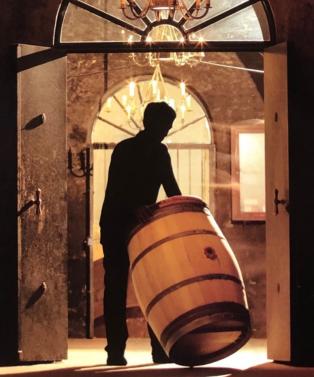
## Wine Spectator.com

# BORDEAUX'S CLASSIC CABERNETS THE LEFT BANK SHINES IN 2016



OREGON PINOT NOIR TOP WINES, EMERGING STARS

LOS ANGELES
WHERE TO EAT NOW

TORRES FAMILY LEADERS IN SPAIN

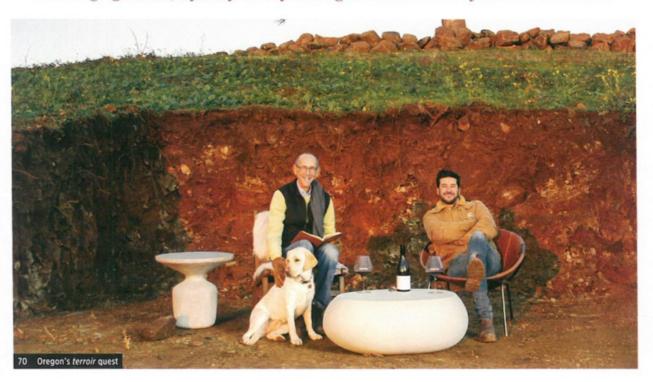


#### **Wine Spectator**

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March 31, 2019 Vol. 43, No. 15

The benchmarks of the wine world come in many forms—a region such as Bordeaux, admired for centuries; a much-loved grape such as Pinot Noir finding new expression in an emerging terroir; a family winery leading an ancient country to modern success.



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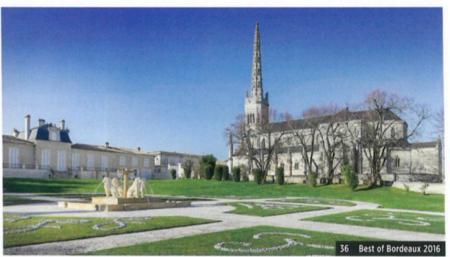
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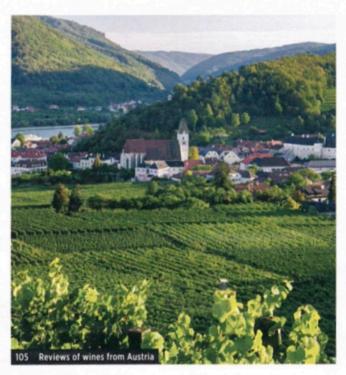
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- A Perfect Match: Chocolate Mousse With Tawny Port Find out more about this intriguing pairing—and get the recipe from chef João Dias of Ferreira in Montréal

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2017 BORDEAUX BARRELS Want even more Bordeaux coverage? Get James Molesworth's scores and tasting notes for more than 250 red, white and dessert wines from the 2017 vintage. Plus, read his dispatches from first-growths Haut-Brion, Lafite, Mouton, Margaux and Latour, Right Bank all-stars Pétrus and Cheval-Blanc, and more.



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#### Three Benchmarks

his issue focuses on three key benchmarks in the world of wine.

The most prominent is Bordeaux, France's premier winegrowing region, a global behemoth. In 2016, a great vintage for its Cabernet-based wines, Bordeaux's top estates have produced classic reds, hallmark bottlings that will blossom in the cellar and appreciate in value for years to come.

Senior editor James Molesworth, our lead taster for Bordeaux, reviewed nearly 600 wines from the 2016 vintage, in independent blind tastings conducted in our New York headquarters and on location in Bordeaux. The Left Bank regions of Pauillac, St.-Estèphe and St.-Julien are the sweet spots for quality.

Pinot Noir is flourishing in Oregon, where an alluring style is developing, particularly in the Willamette Valley. The state's 800 wineries now work with nearly 20,000 acres of Pinot Noir, and in just one long generation, since the founding of its modern wine industry in the 1960s, Oregon has earned its place as a source of benchmark Pinot Noirs.

According to senior editor Tim Fish, who tastes hundreds of Oregon wines each year, the state has enjoyed a trio of exceptional vintages from 2014 through 2016, which makes finding great wines easy. All three years earn classic ratings of 95 or more points on our 100-point scale.

In his report this issue, Fish draws attention to a recent wave of Burgundy-based vintners who have been attracted by Oregon's potential, and he profiles four of the top performers. They have come not to replicate Burgundy, Fish says, but because they believe that like Burgundy, Oregon can make excellent Pinot Noir with distinctive character.

Our third standard-bearer is neither a region nor a grape, but a family—the Torres family of Spain. Five generations have been leaders and innovators and have helped their country become one of the most dynamic wine centers in the world.

