



The story of elBulli

Our story from 1961 to today

elBulli

[1961-1982] origins

1961. It all began with a minigolf installation...

1963. ...which later became a beach bar.

1964. The first restaurant.

1970-1975. An ever-increasing choice.

1975-1980. The Neichel era.

1981. The arrival of Juli Soler.

1961-1982. Some menus of the time.

1961-1982. Anecdotes of the time.

1961-2006. The various stages of **eIBulli** and those running it.

[1961-1982]
origins

1961. It all began with a minigolf installation... Doctor Hans Schilling, a German homeopathic doctor, and his wife Marketta, Czechoslovakian in origin but German by adoption, came to Roses at the end of the 1950s, and having fallen in love with Cala Montjoi, they decided to buy a piece of land there. The setting for the building that the doctor and Marketta occupied is a hundred metres uphill from where the restaurant was to be located. Mrs Schilling was already serving meals before the establishment existed, organising barbecues in the open air, which at times was frowned on. At that point, our link with the story begins with a planning permission licence for a minigolf installation, dated June 1961. The name chosen for their business (which came into use at some unspecified time) was El Bulli, since the Schillings had some French bulldogs, a breed colloquially known as "bulli".

[1961-1982]
origins

1963. ...which later became a beach bar. For just over a year, El Bulli operated as a minigolf installation, but very soon, because of Cala Montjoi's popularity as a scuba diving location for European enthusiasts who were in the area, the Schillings installed a beach bar. José Lozano, from Cordoba, who has been in the area since the beginning, built a thatched hut which served as a meeting point for bathers and scuba divers, and was known in Roses as the "German bar".

[1961-1982]
origins

1964. The first restaurant. In 1964, after a kitchen and a covered patio, which doubled as a dining area, were built, a Grill-room was installed in El Bulli, which was run by Otto Müller, from Switzerland, until 1966. This was the first restaurant. From that year on, various people ran the place, that served simple dishes such as roast chicken, leg of lamb and grilled fish. Gradually more elaborate dishes appeared on the menu, thanks to Doctor Schilling's interest in gastronomy; the doctor, who spent most of the year in Germany, used to go to the continent's finest restaurants, from which he would bring ideas that were gradually adopted in subsequent years.

[1961-1982]
origins

1970-1975. An ever-increasing choice. From 1970 onwards, El Bulli went from strength to strength as a restaurant. Many more French dishes began to be served, including flambéed sea-bass with fennel, prawns in Pernod, double entrecôte with béarnaise sauce and emincé of beef Stroganoff. Whenever Dr Schilling returned to Roses in the autumn, he was always pleased to see the progress made in the restaurant under Marketta, and each time he would bring new ideas, items, including products that were difficult to import at that time.

[1961-1982]
origins

1975-1980. The Neichel era. The arrival of Jean-Louis Neichel in 1975 changed El Bulli's way of working and brought new perspectives that were to be consolidated over the years; in 1976 El Bulli was awarded its first Michelin star. During the winter closure months, Dr Schilling encouraged his chef to visit great European restaurants, and negotiated a stint for Neichel to work with the great Alain Chapel, whose restaurant, *La mère Charles*, held the guide's highest accolade. Subsequent seasons' offerings were clearly marked by these influences.

1981. The arrival of Juli Soler. At the end of the 1980 season, Neichel decided to move to Barcelona, and a little later Juli Soler arrived to take over the management of El Bulli. Juli appointed Yves Kramer, Neichel's assistant, as head chef. The same year Jean-Paul Vinay was taken on as Kramer's assistant, although after a few months, they exchanged roles and Vinay became head chef.

a rock fan in Montjoi by Juli Soler. In late December I came to stay for a few days with a friend, Silvia, the owner of the *Barbarossa*. One day, while having a coffee in the bar *La Sirena*, I was introduced to Marketta. I had met her once before when I had gone to have a meal in El Bulli with Silvia. Marketta told me that they would be renewing their squad the following year because Jean-Louis Neichel, their chef and manager, was thinking of moving to Barcelona. As the future of the establishment was in some doubt, I was offered the job of manager. Strangely enough, this was the same day I received another offer, from a new restaurant, *L'Antull*, owned by the Perelló family, just next door to *La Sirena*. Marketta filled me in with all the details and we fixed an appointment for an interview with her husband, Dr Schilling, for 12 noon, December 25th, in cala Montjoi. I had only been to the cala a couple of times. The road was pitted with bumps and potholes. The telephone line was often down and there were frequent power cuts. It was rather a bleak area, not sheltered like it is today, but I did not think twice about disappearing from the map, the map I had charted out for myself at that time. It was a big change for me, and the thought of running one of the best restaurants in Catalonia gave me the strength to face up to the challenge.

The night before the appointment, Christmas Eve, was as festive as ever. The next morning, I was supposed to get up at 10 to go to El Bulli, but punctuality has never been my strong point, and it was nearly noon when I woke up. So I went haring off to the road up to cala Montjoi. I was wearing a sheepskin coat, and although it was December, the sun was baking. I walked up the road, a bundle of nerves. Up and up I went; after two kilometres I breathlessly went past the Dolmen, and two kilometres further on, the Torre del Sastre. When I reached the point of exhaustion, a Seat 1500 came round the bend and I cadged a lift.

And that is how I came to the "Hacienda El Bulli"; years later, as soon as I could, I registered the name "Restaurante El Bulli", as I had never liked the "Hacienda" part.

As soon as I went in, there were Marketta and her husband waiting for me. After the usual introductions, they suggested we all try the New Year's Eve set meal that Neichel was preparing. While we were eating, I soon realised that what Dr Schilling was interested in, more than the business, was gastronomy itself, focusing on enjoyment at the table, accompanied by exhaustive knowledge, seeking at all times to offer the diner moments of intense pleasure. At that time, a table at El Bulli was already different to tables in other restaurants in Spain. Even the cutlery, glassware and china were imported from Germany and drew their inspiration from the great restaurants of the time, belonging to Alain Chapel, Jacques Pic, and so on. The service, consideration – in short, the way the restaurant was run, were also based on these models. The doctor seemed to like my plain-speaking explanation of how, as far as I was concerned, the most important thing was for people to have a good time, and that they also knew how to do so. However, my worldly wisdom and experience of fine food and wines, and even knowledge of the trade, were not up to par, even for a beginner. So I told him, and the Doctor suggested I do two months of intensive travelling, visiting the best restaurants in France, Belgium and Germany. On my return, in the middle of March 1981, I was ready to face my first season as manager.

And right at the start, something odd happened. That year, our opening coincided with Holy Week, and we were fully booked: a large number of French and Germans, together with good customers from L'Empordà and Barcelona, meant that we had to hang the "Reservations Only" notice on the door. On one of these days, some customers from Perpignan came, fairly perplexed, telling us that we no longer appeared in the Michelin Guide. "That's impossible", I said. They amiably challenged me to fetch a guide and see for myself. It was my lot, therefore, to go to Figueres and find a well-stocked bookshop with the Michelin Guide. And it was true. At that time, the restaurant was full every day and we would end up tired out. But on Easter Sunday, I invited Marketta to go to Paris with me. Marketta never used to venture outside cala Montjoi, but she keenly accepted. I also took Yves Kramer, who was then chef de cuisine, with us. One the Monday afternoon, after closing the restaurant, we set off for Paris; we stopped for dinner in Lameloise, in Burgundy, and the next day, in Paris, we telephoned for an appointment. When they asked us what day we wanted, I replied: "We're at the door". In fact, they were very kind, but as I was complaining about our disappearance from the Guide, they were forced to give us an explanation. It turned out that they thought the restaurant had closed down. I explained that we wanted to begin a new cycle, and they promised to keep a close eye on the establishment's progress. A month later, a man who was lunching alone asked for the bill, paid, and then said: "Hello. Look, don't hit me – I'm a Michelin inspector." He then asked to visit the kitchen and the rest of the set-up, and we chatted for some time. The following year, 1982, El Bulli was back in the Guide with

one star. With this grounding, we awaited the following year's visit to ask for two stars. And so it was.

