harvest time is mid to late September and our output is now 3,000 bottles a year,” he adds, “but in the next three years, when we hope to raise our current *Vino de Mesa* status to *Vino de la Tierra*, we’ll be increasing this to 10,000.”

FLEQUI BERRUTI AND FOUR
OTHER ENOPHILE FRIENDS
DO ALL THE WORK AT
LOBECASCOPE VINEYARD
THEMSELVES



Golden Green

Organic is de moda (fashionable) not only in the field of wine. Spain is the foremost exporter of olive oil worldwide and awareness of the positive health aspects of producing it by natural environmental-friendly methods is gaining appeal with the public.

One of the country's most experienced suppliers, the Madrid-based Aceites Toledo, S.A., has imminent plans to open a new crushing mill which will concentrate solely on producing oil from organic olive groves. The process involves cold pressing of the oil (crushing within a day of picking to prevent oxidation and 'fustiness' by large stone rollers instead of by mechanical processes) and cutting edge techniques aimed at avoiding OMWs (Olive Oil Mills Waste Waters), by having one outlet for oil and the other for the solid part or pomace and not

allowing the paste enough time to fluidize.

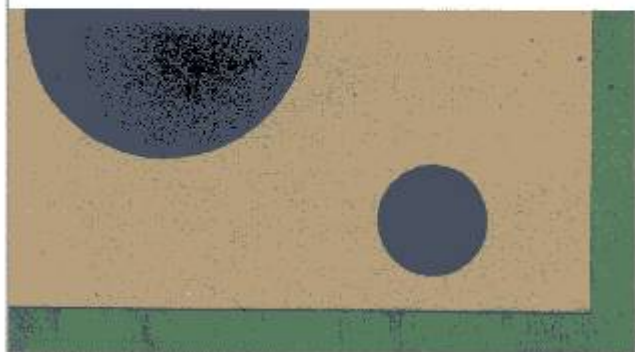
Organic oils are already produced in this way at two of Aceites Toledo's most productive organic olive groves in the Montes de Toledo and the Dehesa de Monreal bird haven (both in Castile-La Mancha). In 2001 the company was officially certified by ECOCERT – an inspection body accredited to verify the conformity of organic products according to European, Japanese and U.S. organic regulations. Techniques for producing the organic versions involve non use of insecticides and toxic fertilizers on the trees and land.

A Bird Lover's Oil

Originally launched by septuagenarian Juan Rubio Navarro back in 1950, the business is now run by his son Juan Carlos Rubio – a much-traveled, multi-faceted family man with four young

ORGANIC WINES

- Gosálbez-Orti www.qubel.com
- Albet i Noya www.albetinoya.com
- Bodega Ecológica Bruno Ruiz
- Bodegas Robles www.bodegasrobles.com
- Bodegas Lezaun www.lezaun.com
- Bodegas Bocopa www.bocopa.com
- Vinos Piñol www.vinospinol.com
- Biodynamic
- Lobecoscope www.lobecoscope.com
- Descendientes de J. Palacios
- Dominio de Atauta
- Campos Góticos www.camposgoticos.com
- Adrada ecológica www.adrada.com



adult children, who speaks fluent English. He busied himself in other diverse spheres such as law, art and music, in between creating new strategies as Marketing Manager for five years in the 1980s, and took over the company reins as director permanently two years ago.

"In my 'other lives' I ran a contemporary art gallery for twenty years just a few steps away from where Aceite Toledo's offices now stand," says Juan Carlos. "And way before that, when I was a young man studying law and humanities during a five year stay in California, I used to broadcast a jazz program on the Santa Cruz radio in the evenings." Among his published books is one on the links between music and the railroad called "La Música del Tren." He's a seasoned world-

wide business and leisure traveler and the countries visited range from Korea to Dubai and from Canada to New Zealand.