Parent company Familia Torres has always been based in Catalonia, on Spain's Mediterranean coast. But its stable of wine estates now stretches all the way to the Atlantic, in Rías Baixas, and includes Rioja, Ribera del Duero and Priorat among its stars. An offshoot in Chile has had success, and Marimar Torres has followed her own path in California, where she makes outstanding Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in Sonoma.

Beginning on page 52, contributing editor Robert Camuto profiles the Spanish branch of the Torres family, while Napabased associate tasting coordinator Aaron Romano tells Marimar's story.

This issue also offers dining guidance to visitors to Los Angeles and Miami, pleasant destinations in deep winter. Both cities offer new restaurants with exciting wine lists. Look for L.A.



recommendations from editor at large Harvey Steiman, and Miami destinations on our Travel page.

And to help you keep good health and indulgence in balance, we've gathered advice from chefs and sommeliers, who eat and drink for a living. You may not tackle marathon running, like chef Daniel Humm of New York's Eleven Madison Park, but you might be inspired to get on a treadmill. One step at a time!

Marvin R. Shanken Editor and Publisher

1 Matthews

The R. HL

Thomas Matthews Executive Editor







he Torres wine family is reinventing itself. Again. Over five generations, Familia Torres has evolved from a modest Catalonian bottler to an industry colossus, with more than 30 brands, thousands of vineyard acres, about 4 million cases of annual production and more than \$300 million in annual revenues.

But Familia Torres is defined by more than big numbers. By investing profits from its popular large-production brands, the company has continually added higher-end wines to the portfolio, contributing to Spain's modern renaissance.

Over 150 years, each generation has made a lasting mark by pioneering new wines and disrupting the status quo. Now the fifth generation, led by soft-spoken Miguel Torres Maczassek, 44, is revamping the company's successful modern business model.

"We aren't aiming to grow," explains Torres Maczassek, tall, lanky and displaying his family's crystalline blue eyes. "If anything, we are looking to become smaller. To focus on our top wines and best properties."

The strategy means big investment in a mosaic of boutique estates currently responsible for a mere 10 percent of Torres' production. And in another shifting of gears, this family that introduced international varietals a generation ago is turning its attention to reviving obscure heirloom grapes.

Reflecting its changing priorities, at the start of 2018 Torres began stripping its prominently labeled name and three towers logo from its globally popular mass-market wines such as Sangre de Toro and Viña Sol. The idea is to reserve the Torres name for distinctive, top-quality wines from the home base in Penedès and other Catalonian appellations such as Conca de Barberà, Priorat and Costers del Segre.

Elsewhere across northern Spain, from Ribera del Duero to Rioja, Rueda and Rías Baixas, the company is following a similar path creating estate-bottled wines and giving independence to local teams to experiment in vineyards and new modern wineries.

"My father is obsessed with quality," Torres Maczassek says. "But I am obsessed with showing the expression of a particular place."

amilia Torres is widely recognized as Spain's most influential wine name-representing the country with unrivaled breadth, depth and innovation in wine styles and terroirs. "Torres represents every aspect of the Spanish wine industry in the world," says Pablo Álvarez of famed Vega Sicilia in Ribera del Duero, while Álvaro Palacios, a Rioja native and pioneer of Priorat's resurgence, points to Torres' "impeccable reputation" and says the company's success has inspired other wine producers to "believe in Spanish wine."

Similarly, Christopher Cannan of Priorat's Clos Figueras praises the family "not only for being among the first to put Spanish wines on the global map, but also for their commitment to ecology and sustainability in every aspect of their operations."

Torres is both a closely held company and a close family. Miguel and his sister Mireia, 48, the company's director of innovation, grew up outside Vilafranca del Penedès in the 19th century farmhouse Mas La Plana, which gives name to the iconic Cabernet Sauvignon created by the siblings' father, Miguel A. Torres, in the 1970s. They now live in their own homes on the sprawling estate.

Miguel A. Torres, 77, officially retired in 2012 but presides over the company board and heads Torres & Earth, the family's ambitious initiatives on sustainability in the face of climate change.

Each week, the family gathers in the sleek main winery, Waltraud Cellar (named for Miguel and Mireia's mother), built of stone, concrete and cortene steel by renowned "green architect" Javier Barba. Here, with winemaking and vineyard team staffers, they taste and make decisions about blends, vintages and releases.

Though her brother makes the final decisions, "It is a democracy," explains Mireia Torres Maczassek, who has degrees in chemical engineering and enology and generally focuses on the painstaking research that goes into family projects. Her recent endeavors include selecting indigenous yeasts from Torres estates, launching Torres' first sparkling wine and cloning forgotten local varieties.

One afternoon in January, after lunch at Mas La Plana with their parents, the siblings met to taste experimental wines from heirloom grapes. The new generation's ethos involves a constant search for breakout wines. Part of that search—the family's decades-long research into dozens of near-extinct Penedès varieties—is now yielding results.