El Bulli was an enchanting place, getting there was almost an adventure, but thanks to our clientele and word of mouth, Germans, French and a good many Catalans came to savour a cuisine that, although very different to that of today, was already in the forefront of new European trends. Jean-Paul Vinay's menu was very much in the *nouvelle cuisine* line, with light influences from his home town, Lyon, and from Michel Guérard, as one of the last places he had worked had been in his restaurant; and added to all this was the quality of the best produce from our region: the best home-grown vegetables, succulent fish and shellfish, and so on. And then, of course, there was our philosophy, our interest above all in giving pleasure to the diner, so that he would leave the place a satisfied and happy man. In fact, inspired by unwritten, but ever-present guidelines, we ensured, and still do, that the atmosphere in El Bulli was unique.

[1961-1982]
origins

1961-1982. Some menus of the time. The menus we have kept from that period show the restaurant's tourist slant in the beginning, and the gradual appearance of more sophisticated dishes inspired, as was *de rigueur* in the 1970s, by French *haute cuisine*.

Anecdotes of the time. The story of the restaurant might be written in terms of its gourmet output, but also through a series of anecdotes. In the early years of elBulli, guests would sometimes arrive by boat. One of the most frequent customers was Captain Moore, then Salvador Dalí's agent. Moore would come into the bay in his enormous yacht, accompanied by his friends and half a dozen spectacularly beautiful women. At any time of day, with the help of a megaphone, they would shout out from the deck how many people were coming to eat. The kitchen would start preparing food, fully aware that the guests would be disembarking in dribs and drabs by means of a dinghy. It would not be until two hours later that everybody would be sitting at the table. There was also no telephone in Cala Montjoi, and when Dr Schilling, who used to spend several months in Germany, wanted to talk to the restaurant, he was forced to send a telegram to the chef, telling him to be in the reception area of the Hotel Moderno in Roses two days later at a certain time. When that time came, the chef would go seven kilometres down the road and wait in the reception area for the Doctor's call.

It was not until 1977 that the telephone line was installed, and it cost a small fortune: seven kilometres of cable for just one subscriber. When the workmen had finished, Jean-Louis Neichel and the gardener, José Lozano, dug a trench some one hundred metres uphill to bury the line, up to the house where Marketta was living, so that she would not be cut off. It so happened, however, that whenever the telephone rang, one could not tell whether it was for the restaurant or for Marketta; so, a few days later, Neichel and José dug another trench, alongside the first one, to take a cable connected to a bell. If the call was for Marketta, the bell was rung from the restaurant to let Mrs Schilling know that she was to pick up the phone.

José lent his hand to various tasks during all the phases of the restaurant. At the beginning of the 1970s he took it upon himself to dismantle what was left of the minigolf installation, and he was the one who, armed with a home-made

gadget (a bamboo cane open at one end with a stone) used to go looking for sea urchins among the rocks near Cala Montjoi; it is no accident that elBulli was one of the first *haute cuisine* restaurants in Spain to serve this delicious seafood product. Here is another story connected with seafood. At that time, a good many lobsters were caught off Cape Creus, and sometimes their prices would go down considerably. When this happened, the restaurant van would be sent down to the wholesale fish markets in Roses or Port de la Selva to load up with dozens of kilos of lobsters. But elBulli had no lobster tank to keep them fresh, and so a concrete sink was reconditioned and sea water pumped into it to keep the lobsters alive. When one was needed for a dish, it was fished straight out of this improvised tank.

[1961-1982]
origins

1961	Minigolf. Hans and Marketta Schilling (owners until 1990)
1964	Otto Müller (Manager)
1967	Helga Lübe (Maîtresse d'Hôtel), Fritz Kreis (Chef de Cuisine)
1968	Manfred Hüschelrath (Manager and Maître d'Hôtel), Gabi Amann (Chef)
1970	Urs Müller (Manager and Maître d'Hôtel), Oki Bouillard (Chef de Cuisine)
1975	Urs Müller (Manager and Maître d'Hôtel), Jean-Louis Neichel (Chef de Cuisine)
1976	Jean-Louis Neichel (Manager and Maître d'Hôtel)
March 1981	Juli Soler (Manager and Maître d'Hôtel), Yves Kramer (Chef de Cuisine)
October 1981	Juli Soler (Manager and Maître d'Hôtel), Jean-Paul Vinay (Chef de Cuisine)
October 1984	uli Soler (Manager and Maître d'Hôtel), Ferran Adrià and Christian Lutaud (Chefs de Cuisine)
March 1987	Juli Soler (Manager and Maître d'Hôtel), Ferran Adrià (Chef de Cuisine)
1990	Juli Soler / Ferran Adrià (present owners)
1990	Toni Gerez (Maître d'Hôtel), Xavier Sagristà (Chef de Cuisine)
1994	Lluís Garcia and Lluís Biosca (Maîtres d'Hôtel), Marc Cuspinera (Chef de Cuisine)
1996	Lluís Garcia and Lluís Biosca (Maîtres d'Hôtel), Eduard Bosch (Chef de Cuisine)
2001-present	Lluís Garcia and Lluís Biosca (Maîtres d'Hôtel), Albert Raurich and Oriol Castro (Chefs de Cuisine)

* We have included this summary in –the origins- in order that the user can familiarize himself with the different periods of elBulli.

[1983-1986]

the years of learning

1983. Ferran Adrià's work experience at elBulli.

1984. Ferran joins the staff.

1984. A duo in charge of the kitchen.

1985. The beginning of a personal career.

1983-1986. What elBulli was like.

1983-1986. Some dishes of that time.

1983-1986. Menus.

[1983-1986]
the years of learning

1983. Ferran Adrià's work experience at elBulli. Between mid-1982 and the end of 1983, Ferran Adrià was doing his military service in the navy, in Cartagena. In the summer of 1983, at the suggestion of another Catalan recruit, Fermí Puig, he decided to spend his month's leave in elBulli, a restaurant he had never heard of. When the month was over, he was happy with the experience and immediately arranged to join the staff the following year.

arrival at elBulli, "act one", by Ferran Adrià. I first heard about El Bulli while I was hundreds of kilometres from Roses, further down the Mediterranean coast. In 1983 I had been doing my military service for almost a year in Cartagena, in the Navy. I was 21 years old, and because I had worked in restaurants before my call-up, I was lucky enough to be sent to work in the Admiral's kitchen. At the beginning it was a comfortable posting, although I later saw that it involved the responsibility of thinking up new menus every day for this high-ranking officer and his family. By chance, at the beginning of that year, another budding young chef, also Catalan, was posted to the kitchen to assist me. He was Fermí Puig, now chef at the prestigious *Drolma* restaurant in Barcelona.

As everyone knows, military service has its rules, its hierarchies, its rituals and customs. In that kitchen, the old hand was me, and the new boy, Fermí. Whether it was to win my confidence or to share experiences outside the barracks, the fact was that that spring, he suggested that during our month's leave in August, I should do a stint in El Bulli, a restaurant on the Costa Brava where he had worked. He told me it was one of the best in Spain, and that it had two Michelin stars. Little did he know that at that time I had no idea what that meant. However, I took note of what he said and perhaps began making plans to spend a pleasant summer at the beach; in fact this is probably what influenced my decision, rather than the idea of going to work in a restaurant during my month's leave. Meanwhile, we devoted ourselves to our first culinary experiments, and I made my first foray into *nouvelle cuisine* guided by chefs such as Michel Guérard and the Troisgros brothers, thanks to the books that Fermí had brought with him. For several months, we copied the dishes from these recipes and served them to the Admiral.

And finally August came, and my "excursion" to El Bulli. As soon as I got to Roses, I went to the bar *La Sirena*, on the waterfront, where it had been arranged that I would

be picked up. It was an El Bulli waiter, Luis Rubio (later to become the maître), who turned up and drove me along a road whose surface was completely different to what it is now. As bend after bend took me nearer to cala Montjoi along this rocky, dusty road, I could not help thinking that somebody had been pulling my leg. How was it possible that to get to what, according to Fermí, was a de luxe restaurant, there was no other route than this veritable goat track? It was incredible...

