

Bibi García, Cortijo de los Agujares, Málaga, Ronda.



The profession of winemaker. José Antonio Itarte, from the Basque country and formerly in the steel industry, now owns a surprising estate called Cortijo Los Agujares: 800 ha (1,976 acres) of land with various crops, but only 18 under vine—Tempranillo, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Petit Verdot and Pinot Noir. The 2008 vintage of the latter had the audacity to win the prestigious Mondial du Pinot Noir in Sierre (Switzerland), eclipsing some of the stars in this variety's universe. The work being done by Bibi García, an excellent oenologist trained in Madrid, Chile, La Rioja and Priorat, is also beginning to bear fruit.

The local wine scene also receives visits (and inspiration) from "flying oenologists", such as Ignacio de Miguel and Josep Lluís Pérez. The former provides consulting services for the Pasos Largos wine made by José Manuel López, owner of one of Andalusia's best restaurants, Tragabuches (in Ronda), named after a notorious inhabitant of Ronda, an early 19th-century bullfighter, bandit and smuggler. Josep Lluís is working on the ambitious La Melonera project with the invaluable aid of young oenologist Ana de Castro, although the wine has not yet appeared on the market. The peacefulness of this magic setting attracts people who are keen to get away from it all.