When asked to name his favorite family wines, Miguel Torres Maczassek says those bottles are "to come," from rediscovered varieties like Forcada, a citrusy, aromatic white grape that ripens about a month after Chardonnay. "Every generation has to show the thinking of that generation in their work," he says. "Everything the family has created has come from work in the vineyards and the winery. In my family, this is all we know how to do."

iguel Torres Maczassek is a globetrotting CEO who travels the world three months each year. But when he's home, he often lunches on chickpeas alongside his vineyard workers, speaking Catalan. He drives a hybrid SUV and visits the family estates with a backpack over his shoulder.

As a young man, Torres Maczassek earned a master's degree in business in Barcelona, then finished with a semester at the University of North Carolina. By the time he graduated, he says, "Wine was calling me." He sought jobs at other Spanish wineries but says no one would hire a Torres heir "because nobody thought I would stay."

So instead, he went to work for the perfume division of Carolina Herrera, owned by Barcelona fashion giant Puig. Over four years working as a product and brand manager, he learned valuable marketing lessons applicable to wine, including "starting with an idea and creating something based on senses and emotion."

In 2001, his father offered him the job of general manager at their Penedès' winery Jean Leon, a largely independent estate the family purchased in 1994 from its ailing namesake founder.

Leon (born Ceferino Carrión) was a Spanish legend who'd left his home at 19 to seek his fortune, sailing as a stowaway from France to New York and eventually making his way to Hollywood. There he opened La Scala, which went on to become a celebrity hot spot. In 1963, Leon bought vineyard land in Penedès and pioneered French varieties there, including Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc with vinestock from historic Bordeaux châteaus Lafite Rothschild and Palmer.

Leon's story captivated Torres Maczassek, but he knew that the wines, often marred by bitter tannins, needed improvement. In his four years at Jean Leon, he invested in modernization and refined winemaking with attention to details-from more careful grape selection and sorting to gentler crushing and handling of the fruitall with the goal of making the wines smoother on the palate.

At the same time, he began the conversion of the estate to organics, completed by Mireia Torres Maczassek, who took over in 2010. She has since expanded the winery lineup, including the addition of small-batch (fewer than 200 cases) "experimental" wines.

With the boom of Spanish reds at the turn of the millennium, the brother-sister team began to discuss launching projects outside Penedès and Catalonia—in places like Ribera del Duero and Rioja that were known for ageworthy red wines based on the indigenous Tempranillo grape.

Miguel A. hesitated, agreeing only to buy what his son calls a "garage winery" with a couple of acres in Ribera: "It was a test,"



Among other projects, Mireia Torres Maczassek heads the Jean Leon winery, purchased from its founder, a Spaniard who found fame in Hollywood as a restauranteur.

says the younger Miguel. "My father wanted to see if we could succeed-the hard way."

For the first vintage, 2003, the siblings scouted Ribera del Duero and purchased enough grapes to produce 4,000 cases, which they labeled Celeste. "We didn't start with the idea of making an iconic wine," says Miguel Torres Maczassek. "We wanted to come to a new area and be humble."

The wine was a commercial hit, and production (under the consulting eye of ex-Vega Sicilia winemaker Xavier Ausàs since 2015) has grown to 60,000 cases. Success convinced the Torres patriarch that the family should buy more vineyards outside Catalonia, including in Ribera, where Torres' recently named Pago del Cielo now cultivates 53 acres.

In 2009, Miguel A. sent his son to troubleshoot another operation-this time the Miguel Torres estate in Chile, which was beleaguered by management problems. Though in the last semester of enology school in Spain at the time, Torres Maczassek dropped his studies to move to the Curicó Valley with his American journalist wife, Sarah Andrews, and their infant daughter.

While there, his proudest innovation was helping to revive the

local País varietal, which had fallen out of favor. Seeing the grape's potential as a sparkling wine, he worked with local growers and pioneered the first sparkler from the grape, dubbed Estellada.

His young family also dug roots in the community that went beyond business. When a devastating earthquake hit central Chile in 2010, they repaired a badly damaged winery, and also helped raise funds to build more than 40 houses for winery workers and other locals in need.

After the earthquake, the family registered Miguel Torres as the first major fair trade winery in Chile-guaranteeing grape prices from

its suppliers and committing a percentage of profits to community projects. At the same time, they began the organic certification process for Torres' nearly 1,000 vineyard acres.

In 2012, Miguel A. called again. This time it was to have his son take the lead of the company back in Spain.

odegas Torres was founded in 1870 by brothers Jaime and Miguel Torres Vendrell, using the small fortune that Jaime, the younger brother, had amassed trading in Cuba. The Torreses began as négociants, blending wines they purchased throughout Penedès and selling them in barrel.

Miguel's son, Joan Torres Casals, pioneered the family's production of oak-aged brandies. But it was generation three-embodied by Miguel Torres Carbó, a pharmacist and Bordeaux-trained agronomist—that set the company on the path to worldwide success.

In the lead-up to the Spanish Civil War in the mid-1930s, the Torreses' home base of Vilafranca del Penedès was largely taken over by anarchists. As the family tells it, Torres Carbó was warned that he would be assassinated if he stayed in Penedès. So he fled north to Barcelona, where he joined the Republican Army and was tasked with making vaccines.