...but true. In fact, El Bulli was one of the few Spanish restaurants to have been awarded two stars in the Michelin Guide, at a time when there was no establishment in Spain with the highest category. There I met the alma mater of the restaurant, its manager, namely Juli Soler, with whom I have shared the history of El Bulli ever since. As well as Juli, the team consisted of Jean-Paul Vinay, chef de cuisine, Annick Janin, in charge of patisserie, Christian Lutaud, assistant chef, and a squad which in summer amounted to some twenty people between the kitchen and the dining area.

That month was highly intense in all senses of the word. From a personal perspective, there was the work itself, stimulating and new, but also the nights out in Roses. Professionally speaking, the stint in El Bulli was a real immersion in the world of haute cuisine, since it was the first time I had heard of all the trappings of this world: the critics, the running of a restaurant, gourmet guides, and so on. At that time, the El Bulli style was *nouvelle cuisine*, not just because of the nationality of Jean-Paul, Annick and Christian, but also because the movement was at its height just then. The experience was so positive that, at the end of my leave, it was suggested that I join the staff the following March, the beginning of the 1984 season. I completed my military service in mid-December 1983, and perhaps with the idea of confirming the commitment I had made in the summer, I decided to go back to Roses for a few days. That trip was something special, as the journey between Barcelona and El Bulli, which usually takes just over an hour and a half, took Fermí and me three days. Needless to say, we did not follow the direct route.

This was "act one" of the five acts making up my career in El Bulli, five decisive moments that may be summarised as follows: the summer job in 1983, joining the staff at the end of March 1984, my promotion to chef de cuisine along with Christian Lutaud in October 1984, taking over the kitchen on my own in March 1987 and the setting up of the partnership with Juli in 1990. The most remarkable thing about all this is that chance was what determined my career, except for the last item, which was the only thing consciously planned. Everything else happened as I have related it, it is true, but it could easily have turned out otherwise. The only thing I am sure of is that El Bulli changed my life and made me what I am. It only remains for me to thank all those who have done their bit to turn El Bulli into something more than just a restaurant: it is a way of understanding life.

[1983-1986]
the years of learning

1984. Ferran joins the staff. After his military service was over, and after a temporary job in a restaurant in Seville, Ferran joined the elBulli staff as a chef de partie in March 1984. During those early months, he began to come into contact with the preciseness, stringency and concentration required for working in a restaurant of this category. But in August, Jean-Paul Vinay announced that he was leaving elBulli to open a restaurant in Barcelona. For the previous few months, Ferran, Christian Lataud and Toni Gerez, one of the pillars of the dining area, had been offered the chance to set up a restaurant of their own in Setcases, near Camprodon. Various conversations with Juli followed and he persuaded them to stay, so that in October, Ferran and Christian became the chefs de cuisine.

[1983-1986]
the years of learning

1984. A duo in charge of the kitchen. Ferran and Christian were "lucky" in that they saw very few people come to the restaurant in October, November, December and January, and this gave them a good deal of free time to reorganise themselves and make plans for the future. On their days off, the two chefs would visit other restaurants, at least the ones they could afford. The early months also saw the beginning of Ferran and Christian's visits to the Boqueria market in Barcelona, or purchasing trips to Perpignan. 1984 also saw the first business trip to France, where they had a meal in Lucien Vanel's restaurant in Toulouse. Subsequently, on a trip they made with Dr Schilling, they had the opportunity to visit great restaurants serving French *haute cuisine* and in some of them they made arrangements for in-service traineeships which Ferran and Christian completed in 1985.

my experience in the Republic of cala Montjoi, by Christian Lutaud. Returning now, in 2004, to the El Bulli kitchen has been a trip back to the past, although the "Bulli World" today is from another galaxy, and is nothing like the one I knew. At the end of this visit, Albert, Juli and Ferran asked me to write a few lines on the years I spent in El Bulli.

Over twenty years have gone by since I, with my 2CV and my guitar, landed in cala Montjoi. Three months previously I had had a meeting with Jean-Paul Vinay and Annick Janin which led to me becoming assistant chef, and so swell the ranks of the "Gang des Lyonnais". Also at El Bulli were Mme Marketta, Juli, Jose, Ali, Ángel, Artur, Jordi, Julio, Cándido and others, who were to be my new family, and this corner of the Mediterranean, my new country, which would mark my life for ever afterwards. All those years in El Bulli were special, and moulded me as a professional and as an individual. I have a great many memories, many of them good and just a few bad ones, and I have forgotten the latter. From Jean-Paul and Annick I learned the trade (techniques, taste, tidiness, hygiene, etc.) and I shared a friendship and good times with them; everything else I learned from Juli.

Then came Fermí (Mr Puig), and after him Luisito, Ramiro Buj Fuster (my friend from Gandía), and one day, Ferran arrived. We were gradually leaving the Spanish Navy without cooks. I used to look after the arrival of the new cooks, tell them about the work, accommodation and the life in our little commune, and also about the night life

in Roses (*Chic, Si Us Plau, Rachdingue, Picasso*, etc.). When he finished his military service, Ferran stayed with us, the team concept became more important, and the level higher (in two years we obtained two Michelin stars). With Ferran and Toni Gerez (the gentleman from Llançà) we formed a "triumvirate" and began our trips to Setcases to venture forth and open our own establishment, something which never left the drawing board. In fact, there was one event that changed the destiny of El Bulli. Jean-Paul and Annick left to set up their own restaurant, *La Ciboulette*, taking with them half the team (Fermín, Cándido, Tito and Ángel). So we put our project aside and went back to our home, to cala Montjoi, for a new undertaking, with Ferran and I as chefs de cuisine, assisted by Andy and Uwe. Later we were joined by Albert Adrià and Xavi Sagristà.

I well remember our first steps, the first menu, the nights spent studying in the caravan (the El Bulli "casino"). Ferran and I would go every Tuesday to the Boqueria and buy produce from Colomines and Petràs' stalls. Later we would get in the car, together with Xavi and Albert, and go and have a meal in the restaurant in Gualba. We would also visit the truffle and mushroom market in Vic, and frequent the market in Figueres and the fish auctions in Roses. I still remember our visits to the *Mas Pla*, in Borrassà, the restaurant belonging to André Bonnaure, where we used to eat cassoulet, or *Le calamar en folie*, which belonged to our friend René Lopinet, a charming character who left us a few years ago; I can still remember his guinea fowl with spices and honey kebab, as well as his cheesecake.

Among many episodes, I remember the fire in cala Montjoi, with the subsequent power cut; fearing that all the tarts on the sweet trolley would be ruined, we gathered them all together and left them in the freezer belonging to Cal Julià, our fish supplier. And then there were the football matches in the camping grounds, Judit's beach bar, the night clubs, the flat in Roses, which became a boarding house in the summer months, and dinners at friends' homes. The trips to France, the visits to the "greats", like the time Ferran, Juli, Toni and I went to Lyon and stayed the night at my cousin Serge's house in Tarare. Another time, we went with Dr Schilling to Troisgros, and then to Jacques Pic's restaurant, where we had a row with the sommelier. And meals in Roger Vergé's *Le moulin de Mougins*, Jacques Maximin's *Chantecler*, Louis Outhier's *La Napoule...* and in the casino in Cannes, which left us with our pockets considerably lighter. On our trips we also visited bookshops and bought recipe books, such as in Toulouse, where we had a meal in Lucien Vanel's restaurant. And later there were the stages, mine with Troisgros and Michel Chabran, and Ferran's with Pic and Georges Blanc. And then there was the mountain of day to day work. And not only in El Bulli. We were consultants for the *Si Us Plau* restaurant, as well as the *Passarella* restaurant in Roses; we also cooked for the Dalí seminar in Figueres, in the Corte Inglés in Madrid, the Nixe Palace in Mallorca, and the *Florian* in Barcelona.

Time went by (five years), and the yearning to try something else marked the moment for me to move on to new ventures and a change of scenery. Artur Sagués (my fellow-sufferer and a son of El Bulli) and I went to open our own establishment (*La Guardia*), followed later by the *Oligarum*. When this closed down, a new stage began for me, which might be described as my "doing my own thing" stage (courses, consultancy, etc.), together with my friend Paco Torreblanca.

