



closeness to the sea.

A number of others have followed in the wake of this enterprising winemaker. One of them is Antonio García, the enthusiastic owner of the “garage-sized” Los García de Verdevique winery, with very limited production of Tempranillo wines. Others are Los Barrancos and Cuatro Vientos.

Granada has plenty to offer in the red wine line. The town of Cortes y Graena in the district of Guadix (part of *Vino de la Tierra Altiplano de Sierra Nevada*), with its lumpy, stony clay, described by the locals as “turrón-like” and easy to hollow out to form cave-dwellings, is home to small vine growers with tiny wineries. Ramón Saavedra grows his vines along the Cauzón River, a tributary of the Alhama, and produces no more than 8,000 bottles. Antonio Vilchez draws our attention with his very personal

wines. His reds are surprising, made from Pinot Noir, a variety that sometimes struggles in soils that are not those of its native Champagne or Bourgogne. But, in this Alhama Valley, the Sierra Nevada works its magic with icy winds that keep temperatures down, saving the vinestocks from the summer heat.

## The promised land

Perched on the edge of a staggering ravine, the town of Ronda cuts a striking figure. If we look back in history, we find that vines were grown on these high lands even before Roman times. The coins minted in the neighboring Roman town of Acinipo (4 BC-AD 4) bore a bunch of grapes on their reverse side. But the phylloxera showed no consideration for history and the last traces of vines disappeared in the 1950s. Then, in the

1980s, pioneers coming from very different directions decided to restore winemaking in this very beautiful part of Spain. Friedrich Schatz (locally known as Federico), a gardener by profession, was globetrotting when he turned up in Ronda on his travels and decided to stay on. He planted a selection of foreign varieties on the property around his modest country house, including some German and Austrian ones such as Blaufränkisch and Lemberger, which give a touch of distinction to his much-appreciated organic wines. Another German, Prince Hohenlohe, developer of Marbella and creator of its jetsetting nightlife, took on the consultancy services of Alexis Lichine (a well-known viticulturist and wine writer from Bordeaux) for his wine-growing activities. And grower and producer Carlos Falcó (Marquis of Griñón) planted several Bordeaux varieties—

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Food, Wine & Travel Magazine

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January-April  
2010. 6 €