Near the war's end in January 1939, German planes supporting insurgent General Francisco Franco bombed the Vilafranca train station—also destroying much of the Torres winery.

Torres Carbó returned home to ruins, with Spain under Franco's dictatorship and Europe falling into world war. Seeking new markets, he journeyed to Cuba, Mexico, the United States and Canada. With orders from the Western Hemisphere in his pocket, he rebuilt the winery and created the brands that established Torres'

global success and powered its growth to this day: blended wines such as the red Sangre de Toro and white Viña Sol.

Torres Carbó's son, generation four's Miguel A. Torres, became the first winemaker in the family. After studying chemistry in Barcelona, Miguel A. was dispatched by his father to France's Burgundy "My father is obsessed with quality. I am obsessed with showing the expression of a particular place."

Miguel Torres Maczassek

in 1960, where he learned French-style winemaking and viticulture.

In Burgundy, Miguel A. was dazzled by the terroirs and careful vinification techniques. On his return to Spain, he remembers, "I knew we had to start fermenting our own wines. I knew the quality could be better."

The first technique that he wanted to introduce at home was cold fermentation, to make fresher and livelier white wines. It was a time, he recalls, when "Spanish white wines were all maderized, with a dark color." Lacking modern equipment to control temperatures, he improvised, taking white grapes (mostly local Parellada) to ferment in higher,

cooler altitudes in the Penedès mountains. The resulting wine, bottled as the 1962 vintage of Viña Sol, was a taste-changing hit in Spain.

After he began making wine and investing in modern equipment, Miguel A. turned his attention to growing grapes. On a patch of 5 acres of family land, he began experimenting with French varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Chardonnay, as well as Riesling. "By 1966, we realized the Cabernet Sauvignon was beautiful," he says.

In that year, Miguel A. persuaded Torres Carbó to buy the 72-acre Mas La Plana and to plant its complex alluvial soils predominantly to Cabernet Sauvignon. Soon thereafter, Miguel A. renovated the farmhouse for his new bride-Waltraud Maczassek, a vivacious German artist he'd met while she was on a Spanish holiday with her family.

Mas La Plana produced Torres' first signature estate-grown wine, starting with half Cabernet Sauvignon blended with Tempranillo and a dash of Cabernet Franc. Torres Carbó was skeptical of French grapes, but Miguel A. was patient. He gradually increased the percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon to 100 percent and used French oak. In 1979, he was vindicated when Mas La Plana won first place in an international tasting of Cabernet-based wines, besting even Château Latour.

Convinced of the potential, Torres Carbó bought and planted more vineyards for international grapes. He also bought land in Sonoma, Calif., for his daughter, Marimar, who had immigrated to the U.S. and wanted to create her own independent estate. (See "Catalonia to California," page 65.)

In 1975, Miguel A. fell in love with a 12th-century castle called

Milmanda in the heart of Catalonia's Conca de Barberà; the site was surrounded by about 40 acres of land used for wheat. But with the death of Franco that year, Torres Carbó worried about economic crisis and grew shy of investing. So Miguel A. used his own savings and borrowed the rest to