After all this time, coming back to El Bulli, and seeing what it represents, what Albert, Juli and Ferran, their collaborators and everyone who has passed through it have made of it, and the work of one individual, Mme Marketta; seeing how a lad from Santa Eulàlia was over time to become the first chef superstar in history... All this fills me with great joy and immense pride at having been, and still being, part of this family.

[1983-1986]
the years of learning

1985. The beginning of a personal career. 1985 onwards saw various arrivals: Albert Adrià was joined by Xavi Sagristà and, a year later, by Lluís Biosca, who worked in the dining area. Xavi Sagristà was, together with Toni Gerez, one of the mainstays of the restaurant until 1993, when they opened their own restaurant, the *Mas Pau*. Also in 1985 they underwent the traineeships that had been organised the previous winter. Ferran went to work with Georges Blanc and Jacques Pic, and Christian with Troisgros and Michel Chavran. One of the most important visits they made during those months was to the *Currito* restaurant in Madrid, where they ate a partridge in *escabèche*, whole, as it was usually served. At that time, *escabèche* was not usually found in *haute cuisine* restaurants. So they decided to reproduce the recipe, instead boning a pigeon and presenting it in a sophisticated way. This was one of the iconic dishes of our career.

my arrival at El Bulli: necessity or vocation?, by Albert Adrià. This book has required me to dig deep into my memory, not always an easy task, in an effort to recall as accurately as possible the years gone by, my arrival, the feelings I would have had back then when, as a lad of just 15, I ended up in El Bulli. It has been nearly two decades of work, sometimes hard, almost always gratifying, that began on 28th March 1985. That grey, unsettled day I arrived at cala Montjoi, and the spot seemed enchanting yet bleak. And I began to harbour doubts, wondering whether I had made the right choice in coming so far from home. The situation got worse when Ferran introduced me to the manager, a lanky, restless fellow called Juli, who immediately peppered me with questions which, to tell the truth, I did not begin to understand. I thought then that such a reception was necessary, as if he somehow wanted me to understand that I would not be the boss' kid brother there.

After a while, they got me to choose what was to be my new home, although I can no longer remember whether I stayed in a room first, or whether I went straight to the ramshackle caravan that would later house me, situated halfway up the track that went from the bend in the road to the restaurant. Despite the obvious inconveniences, and once I had got over the initial misgivings, it seemed a paradise: suddenly I was living on my own, without the support of my parents, and although the first two weeks it took me some time to adapt, having left school, my friends and my environment behind, the predominant feeling was one of interest to see what the

future held for me. And as always, first things first: very soon discotheques, parties and girls became my main concern.

And what about work? One of the first questions I am always asked in interviews is: "How did you come to El Bulli?", followed by "Was it a vocation for you?" The answer is as simple as it is unoriginal. I had never liked school, but all the time I was passing my exams, there was no problem; however, when I got to secondary school and did not even pass P.E., I decided that there was no point in even finishing the first year. At that point, perhaps the most logical thing to do was to go to El Bulli, at a time when my brother Ferran was chef de cuisine and needed staff. And so I joined El Bulli, and I am still here, nearly twenty years later. Funnily enough, people tend to think that I arrived in the restaurant long after Ferran did, perhaps because there is seven years' difference in our ages, although the truth is I arrived just one year after him.

Another frequent question in interviews is "Why did you specialise in patisserie?" There are various reasons. Firstly the person in charge of patisserie left around 1987, and I, having worked in all the departments of the kitchen, found myself in patisserie at that time. In addition, I knew that I had a hereditary allergy to shellfish, which was a nuisance as I could not work properly with it. Finally, the fact that my "teacher" was Christian Letaud, who had an exquisite grounding in the Lyonnais school, helped me to discover all the techniques and secrets of the sweet world. From then on (interrupted only by my military service in 1988) I quickly absorbed everything there was to know about this aspect of cooking. However, since 1997 I have not been devoting myself exclusively to desserts, as I am in charge of the Workshop in Barcelona, and together with Ferran and Oriol look after everything, both sweet and savoury.

There is a saying (not mine of course) that I often repeat: "You are what you cook, and you cook what you are". In the light of this, I owe not only my way of cooking, but also the way I am, to all those who one way or another have crossed my path over these two decades. They helped me to mould my way of living and enjoying life which I would certainly not have learned had it not been for El Bulli.

[1983-1986]
the years of learning

1983-1986. What elBulli was like. The feelings one gets driving from Roses to Cala Montjoi are the same as those of twenty years ago. The road surface is much better now, it is true, but the landscape still offers magnificent views to the eyes: the Gulf of Roses, the craggy coastline of the south side of Cape Creus, the inlets with their clear waters, and finally, framed by the projection of Cape Norfeu, the slim form of Cala Montjoi. As far as the restaurant itself is concerned, the dining areas are almost the same as Ferran found them in 1983 (as Juli had already extended the second dining area). The major changes are to be found in the garden, the parking area, and the kitchen, which were subsequently modified. The kitchen occupied a cramped area of some 50 m², with room for barely ten people, and had certain drawbacks that prevented us from developing the style we were later aspiring to.

[1983-1986]
the years of learning

1983-1986. Some dishes of that time. During the three years that Ferran and Christian were in charge of the elBulli kitchen, they carried out a thorough review of the heritage of classical cooking and *nouvelle cuisine*. These are some of the dishes that marked the final stage of our "versions" prepared in elBulli, before we began to create our own recipes in 1987.

These dishes are not included in the **elBulli**1983-2005 General Catalogue.

[1983-1986]
the years of learning

1983-1986. Menus. The menus of this period bear witness to the restaurant's orientation towards classical cooking and even more to *nouvelle cuisine*.

[1987-1993] **an emphasis on creativity**

1987. Ferran Adrià, a chef on his own.

1987. "Creativity means not copying".

1987. Winter closing.

1990. Journey to the avant-garde.

1990. The two stars are recovered.

1990. elBulli, S.L.

1991. First alterations.

1992. The first workshop.

1993. The new kitchen.

1993. The taste of the Mediterranean.

[1987-1993]

an emphasis on creativity

1987. Ferran Adrià, a chef on his own. The beginning of January 1987 saw a significant circumstance: Christian Lataud was to leave elBulli to open a restaurant in Jávea (Alicante). At the same time, Ferran was beginning to see that cooking fascinated him more and more, and he was becoming much more committed to his profession. This new situation changed things considerably. As this was the first time he was in charge of the kitchen on his own, he began to map out his own route in complete freedom.

[1987-1993]
an emphasis on creativity

1987. "Creativity means not copying". At the beginning of 1987 we went to the Côte d'Azur, with a group of catering professionals, to visit some of the prestigious restaurants of the area. We were staying in the *Negresco* in Nice, whose restaurant, the *Chantecler*, was run by Jacques Maximin. One day, in the reception area, we were talking to Michel Palmer, the manager of the hotel, and Maximin himself, who told us he was holding a demonstration for the Escoffier Foundation in Cannes, and he invited us along. During the discussion following the demonstration, one of those attending asked the great French chef what creativity was. Maximin replied: "Creativity means not copying". This simple sentence was what brought about a change in approach in our cooking, and was the cut-off point between "re-creation" and a firm decision to become involved in creativity. After getting back to the restaurant, we were convinced that we needed to use major cookery books less and less and try to find an identity of our own. This was the start of our plunge into creativity in elBulli.

[1987-1993]
an emphasis on creativity

1987. Winter closing. Up to the winter of 1986, elBulli used to close for two months, between January 15th and March 15th every year. But from 1987 onwards, the period of closure was extended to five months, from around mid-October to mid-March. Later these five months became six (from October 1st to April 1st). Why was it suddenly decided to close five months in the winter, and later six? Although we find it almost laughable now, the truth is that we had very few customers in that period, and so keeping the restaurant open meant a considerable drain on the cash flow. And what at first was a necessity later became a basic characteristic in elBulli. In fact, were we not to close during those months, maintaining the level of creativity that we have set for ourselves would be out of the question.