His current spare time love is ornithology. "There are over 150 different species of birds in and around the waterlands near our Dehesa de Monreal olive groves," he explains. "We're at a migratory crossing point. Half the world's bird life –from flamingoes to ospreys– comes there. It's hard not to be fascinated by the variety." Juan Carlos often spends weekends unwinding and observing the non-stop activities of his swimming, paddling and airborne feathered friends from a wooden hideaway he ordered from a specialist builder in England.

Aceites Toledo is renowned globally and exports its goods

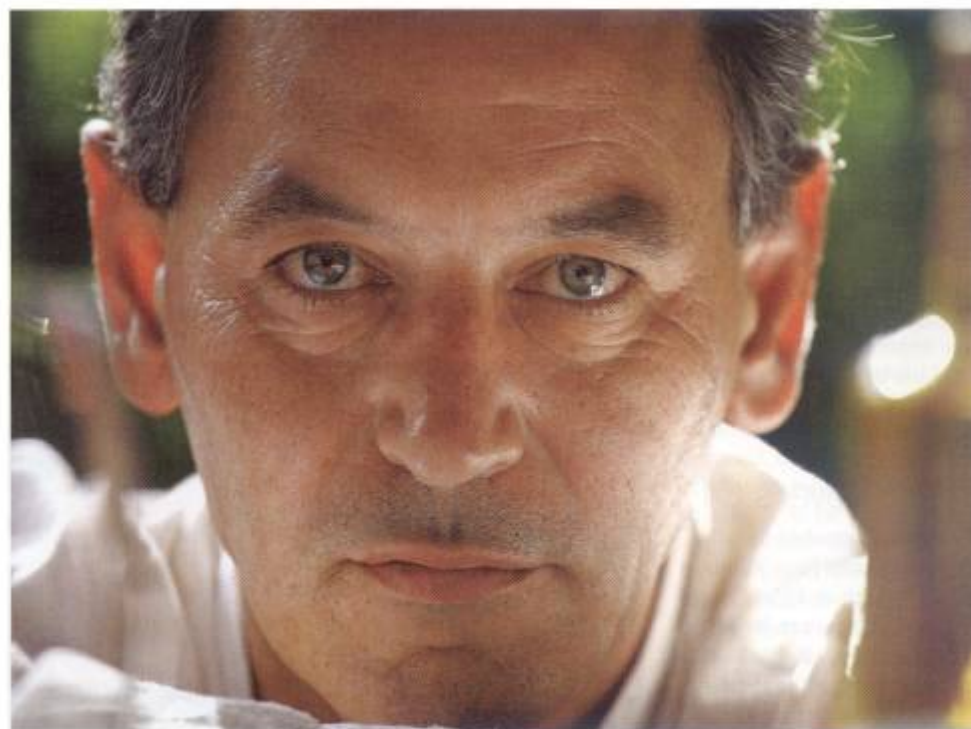
SELECTED ORGANIC OLIVE OIL MAKERS



Toledo
Aceites Toledo SA

to the Americas, Europe and the Far East. It deals mainly with two organic Extra-Virgin olive oils; the highly individual and traditional Dintel Ecológico which is either made from the richly flavored local Cornicabra

olive, with its rich 80% oleic acid content, or from the herby and fruity Arbequina variety (the green fruit- and avocado-flavored Hojiblanca is also used for some versions); and the more eclectic Oliterra Ecológico which is the result of a blend of Cornicabra, Arbequina, Hojiblanca and Picual olives. (The latter – rich, robust and golden-green – is widely regarded as the 'Queen of Spanish varieties'). Both Dintel and Oliterra oils have won several awards, and bear the Denominación de Origen Montes de Toledo, which covers 74,100 acres and produces 1,100 tons of oil a year.



Juan Carlos Rubio of Aceites Toledo

London-born Peter Stone is a freelance translator and journalist who contributes articles to a wide variety of international magazines and guidebooks, including *Time Out* and *Insight*. His publications on Spain include *Madrid Escapes* (2003), *Frommer's Madrid* 1st and 2nd editions (2005-7) and *Frommer's Barcelona* 2nd Edition (May 2007).