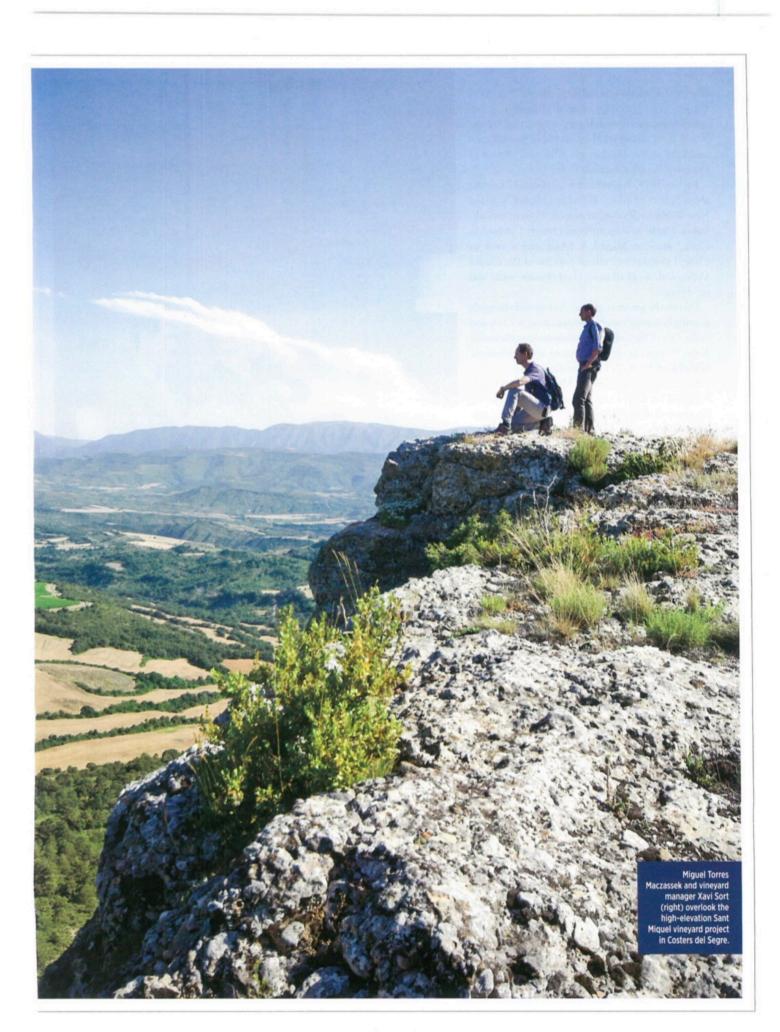
complete the transaction,







Brothers Jaime (left) and Miguel Torres Vendrell (center) founded Bodegas Torres as a négociant in 1870. Third generation Miguel Torres Carbó (right) parlayed the small operation into a global force in the 1940s.



planting Chardonnay in the deep silty clay soils. More than a decade later, he vinified Milmanda, a lush barrel-fermented Burgundy-style version that became Torres' most renowned white, served at Spanish royal weddings and at the historic 2016 state dinner of President Barack Obama in Cuba.

By late 1979, Torres Carbó, increasingly nervous about Spain's economy, dispatched Miguel A. to the New World to develop an outpost. "I went to California, I went to Argentina and finally I arrived in Chile," recounts Miguel A. "And after a week in Chile, I saw this viticultural paradise in the Curicó Valley, with no phylloxera, good climate, water and good people."

Despite the presence of near-century-old vineyards growing European varieties, winemaking in Chile was rustic. One of the first foreign companies on the scene, Torres brought modern equipment and by example helped spur the area's 1980s renaissance.

Beginning in that decade, Miguel A. also began exploring his native Catalonian terroirs and grapes. He acquired about 250 acres of church-owned farmland near Catalonia's spiritual center—the monastery of Poblet, a little more than a mile southeast of Milmanda. The land included slate and granite soils, wheat and some neglected vineyards. He planted Garnacha, Cariñena and Monastrell along with some heirloom varieties; from its first vintage in 1996, Grans Muralles became Torres' signature Mediterranean red blend.

Over the past 25 years, Miguel A. has seen the company's business grow enormously. But he wants his legacy to include helping the wine industry cope with climate change.

A decade ago, the company committed to reducing its carbon footprint by 30 percent by 2020, and since 2012, Torres has spent 11 percent of annual profits on environmental initiatives. Wineries treat and reuse wastewater and create heating with biomass fur-

naces that burn vineyard cuttings. And Torres has partnered as an investor in other promising ventures, such as CO, capture from fermentation to create usable methane.

"I wish I could persuade the whole wine world to move ahead with these things," says Miguel A. "Why? Because we winemakers are going to be the ones most affected. The essence of a wine in Burgundy or Napa Valley is going to change."

n the years since the younger generation has taken over, Torres estates and wineries have continued to expand across northern Spain. The family snapped up the Rueda winery of French brothers François and Jacques Lurton for Verdejo whites, and last year bought vineyards in the cooler coastal climes of Rías Baixas at Spain's northwestern tip, looking to produce ageworthy whites.

"I don't want to do new projects," says Miguel Torres Maczassek. "I would like for the projects we have outside of Catalonia to become more independent. They are what they are themselves. If you want to go into details, you have to be very close."



Miguel A. Torres (left) passed the reins to his son in 2012 but remains on the company board and oversees initiatives to help the global wine industry cope with climate change.

Getting up close in Catalonia means exploring terroirs in its rugged interior, each with its own focus.

In Catalonia's Priorat, where the family invested in the 1990s and created the signature wines Perpetual and Salmos, that now means buying old vineyards to supply single-vineyard crus aimed at elegance and complexity. From plots in a steep 4-acre, 80-yearold Garnacha and Cariñena vineyard called Mas de La Rosa, the company plans to launch a cru beginning with the 2016 vintage. And on a nearby ridge, Torres is buying up dozens of small, longabandoned vineyard plots at some of Priorat's highest elevations, with the goal of resurrecting them for future generations.

In Catalonia's Costers del Segre, Torres is developing another potential star wine, Purgatori, named after a local vineyard area farmed by monks in the 18th century and known for its harsh climate. "It is the most continental vineyard the family has, with the poorest soils," notes Miguel Torres Maczassek.

The vineyard, bought by Torres nearly 20 years ago, is more than 400 acres in size, planted to Garnacha, Cariñena and Syrah. For







Left: Torres expanded into Rioja in 2005 with the purchase of land in the Alavesa zone, where the company currently has 45 acres under vine and plans for additional estate vineyards. Right: Based in the Curicó Valley, Miguel Torres Chile draws on approximately 1,000 acres of estate vineyards growing both local and international varieties.

years, the grapes were used in various Torres blends, but Miguel Torres Maczassek decided the fruit was worthy of its own wine. "All the Torres winemakers were fighting for the grapes from Purgatori," he says. "I said, let's taste the grapes separately, plot by plot."