[1987-1993]
an emphasis on creativity

1990. Journey to the avant-garde. 1990 was the year we began to find our feet in the gastronomic world, and our focus was no longer just the Michelin Guide, but also the *Gault & Millau* guide and magazine, founded by Henri Gault and Christian Millau, who almost twenty years previously had backed and given *nouvelle cuisine* its name. Thanks to them we became aware of the existence of two chefs considered to be among the most advanced of their time, Michel Bras and Pierre Gagnaire, and we decided to become acquainted with their cooking *in situ*. That trip marked our outlook on cooking. From Gagnaire we learnt something that may be summed up thus: "Everything is possible". With Bras we discovered sensitivity, the world of nature, respect for the pronounced flavour of each product, to a level that we had never experienced up to then, a cooking concept based on purity. The enthusiasm they aroused in us began to mark our cuisine, with a combination of a regional-based style, which had been our trademark up to then, and a more avant-garde style that had no roots.

[1987-1993]
an emphasis on creativity

1990. The two stars are recovered. The work done in elBulli was gradually beginning to bear fruit and earn recognition from specialist guides. In 1990 the National Academy of Gastronomy gave Juli Soler its award for best Chef de Salle, and two years later it was Ferran Adrià who received recognition with the award for the best Chef de Cuisine. But 1990 also saw the Michelin guide, possibly the most significant world reference in catering, awarding a second star to our restaurant, a distinction that we had already enjoyed in the previous decade.

[1987-1993]
an emphasis on creativity

1990. eIBulli, S.L. During the years we looked after the kitchen and the dining area as employees, we were given a considerably free rein by the Schillings, but naturally this freedom had a limit and a good many decisions needed to be okayed by them. 1990 saw what was undoubtedly the most significant organisational change of our time in the restaurant, when Marketta and Dr Schilling decided to retire, giving us the opportunity to buy eIBulli, something that they had already hinted to us from time to time. Up to then we were not sure whether we would stay in Cala Montjoi or whether we would open a restaurant in Barcelona or somewhere else, but after the decision to buy eIBulli, our future was firmly linked to these parts.

[1987-1993]
an emphasis on creativity

1991. First alterations. From 1991 onwards, once we were able to enjoy the freedom of deciding what the restaurant was to be like, we set about altering various areas of the elBulli installations. Firstly we laid out a customers' parking area, which also enabled us to fix the surrounding garden so that it blended in with the natural landscape of the Cap de Creu park. A year later we made alterations to the patio. We did not touch the dining areas, which were basically the same as when Juli arrived in Cala Montjoi in 1981.

[1987-1993]
an emphasis on creativity

1992. The first workshop. In the summer of 1991, the sculptor Xavier Medina Campeny, a customer and friend of elBulli, had a series of conversations with Ferran about art and creativity, after which he invited him to work in his workshop in Palo Alto, in the Poble Nou district of Barcelona. The following winter, while Xavier carried on with his work, Ferran cooked dishes that they subsequently ate for lunch and dinner every day, but above all, it was an unforgettable experience for him. Firstly, he got to know how a creative mind works, a world that until then he had not been able to see up close, and it was obvious to him that what he was seeing could be applied to the world of gastronomic creativity. In addition, it so happened that for the first time ever, Ferran was in a kitchen creating, without having to cook for a session in the restaurant. This was undoubtedly the germ of the idea for the future elBulli workshop.

[1987-1993]
an emphasis on creativity

1993. The new kitchen. Following the car park and patio alterations, one of the decisions to be taken when elBulli was established as a limited company was to have a new kitchen built. So we went to see some of the most up-to-date kitchens, such as the one belonging to the Troisgros brothers in Roanne, which at that time was a model to aspire to. By 1992 we were quite clear about the features of our future kitchen. There then began an exciting period during which we drew up plans and projects, with the collaboration of the architect, Dolors Andreu, and the contractors, Maquinarias García, for the area of our dreams: we made models, we decided to use materials that were not commonly used in kitchens, we included some sculptures by Xavier Medina Campeny, which today are almost a symbol of our kitchen, and so on. The result was an area of 325 m², with all the necessary facilities to enable us to work in a way that was completely new to us, under the best conditions possible. The elBulli that we know today would not have been the same without this kitchen, which leads us to state that it has been an essential element in our evolution.

[1987-1993]
an emphasis on creativity

1993. The taste of the Mediterranean. It is highly likely that, but for *El Bulli. El sabor del Mediterráneo*, we would never have tackled the General Catalogue. Indeed, when planning the Catalogue, the first thought that came to mind was that, when writing that book, ten years previously, our intention was not to restrict ourselves to including just recipes, but to sketch out a certain analysis of our cooking. If we look at the books published up to the time of the publication of *El Bulli. El sabor del Mediterráneo* (which was released in 1993), we can see that there were a good many books by chefs that only included recipes, or else others in which personal ideas on cooking in general were laid out, but there were very few that concentrated on the analysis of styles, creative methods and so on. That book, then, embodied our desire to codify our cooking from a theoretical point of view, an approach that was continued in subsequent books.

[1994-1997]

the period that mapped our future

1994. The birth of the concept of the creative team.

1994. The birth of technique-concept cuisine.

1994. Courses at Cala Montjoi.

1995. The birth of elBullicatering.

1995-1996. *Talaia*, a prototype workshop.

1995. National and international distinctions.

1996. Support from Robuchon, a vital factor in our career.

1997. The workshop in the Aquarium.

1997. Three Michelin stars.

1997. Tableware for our "follies".

[1994-1997]
the period that mapped our future

1994. The birth of the concept of the creative team. Although we had already experimented with the possibility of creating without thinking of serving meals in the restaurant in Xavier Medina Campeny's workshop in 1992, it was not until 1994 that we thought of forming a team devoted to creativity, which adopted the name of the development squad. This was in response to the need to professionalise the creative process. In eIBulli we began to set a standard that called for a daily dedication to creativity, since there was now a clear purpose: to generate new concepts and techniques. At that time, for financial reasons, we had to combine the work of the development squad with our daily functioning, and so after the lunchtime session, or even in snatched moments during the *mise en place*, we developed ideas that were later to become dishes.

[1994-1997]

the period that mapped our future

1994. The birth of technique-concept cuisine. In 1994 we began to suspect that for our cuisine to develop at the pace we wanted, we would need to expand our idea of creativity and orientate our search not so much towards mixtures of products or variations on concepts that already existed in order to create new recipes, but to create new concepts and techniques. From then on, the technique-concept search was our main creative pillar, without abandoning other styles and methods, and this gave rise in subsequent years to our foams, new pasta, new ravioli, the frozen savoury world, new caramelisation, and so on. Technique-concept creativity almost certainly marks the most important difference between a cuisine that is merely creative and one that is constantly evolving.

[1994-1997]
the period that mapped our future

1994. Courses at Cala Montjoi. In the winter of 1993-1994, we began organising a series of gastronomic courses in elBulli, spread over three days and aimed at professionals in the sector. These courses were held every year until 1999. At first, they were one of the solutions aimed at occupying the annual six-month period that the restaurant was closed, but now we see that they were very important for our evolution because, for example, it was not until 1994 that we had ever had a meal in the restaurant, and this gave us a completely new perspective which helped us to think about the menu and its evolution. This information became increasingly broader and useful, since although at the beginning those attending were mostly other chefs, as time went by they were joined by gastronomy enthusiasts. Running these courses also meant that we had to plan theory and practical classes. Organising these sessions unquestionably called for an effort we were not accustomed to, and they forced us to analyse our cuisine for the first time.

[1994-1997]
the period that mapped our future

1995. The birth of eIBullicatering. The idea that gave rise to the birth of **eIBullicatering** was to transfer the restaurant's output to a broader public, obviously adapting it to the requirements of events that typically used this kind of service. This was an important initiative, since eIBulli was one of the first quality restaurants to make inroads into the world of catering, something that was frowned on at that time. The headquarters of **eIBullicatering** was set up in the kitchen facilities of the Aquarium in Barcelona, under the management of Eduard Roigé. We immediately began selecting what kinds of snacks, *tapas* and dishes were most suitable for larger numbers. Thus many of the recipes that had been tried out in eIBulli were found to be suitable for producing on a larger scale. Since then **eIBullicatering** has been constantly evolving and today may be said to have a character of its own.

