

PHILOSOPHY OF “LA MELONERA” ESTATES WITH VINEYARDS

What wine lover hasn't dreamed of having his own personal wine, made at his own winery? But what wine buff hasn't also dismissed such an idea as impossible because of a lack of time and know-how?

A group of enthusiasts united by their common passion for wine, some because of their professional ties and others merely because of a fondness for this beverage, asked themselves these same questions—until one day they had the unique and original idea of creating small wine-growing and making properties. In addition to the estate, including its own personal ageing cellar, each property would have a parcel of land where a small vineyard could be established. The vines and the production of the wine resulting from their fruit would be managed by Spain's top wine growers and makers. This is how the “La Melonera” Estates with Vineyards came about. Forming part of this venture's management team is José Luis Pérez Verdú, currently the most representative member of Spain's new wine-growing and making elite. The idea behind it is to assert the status of quality wine as the creative work of individuals who act as interpreters of the terroir, the final result being the achievement of these creators, or WINE CREATORS. Another of “La Melonera's” aims is to broaden the range of varieties used, in light of the current uniformity, bringing back such native varieties as Melonera, Blasco and Tintilla, to name a few.

This concept had a distant forerunner in the first Bordeaux chateaux of the late 17th century. Because of their isolated, bucolic setting, these properties were originally estates for leisure and hunting. They later became vineyards with small wineries. The wine produced was aged and marketed by the *negociants* at Bordeaux harbour.

One of the essential conditions for the project was the right location. It had to be a place that combined an exceptional Mediterranean landscape, age-old holm oaks in an outstanding natural setting, with a long-standing wine tradition. These criteria were based on a deep and abiding respect for the environment. The ideal location was found in a place where typically southern varieties could be grown, one with a rich heritage of native varieties that are now nearly extinct, in the area where wine had first been introduced by the Phoenicians over 2,500 years ago and where phylloxera and other vicissitudes had nearly wiped out the wine industry in the mid-19th century. It is located in the La Serranía de Ronda region (Málaga), 50 km from the Mediterranean Sea and a mere 2 km from the city of Ronda.

Each of the wine estates is a different size, ranging between five and eighteen hectares of Mediterranean forest, and each has its own vineyard in the open areas between the oak woods. The vineyards themselves vary in size between one-half and two-and-a-half hectares. One area of the property will be set aside for the production and bottling plant, where the grapes from all of the different owners' lots will be made into wine. Each owner's personal cellar will contain the barrels where the wines from their own vineyards will be aged.

If an owner would like to create a special wine with the advice of a world-renowned oenologist, wine designer or outside consultant, a small amount of grapes would be selected to undergo a different winemaking process, with the signature of the wine creator.