In 2012, employing a rigorous selection to produce about 2,000 cases, Torres launched Purgatori as its own estate wine; with a new winery built in a nearby farmhouse, 2018 is the first vintage for which the wine has its own home.

"There are certain vineyards that scream to have a wine produced from that vineyard," says Torres Maczassek. And, he adds, "I believe our family name should be limited to being identified with places that are really exceptional."

he Torres family has always looked back as well as ahead, hoping to find future success in the roots of the past. In the late 1980s, Miguel A. placed advertisements in area newspapers calling on locals to report unknown grapevines in their gardens or vineyard.

The project became Torres' ancestral collection of about 50 varieties, some of which Miguel A. refers to as his "climate change collection" for their resistance to heat or drought or their ability to ripen at high elevations. As Miguel and Mireia took on key roles in the business, they went deeper into their father's study.

"We saw that there was something more than interesting in some of these varieties," says Miguel Torres Maczassek. "We were looking for grapes that have a potential for freshness in a hot climate. There were two that stole my heart, and my sister's."

The siblings believe White Forcada "could be the future of white wine in the Penedès." Following the release of tiny quantities of two vintages-2015 (50 cases) and 2017 (100 cases)-of a varietal white Forcada called Castell de Miralles, Torres also plans for the grape to replace Sauvignon Blanc in Fransola, a flagship brand from the 1970s.

The second grape, Moneu, is a deep, dark red that stays fresh on Penedès' scorching-hot valley floor. Torres hopes to release a scant 25 cases of the 2017 vintage by 2020.

Torres Maczassek insists that his family's work is laying a foundation for the future, and not only for Torres. They have readily shared their plant research and worked with a nursery to offer grafted vine cuttings to other producers. "If we can contribute to give the Penedès back its roots and typicity, that is fantastic," he says.

Torres' history has had its share of flops, including daring experiments such as producing wine in China in the 1990s (where Torres still has a prominent import and distribution company). But the family has shown its resilience in learning from mistakes.

One of its greatest domestic challenges has been in Rioja, where Torres purchased land and built a winery in the Rioja Alavesa region in 2005. Though production has boomed, Torres Maczassek says he is not satisfied—the wines to date have shown to be good, but not excellent. "In Rioja, I am rethinking everything," he says. "We are in such a beautiful place. We can do better."

#### Selected Recent Releases From Torres in Spain & Chile\*

SCORE	WINE	PRICE	CASES	
92	Penedès Reserva Real 2011	\$225	25	
92	Pinot Noir Empedrado Escaleras de Empedrado 2013*	\$100	309	
91	Cabernet Sauvignon Penedès Mas La Plana 2013	\$70	600	
91	Conca de Barberá Grans Muralles 2011	\$140	36	
90	Priorat Cos Perpetual 2014	\$70	70	
89	Conca de Barberá White Milmanda 2014	\$65	25	
88	Priorat Salmos 2015	\$35	600	
88	Rioja Altos Ibéricos Reserva 2012	\$24	350	
88	Tempranillo Ribera del Duero Pago del Cielo Celeste Crianza 2015	\$21	5,000	
87	Cabernet Sauvignon Penedès Gran Coronas Reserva 2010	\$17	1,500	

\*This bottling is from the Miguel Torres winery in Chile; production figure is cases made



Hampering Torres in Rioja is a lack of estate vineyards; with only about 45 acres of vines but a production of more than 125,000 cases, Torres buys most of its grapes from contracted growers. But it plans to change that starting with the recent purchase of a 70-year-old Tempranillo vineyard.

In spite of a familial restlessness for improvement, the Torreses take a long view suited to wine, assessing nearly every newly planted vineyard or acquisition as a project for two or three generations.

arly on a bright January morning, Miguel Torres Maczassek is geared up and on his mountain bike, navigating along rugged dirt trails through small vineyards, oak pine forests and Mediterranean scrub and wild herbs.

Cycling is his passion outside of work. His meditation. "This is the Penedès-small farmhouses and vineyards," he says. "There are thousands of trails here. I have been biking here all my life, and every weekend I find a new one."

Later in the day, he drives with vineyard manager Xavi Sort north to the Pyrenees foothills in Costers del Segre. Here, Torres' nearly 300-acre vineyard plateau is perhaps the highest in Catalonia, at an altitude of more than 3,000 feet. About 5 miles to the north is the Sierra de Gurp mountain chain, backed by the Pyrenees snow peaks.

In the past 20 years, this has been Torres experimental ground

for high-altitude viticulture. In recent years, the estate has also planted Pirene, a red heirloom variety suited for these heights, believing that this grape and place call for their own wine. "It's fresh, it shows fruit, minerality, it's long and the alcohol is never high," Torres Maczassek says. "It's beautiful."

Not lost on anyone is that the land, associated with a nearby chapel, bears a name dear to the Torreses: Finca Sant Miguel.

Of the past five generations, Miguels have led four. Other Torreses with roles in the company include Miguel A.'s older brother, Juan, who acts as vice president, and Juan's son Arnau, who leads tourism and events.