[1994-1997]

the period that mapped our future

1995-1996. *Talaia*, a prototype workshop. 1995 was a crucial year for our creativity. Our experience in Xavier Medina Campeny's workshop had given us a strong impulse. In addition, the consolidation of our winter closure period gave us a few months to concentrate solely on the creative process without having to worry about daily service in the restaurant. We needed to find a place where we could work in total liberty and tranquillity, and the solution came with the opening of the *Talaia* restaurant in the Olympic Port in Barcelona, for which we were consultants at the time. So, we often used to go to the *Talaia*'s kitchen between 4 and 7pm to conduct our experiments. We did this right through the year, although it was not until 1996 that this activity became consolidated, with the collaboration, through the *Talaia*, of Marc Singla, Carles Abellán and Sergi Arola. They were two extremely fruitful years, when we made definite strides towards realising our dream, a Workshop devoted exclusively to creativity the year round.

[1994-1997]

the period that mapped our future

1995. National and international distinctions. 1995 saw the publication of the *Lo mejor de la gastronomía* guide, which since then has become one of the most prestigious guides in Spain. In that edition, the critic, Rafael García Santos, decided to award elBulli a score of 9.75, the highest score yet. Furthermore, 1995 saw an occurrence that made us particularly proud. The French *Gault & Millau* food guide gave us a score of 19, which put us at the same level as the great restaurants of France, thus endorsing abroad the recognition we had been receiving in Spain. The reason we were particularly proud of this was because the two people responsible for this guide were those who over twenty years previously had coined the term *nouvelle cuisine* and had supported the type of cuisine that Michel Guérard, Paul Bocuse, the Troisgros brothers and other chefs had nurtured in France.

[1994-1997]
the period that mapped our future

1996. Support from Robuchon, a vital factor in our career. It is no secret that Joël Robuchon is one of the great names in cooking in the last twenty years, and that his opinion carries great weight in the world of gastronomy. So when in an interview he gave in 1996 he named Ferran Adrià his “heir” and said that he was the best chef in the world (an opinion he had already hinted at in 1994), he undeniably attracted the gaze of all critics and gourmets to elBulli. Four years previously, one day in the summer of 1992, Robuchon was due to come to have a meal at elBulli. For the three or four days beforehand we were really on tenterhooks, a feeling that not only stayed with us when he arrived, but also increased when he told us he could only have a quick meal as he had to go to Perpignan to catch the High Speed Train. Obviously we had planned the full menu, and were slightly disappointed to think that we had to shorten it. To our surprise, halfway through the meal he told us that he did not mind missing the train and that he wanted to eat the full meal. Thus began the story of the relationship between Robuchon and elBulli.

[1994-1997]
the period that mapped our future

1997. The workshop in the Aquarium. After the development squad in 1994 and the off-season workshop in the *Talaia* restaurant in Barcelona, we gradually came round to the idea of the need to set up a workshop, but we did not know how and where to do so. Joël Robuchon had something to do with it when he advised us to separate our creative work from the restaurant service. The first step that occurred to us, and the most reasonable, was to visit a culinary workshop to see how it worked, and on that basis, set up our own tailor-made workshop. But to our surprise, after asking a good many professionals in the sector, we realised that nobody knew of any establishment of this type. So we decided that, rather than taking on too much risk at the start, we would set up our workshop in the premises of our outside catering company in the Barcelona Aquarium. In the beginning, we made use of a corner of the office for our theory work, and a section of the kitchen for our experiments. Albert and Oriol devoted themselves exclusively to the Workshop, while Ferran divided his time between there and his work in elBulli.

[1994-1997]

the period that mapped our future

1997. Three Michelin stars. There are a good many restaurant guides that give out their awards all over the world, but there is no doubt that the Michelin guide is not only the best known, but also the one whose "stars" are most coveted by restaurant owners. For this reason, the awarding of three stars to elBulli in 1997 (which at that time were held in Spain only by the *Arzak* and *El racó de can Fabes* restaurants), could not but overwhelm us with pride. Without any doubt, this marked one of the major milestones for the understanding of our story, and changed the gastronomic world's outlook and recognition of our cuisine.

[1994-1997]

the period that mapped our future

1997. Tableware for our "follies". In 1996, we had contacted some young Barcelona designers to help us design specific tableware for our petits fours. After several months' work, we came up with the definitive range. The pattern followed was based on origami shapes, embodied in thin silver-coated sheets which were shaped to match their purpose. Each piece had its *raison d'être*, its own personality, which was irrevocably linked to a particular petit four, while each petit four was conceived in terms of its particular receptacle. The impact in the restaurant was a sensation. These items marked the beginning of our relationship with the world of design, which has subsequently continued in other initiatives. As part of this reassessment of petits fours, we needed to think of a name for these preparations, and from the following year onwards they came to be known as follies.

[1998-2002] an established style

- 1998. *Los secretos de El Bulli, Los postres de El Bulli.*
- 1998. *Las 50 nuevas tapas de Ferran Adrià.*
- 1998. The beginning of our work at the Hacienda Benazuza.
- 1999. Borges: the first of our consultancy services to major brands.
- 1999. The cover of *El País Semanal*.
- 2000. The cataloguing starts.
- 2000. Work starts on the elBulli General Catalogue.
- 2000. elBullitaller in the calle Portaferrissa.
- 2001. Lunchtime closing.
- 2001. Collaboration with industrial design.
- 2001. elBullicarme.
- 2002. The first part of the General Catalogue is published.
- 2002. The retrospective year.

[1998-2002]
an established style

1998. *Los secretos de El Bulli, Los postres de El Bulli.* At this time, the only book we had published was *El Bulli. El sabor del Mediterráneo*, in 1993. This period, during which we were not to be found on the new release shelves in bookshops, was also when our new style, forged between 1994 and 1997, began to emerge. While our first book gave a rough analysis of what had constituted our cuisine up to 1993, this new style had become consolidated and so we thought it would be useful to "explain" it, by setting down in writing the philosophy of the new style of cuisine that was being created in elBulli. The result of this need and this intention was *Los secretos de El Bulli*, a book which marked a further step in our readiness to analyse our cuisine. A few months later, Albert Adrià released a further book, devoted this time to the sweet world, *Los postres de El Bulli*, in which the recipes were classified by techniques and concepts. This new milestone prepared us for the ambitious project which the General Catalogue represented a few years later.

[1998-2002]
an established style

1998. *Las 50 nuevas tapas de Ferran Adrià.* Those who have been following our progress over the years are aware of the various stages that we have gone through, at least most of them. But there are other aspects that not many people know, and that not even we had identified as being significant, at least until we had carried out this exercise of synthesis. One example, looking back on it, was *Las 50 nuevas tapas de Ferran Adrià*, a book we wrote in the second half of 1997 and which was published in conjunction with *Woman* magazine in 1998. In fact, having tackled the world of *tapas* in the context of haute cuisine in our 1993 book, *El Bulli. El sabor del Mediterráneo*, this new book focussed on modern *tapas* bars, a concept that barely existed at that time, but since then has proliferated throughout Spain.

[1998-2002]
an established style

1998. The beginning of our work at the Hacienda Benazuza. In 1998, when we tackled the Hacienda Benazuza project, our intention was to transfer the elBulli philosophy to the restaurant of this hotel in Sanlúcar la Mayor, near Seville. At the beginning we acted as consultants for all the catering, i.e. the *La Alquería* restaurant as well as breakfasts, which became one of the trademarks of the Hacienda. Later we extended our participation to the hotel as a whole, and among other developments, two more restaurants came into being, *La Abacería* and *La Alberca*. Their success was embodied very soon in various awards, including two Michelin stars. As far as we are concerned, this is a project that we find very exciting, in which we have been able gradually to implement our philosophy. Our dream is to transfer the 3 hours of delight that we wish to impart in a dinner into the 24 hours of a day's stay in the hotel.

[1998-2002]
an established style

1999. Borges: the first of our consultancy services to major brands. One of the ideas were developing at this time was that of using the techniques and organisation of the elBulli kitchen to contribute something useful to everyday cooking, particularly to food industry firms. This process started with Borges oils (although we had worked with Chocovic in 1997), for whom we suggested aromatic oils, vinaigrettes and other products. The intention, in this and in subsequent cases, has always been to provide a distinctive feature to existing products on the market, and thus the aim is for our suggestions to be better, more natural or healthier. As well as providing our services to food brands, we have also tried to disseminate concepts or to cooperate in other fields. These initiatives have given rise to collaboration with Kaiku, Lavazza, Lays, Armand Bassi, Diageo, and so on.

[1998-2002]
an established style

1999. The cover of *El País Semanal*. The fact that in June 1999 *El País Semanal* made us its cover story, under the title "Ferran Adrià, el mejor cocinero del mundo – the world's best chef", meant that for the first time, our restaurant monopolised newsstands all over Spain. To put it another way, this was the first time that we were able to "explain" ourselves to the public, in an article in which other chefs also gave their opinion. This not only gave us great satisfaction, it also undeniably marked a great leap forward in our reputation among other professionals and amateur gastronomes.

[1998-2002]
an established style

2000. The cataloguing starts. In 1999 the snacks, *tapas*, dishes, desserts and petits fours that we had created along the way were now profuse, and we had often thought that it would be useful to categorise them somehow. We had of course kept the recipes for each of them, but it had not yet occurred to us that it might be a good idea to catalogue them as well. The occasion to tackle this task arose when we were organising the menu for the Hacienda Benazuza restaurant, when we thought of offering some of elBulli's "greatest hits" as it were. So we began to review our output year by year and started giving a number to each recipe. This task was fundamental when we decided to tackle our General Catalogue and the first evolutionary analyses.

[1998-2002]
an established style

2000. Work starts on the elBulli General Catalogue. At the start of the new century, with many different recipes behind us, we began to work on a project that had already been outlined in our previous books: an analysis of our cuisine. This was an idea in which we were forced to start from scratch as we saw that no previous studies of this type were to be found in the catering world. The method we adopted involved firstly dating and numbering all the elBulli creations, a practice unknown in gastronomy. Based on this dating, we drew up an "evolutionary map", a chart which identified the parameters defining the changes that occur in a cuisine. The families making up this map were those that were subsequently followed year after year, with the purpose of tracing the evolution occurring in our cuisine. This was the beginning of a long process, taking over five years, which led to what is today our General Catalogue.

[1998-2002]
an established style

2000. eIBullitaller in the calle Portaferrissa. From 1997 onwards, the **eIBullitaller** project had made great strides in the Barcelona Aquarium, where our catering firm was based. The project was being consolidated, but the catering division was growing, as was the Workshop, and we were meanwhile tackling other activities (collaborations, consultancy, books, etc.). This is why, in late 1998, we bought one of the floors of an 18th-century town house in the calle Portaferrissa. The alterations took a year, and in January 2000, we were finally able to move in. The personnel increased with the intake of a large proportion of the eIBulli staff during the winter. In **eIBullitaller** we began to combine cooking creativity for eIBulli with creativity applied to our other divisions, and we formed two distinct teams.

[1998-2002]
an established style

2001. Lunchtime closing. 2001 was the year in which there was an occurrence that completely changed our way of working with regard to creativity, and altered our creativity scenario and schedules. For the first time since we had opened, elBulli began to serve evening meals only. This was due to an idea based on our realisation that, with the extent of our menu, it made no sense to serve it twice a day. It is easy to deduce, therefore, that from then on we also had facilities in Cala Montjoi during the season (the elBulli kitchen) and several hours a day at our disposal to do creative work. The widespread idea that creation was confined to **elBullitaller** no longer held good from then on. Being able to devote a few hours every morning to creativity has altered the way we create and has resulted in a larger number of dishes. One only has to compare the 1998 and 1999 catalogues with the 2001, and to a greater extent, the 2003, 2004 and 2005 catalogues.

[1998-2002]
an established style

2001. Collaboration with industrial design. The search for new techniques and concepts that we had begun at the beginning of the 1990s was not restricted to food, but also included devices and utensils which we used to modify products and to transfer our ideas to the table. This is why collaboration with industrial design was required, which to date has given very useful results. In 2001 we began to work with a Swiss industrial designer living in Barcelona, Luki Huber, who since then has not only suggested new utensils for serving food (slurps, pipettes, spoonfuls, etc.), but has also helped to solve certain problems involving preparations. This cooperation with other creative minds has undeniably been one of the major factors in our work in recent years, and from 2005 onwards has become embodied in the *Faces* project, in collaboration with top designers.

[1998-2002]
an established style

2001. eIBullicarmen. In 2000 and 2001 the Workshop was a hive of activity. On the one hand, we were busy creating for the restaurant; on the other hand, there were new projects such the **eIBullihotel**, we were advising companies and writing our trilogy. All this made for overwhelmingly feverish activity. In late 1999 we had bought a 260 m² premises in the calle del Carmen, on top of the Boqueria market. In the middle of 2001 we decided that the sensible thing to do would be to put some order into this madness. To prevent creativity for the restaurant from being affected in any way by this expansion, we had to devote the Portaferriassa Workshop to it. This is why **eIBullicarmen** came about, a facility for centralising all the activities that had no direct link with creativity.

[1998-2002]
an established style

2002. The first part of the General Catalogue is published. Two years after we began cataloguing and analysing our cuisine, the first volume of what was at the time planned to be a trilogy came onto the market. Coinciding with the 2002 retrospective, we had brought to a close a twenty-year stage, and so we subjected it to analysis. This volume, called **eIBulli1998-2002** included the final period of those twenty years that we had decided to analyse (1983 to 2002), and served to put the method of analysis that we had thought up to the test. Subsequent years saw the publication of the second volume **eIBulli1994-1997**) and the first (**eIBulli1983-1993**), which completed the trilogy. Relying on this method, which by that time had shown that it was feasible (albeit with some inevitable touching up), we continued cataloguing and analysing our creations, which resulted in the publication of **eIBulli2003**, **eIBulli2004** and **eIBulli2005**.

[1998-2002]
an established style

2002. The retrospective year. 2002 was a very special year for us, because for the first time in a long time we had no new items on the menu. This was for various reasons. Firstly we wanted to have a year of reflection and to decide in which direction we wanted our cuisine to go after twenty years. Thanks to the analysis we were conducting for our trilogy, we were able to reach an understanding of what we had done up to then. We also needed time to organise and write the hundreds of pages making up these books. Combining this work with the creative process would have involved an effort that would have been difficult to keep up. Finally, we wanted to make this season a celebration. Many of our customers had asked to try dishes from other years, and this was a perfect excuse to lay on a retrospective.

[2003-2005] an emphasis on investigation

2003-2004. Covers of *The New York Times Magazine*, *Le Monde* and *Time*.

2003. Science department in *elBullitaller*.

2004. Setting up of the Alicia Foundation.

2004. The birth of *Fast Good*.

2004. *La cocina fácil* de Ferran Adrià.

2005. The inauguration of the Ferran Adrià Chair.

[2003-2005]
an emphasis on investigation

2003-2004. Covers of *The New York Times Magazine*, *Le Monde* and *Time*. Following the 1990s when the gastronomy critics honoured us with distinctions that we feel very proud of, perhaps the highlight of what occurred from a press viewpoint in the first decade of the 21st century were the inroads made by cooking in general interest publications, in other words, non-cooking magazines. In 2003, Ferran Adrià, together with the new Spanish cuisine, was the 14-page cover story of *The New York Times* Sunday supplement. A few months later, in 2004, it was the *Le Monde* supplement that devoted its cover and an article to Ferran, while *Time* magazine included the elBulli chef in its list of the top 100 influential people in the world, in all fields. It is fair to say that the public profile of Ferran Adrià and elBulli underwent a radical change because of these three covers.