In the Torres world, there is clearly much to do for generations. A sober work ethic pervades the family. Ninety-five percent of profits are reinvested, and family members who want to join the company must have a university degree and top references from at least two years of work elsewhere.

"My hope is that my children find what they love to do," says Torres Maczassek, whose youngest, also named Miguel, is one of nine cousins in the sixth generation. "To be in the wine world, it has to call you. You have to believe that wine is part of your life," he adds.

Yet clearly Torres, more than a collection of individuals, is a dynasty. "My grandfather used to say, 'Whoever sells the winery will go to hell." He laughs. "That is something you never forget."

### CATALONIA to CALIFORNIA

Marimar Torres cultivates her own wine legacy in Sonoma



By Aaron Romano

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALANNA HALE

pain just never fit me very well," says Marimar Torres, seated in the dining room of her namesake winery in Sonoma's Russian River Valley. Her Marimar Estate has been making high quality Chardonnay and Pinot Noir since the early 1990s. It's an independent venture by a strong-willed woman who left her native Spain to find her calling.

The vintner's Catalan lisp still occasionally hangs at the end of words as she reminiscences. Spirited, with a slight curl to her short brown and silver hair, she is quick-witted and full of stories. Born in Barcelona in 1945, Torres grew up under Francisco Franco's three-decade dictatorship in an era when a woman's place was at home and her ambitions were not meant to extend beyond being a good wife and mother.

There was certainly no place reserved for Torres in the family wine business, at that point run by the third generation and rebuilding after the devastation wrought by the Spanish Civil War and World War II. The



The 45-acre Don Miguel estate vineyard is planted predominantly to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay but also holds a few Spanish varieties Torres is experimenting with.

youngest child and only daughter of Miguel Torres Carbó, Marimar recalls being 8 years old when her father began grooming her brother Miguel A. Torres, four years her senior, to be his successor in taking over the company. "I thought wine was very interesting, but I had to play with dolls," she says, rolling her eyes.

That didn't suit Torres, even at a young age. She convinced her parents that she needed an education beyond high school, which was not commonplace for women at the time. "I told my mother and father, I would never find a man to marry if I did not go to school," she says with a sly smile.

Torres' ambition was equaled by her tenacity. She graduated from the University of Barcelona with a business and economics degree at just 19. She is fluent in six languages.

Her hard work has translated to three decades of success as a vintner in California. She made her first wine, a Chardonnay, from the 1989 vintage. She recalls taking the wine to her father in 1991, just months before he died.

"He declared it the best white wine he had ever tasted," she says, adding that he told her mother, "Marimar must have a winery in California!"

Torres used inheritance from her father's estate and some funding from the family to construct a 15,000-case facility in Sebastopol, which was completed in 1992.

And though Torres had to leave Spain to build it, her winery is full of mementos of her former home. The interior is decorated with Catalonian furniture, antiques and portraits of Torres family

> members. The tasting room overlooks the 45-acre Don Miguel Vineyard, named for her father, and while it's planted predominantly to Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, it has also served as an experimental site for Torres' exploration of Spanish varieties such as Albariño, Tempranillo and Godello.

> Torres owns a second estate vineyard just a few miles to the west in the Sonoma Coast area between Occidental and Freestone; the Doña Margarita Vineyard, named in honor of her mother, comprises 20 acres planted entirely to Pinot Noir.

> er wine story, of course, is rooted in Spain. Shortly after completing her university studies in Barcelona, Torres began accompanying her father on sales trips and became increasingly involved in the family business. She eventually took charge of sales in North America and later became global export manager for Torres.



Marimar and Miguel A. Torres and their father, Miguel Torres Carbó, sample from barrel in the orginal Familia Torres cellar in the early 1970s.

Her California chapters began with a trip to San Francisco in the spring of 1973. "When I came Ito California], I felt like a fish in water," she quips. She urged her father to allow her to stay longer. He obliged, but with one condition: She had to meet with American wine critic Robert Finigan, who had recently ranked a Torres wine very highly.

"We met for lunch, and it lasted four hours," Torres recalls. Two and a half years later, despite opposition from her family, the two were married. "My father thought it was a mistake and didn't expect the marriage to last a year, but it lasted four!"

She continued working for the family, selling Torres wine in North America for the next decade. From 1975 to 1984, shipments of Familia Torres wines to the United States

grew from 15,000 cases to more than 150,000.

With the expansion of Familia Torres wines into Chile and the founding of the Miguel Torres winery, keeping up became increasingly challenging for Marimar. In 1984, she asked her father if she could start her own import business, but he said no. "So my ultimatum was, either I take a national importer or I quit. You can guess what he chose," she jokes. Shortly thereafter, Familia Torres took on Château & Estates as its U.S. importer.

In her decade selling wine, Torres became more interested in the bond between wine and food. She decided to craft a cookbook and spent much of two years traveling throughout Spain, learning about its cuisine and how it had evolved in the decade since Franco's death in 1975. Based on this research, Torres published two cookbooks, The Spanish Table in 1986 and The Catalan Country Kitchen in 1992. Today, her winery's tasting room utilizes these traditional Spanish recipes for food-and-wine parings.

The year before Torres handed over U.S. importing to Château



The Marimar Estate team includes technical director Bill Dyer (left) and cellar and vineyard master Tony Britton, both of whom have collaborated as consultants at the label for more than 20 years.

& Estates, she purchased a 56-acre plot in the rolling western hills outside the town of Sebastopol, Calif., in Russian River Valley. She saw that her brother's foresight to invest in estate vineyards and improvements to the winemaking had been keys to the Torres brand's success over the previous four decades, so she asked him to advise her in planting her sites. The first Chardonnay plantings were established in 1986; Pinot Noir followed in 1988. Independent and determined as ever, she also enrolled in the enology and viticulture program at the University of California, Davis.

One of the more unique things about Marimar Estate is that there has never been a sole official winemaker. Bill Dyer, former winemaker at Sterling Vineyards, serves as a consultant and technical director, while Tony Britton is the cellar master and vineyard manager. Torres, 73, is no longer as hands-on as she used to be, but she still contributes to all winemaking decisions. The collaborative approach has worked. Britton has been with the winery for more than 20 years, and ditto for Dyer.

The team's focus is on creating estate-bottled, terroir-driven wines. "The grapes make the wine," Torres explains, adding, "It's our job to guide those grapes into expressing the personality of the vineyard."

A range of Pinot Noir bottlings (seven in total) from both vineyards highlight various blocks or clones within the sites, such as in the Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Mas Cavalls Doña Margarita Vineyard 2014. This wine blends three different clones and showcases Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir at its finest, with clean fruit flavors and earth notes folded in.

The four Chardonnays range from the fresh and lively Chardonnay Russian River Valley Acero Unoaked Don Miguel Vineyard (2016: 88, \$32) to medium- and full-bodied styles. The Chardonnay Russian River Valley La Masía Don Miguel Vineyard 2016 exemplifies Torres' fondness for wines that balance fresh acidity with rich fruit on a medium-weight frame. La Masía undergoes malolactic fermentation and is aged on the lees for 10 months in 60 percent new French oak, which adds richness and texture.

#### Selected Recent Releases From **Marimar Estate**

SCORE	WINE	PRICE	CASES
92	Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Chico's Run Doña Margarita Vineyard 2015	\$55	220
91	Chardonnay Russian River Valley Dobles Lías Don Miguel Vineyard 2015	\$57	238
91	Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Don Miguel Vineyard Earthquake Block 2014	\$59	298
91	Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Mas Cavalls Doña Margarita Vineyard 2014	\$47	1,912
90	Chardonnay Russian River Valley La Masia Don Miguel Vineyard 2016	\$39	424
90	Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Cristina Don Miguel Vineyard 2015	\$65	255
90	Syrah Russian River Valley Don Miguel Vineyard 2014	\$53	125

In Spain, the Torres family is widely recognized as a leader in environmentally sustainable winemaking practices, and Marimar Estate also follows this long-view philosophy. Both the Don Miguel and Doña Margarita vineyards are sustainably farmed, including the use of biodynamic processes.

arimar Torres attributes her success, and that of her extended family, to the basic values passed from generation to generation.

"We live the work," she says. "The family is the business, and the business is the family." She says it started with the ethic that the older generations instilled in the children. "They were such powerful examples, and made us love our work," she says. "And to this day, that yearning for challenges drives me to accomplish what people thought I couldn't."

She calls her brother Miguel A. Torres a born leader and a pioneer of his era. "His achievement is undeniable, and he showed the family what he could accomplish on his own. My father and mother would be very pleased with the prestige and renown that our brand name has achieved."

As she traveled her path, there were no aha moments for Torres, just one foot in front of the other. She knows her family respects her accomplishments: "It's like my father used to be-when I was in front of him, he never gave me any praises, but I always heard from others that he was very proud."

The relationship with Spain remains complex, a mix of very close

and just distant enough. For example, she originally named her winery Marimar Torres Estate but shortened it to Marimar Estate in 1998. "I had a very generous agreement with my brothers that I could use the name Torres," she explains. "But I came to the conclusion that I expected my business to last more than two generations, but who knows what will happen in the future?"

The second generation at Marimar Estate is already at work. Marimar's daughter, Cristina, 30, has recently begun working alongside her mother. In an ironic twist on the past, the Torres family wanted Cristina to join the business in Spain, but Marimar told them Cristina's education was the priority.



Marimar Torres' California wine legacy will be carried on by her daughter, Cristina (right), who, like her mother, has earned university degrees and gained business experience in the wine industry.

Having completed degrees from Princeton University and University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, in economics and business, respectively, Cristina has been working since last year at California wine giant Jackson Family, building a foundation in marketing and sales while also collaborating closely with the team at Marimar Estate. Now she is poised to take over.

"It's always been clear to me that I want to continue in wine," says Cristina. "And it's especially motivating to carry on my mother's legacy in California."

"It will be the first Torres winery to pass from mother to daughter," Marimar says with a smile.