[2003-2005]
an emphasis on investigation

2003. Science department in elBullitaller. Our interest in establishing a dialogue with science began to become consolidated in 2003 when we contacted Pere Castells, a scientist and gourmet. At first, the relationship was informal, but as the Alícia Foundation project took shape, it gradually took on a more professional nature, right up to the implementation of the science department, which represented a bridge between the Workshop and Alícia. With Pere Castells and Íngrid Farré, who joined soon afterwards, we began by organising ourselves, looking for a work structure, establishing contacts with manufacturers of food products, new devices or instruments, gathering information and reading books, and so on. From 2004 onwards, Pere and Íngrid carried on this research in Alícia. We also analysed the world of textures that we had created in recent years (foams, hot jellies, clouds, airs, texlavazza, spherification, etc.), and we decided to find out why these preparations were possible, what physical and chemical processes were involved and how the products that made these textures possible acted. All this was because of our conviction that awareness of the scientific processes involved in cooking constituted the basis for evolution.

about molecular cuisine, by Ferran Adrià. Judging by the questions I'm asked, everybody seems to think that I am the pioneer, creator or leading light of molecular cuisine.

I'm not exaggerating: nine out of ten interviews bring this topic up, when I have never said anything related to molecular cuisine and elBulli. To start with, I think scientific work deserves respect, and should not be trivialised in this way.

Just to set the record straight: up until 2003, after at least fifteen years of innovation, including the setting up in 1997 of our workshop, the first systematic research centre for a three-star restaurant, our contact with the scientific world had been sporadic. We only got to know Harold McGee or Hervé This through conferences, particularly from 2000 onwards, although This did take part in an Escoffier Foundation event in 1996, in Biarritz, where I gave a demonstration.

This is why we have never ascribed any scientific origin to our creations, which have come about from a purely culinary quest: observation and curiosity have been part and parcel of our activity, in my case for almost a quarter of a century. For example, in 1998 when we discovered that agar-agar could withstand high temperatures, we created hot jellies based on nothing other than observation.

It wasn't until 2003 that our collaboration with the scientist and gourmet, Pere Castells, began, resulting in the setting up of the **Alicia Foundation**. With Pere we managed to do what would have been impossible with any other scientist: to exchange ideas and build up a work structure. One specific result of this partnership was the publication of a **Scientific and Gastronomic Lexicon**, a tool designed to bridge the gap between these two worlds.

But coming back to my alleged role as a pioneer of molecular cuisine, here I must be blunt: I think that what we have here is a marketing operation and the public should not be tricked into believing that molecular cuisine is a cooking style. To cook well, we must learn (its history, techniques, products, tradition and innovation, culinary processes, etc.), and then think, discuss, try out, reflect, choose... And then constantly question anything we assume is true. And if in the mean time we need to resort to science or history books or any other creative discipline, at least we shall acquire new information to reinforce our culinary philosophy.

This confusion is one of the reasons we drew up a *Synthesis of our cuisine*: 23 points to define what we do. One of the things it brought home to us is that the role of research or science, while important, was limited to just one of the 23 points. Cooking is much more than that, or rather, it is something different; at any event, out of respect for the scientific world, a respect that should begin by not having its work trivialised, I shall never mix the two.

Naturally, if a chef wants to label his work as molecular cuisine, he is perfectly at liberty to do so. But in the name of that liberty, I claim to be merely a cook; and everything we do at elBulli as cooking.

* Molecular cuisine was originally called molecular gastronomy. In the 1980s, a few scientists interested in gastronomy (including Nicholas Kurti, Harold McGee and Hervé This) began to study the physical and chemical processes that occurred in a kitchen. This movement was dubbed molecular gastronomy. In fact, this was a practice that had been common in the food industry for some years, although in that case the objective was simply cooking. Strangely enough, while molecular gastronomy gave its inventors a name, contacts with chefs could be counted on the

fingers of one hand. Furthermore, molecular gastronomy ignored certain aspects that today mark the difference from the cooking of ten years ago – for example, the new hydrocolloids: thickeners, gelling agents, emulsifiers and so on. To claim that anyone using these products is practising molecular cuisine only serves to confuse the public, as does the suggestion that the first person to make a foam or a savoury ice cream was guided by scientific principle (and God only knows how ignorant we were of the world of science when we had the idea of using the whipped cream siphon in 1994).

[2003-2005]
an emphasis on investigation

2004. Setting up of the Alicia Foundation. As mentioned previously, 2004 saw our collaboration with the scientific world take a giant leap forward, thanks to Alícia, a foundation set up by the Manresa Savings Bank and the Catalan Regional Government devoted to food and science (its name comes from the Spanish words for Food and Science, Alimentación - Ciencia), in other words, everything related to food processes, health and gastronomy, from a social standpoint, using a scientific approach and methods. This is a foundation that we are helping to project whose headquarters, located in the magnificent monastery of Sant Benet de Bages, is set to open in 2007. With it we aim to carry out an undertaking that is not just purely scientific, but also particularly social and cultural, by implementing programmes for improved nutrition, conducting research in order to gain a better understanding of the history of food and gastronomy, and so on.

[2003-2005]
an emphasis on investigation

2004. The birth of *Fast Good*. This concept was engendered by a question: is it possible to provide fast food, at a reasonable price, which is healthy and of high quality? The answer has been *Fast Good*, a catering idea thought up by Ferran Adrià and subsequently run by NH Hoteles, in an attempt to dignify, as it were, fast food. In other words, at a time when we would be deceiving ourselves if we were to ignore the evidence, in which social customs regarding everyday food have changed, we who are involved in *haute cuisine* can either lock ourselves in our ivory tower, or else try to introduce our experience and skills and offer them to society in the form of quality at a reasonable price. This was our original idea, and we are pleased to see that *Fast Good* still follows these principles and has been extremely well received.

[2003-2005]
an emphasis on investigation

2004. La cocina fácil de Ferran Adrià. The idea for the release of these DVDs in October 2004 had been hatched two years previously. Indeed, at the beginning, several episodes and recipes had been filmed for broadcasting on a television programme that, for various reasons, never saw the light of day. Subsequently, with the idea of making a DVD collection, the filming was completed and 11 programmes were made. The idea of the collection is to make available to the public the most suitable techniques and concepts for application in the home, and to try and improve everyday food, an idea that we have always held.

[2003-2005]
an emphasis on investigation

2005. The inauguration of the Ferran Adrià Chair. The fact that the Camilo José Cela University in Madrid has decided to set up the Ferran Adrià Chair is something that fills us with pride. Since October 2005, this Chair, which is defined as being of "Gastronomic culture and Food sciences" has been teaching subjects such as food safety, nutrition, food composition, taste education and creativity in cooking. Cooking has penetrated the University world, and this seems to us to be highly significant and an interesting prospect for the future, particularly in the theoretical field. Indeed, while there are already a great many schools teaching practical cooking, this is a good time for similar theoretical projects to mushroom. As far as we are concerned, thanks to the books of evolutionary analysis that we have been writing in the last few years, we feel that our participation will not be merely a token gesture, as we have a theoretical starting out point from which we shall be able make a contribution to this initiative.

[2006-hoy] history in the making

2006. A synthesis of our cuisine.

2006. The press chooses the most influential chefs.

2006. Participation in Documenta.

2006. Albert Adrià opens *Inopia*.

2006. Best restaurant in the world.

2006. A synthesis of our cuisine. In the mid-1990s a new style of cuisine began to be forged in elBulli. Today, this style is fully consolidated and we have felt it would be useful to set its foundations down in writing. This is why we have drawn up certain principles that shape our style, which we presented at the Madrid Fusión Show on 25th January 2006. Although it has been no easy task to concentrate our philosophy into just a few sentences, based on our work we have arrived at these 23 items that we believe will serve as a starting out point for defining our cuisine.

synthesis of elBulli cuisine:

1. Cooking is a language through which all the following properties may be expressed: harmony, creativity, happiness, beauty, poetry, complexity, magic, humour, provocation and culture.
2. The use of top quality products and technical knowledge to prepare them properly are taken for granted.
3. All products have the same gastronomic value, regardless of their price.
4. Preference is given to vegetables and seafood, with a key role also being played by dairy products, nuts and other products that make up a light form of cooking. In recent years red meat and large cuts of poultry have been very sparingly used.
5. Although the characteristics of the products may be modified (temperature, texture, shape, etc.), the aim is always to preserve the purity of their original flavour, except for processes that call for long cooking or seek the nuances of particular reactions such as the Maillard reaction.
6. Cooking techniques, both classic and modern, are a heritage that the cook has to know how to exploit to the maximum.
7. As has occurred in most fields of human evolution down the ages, new technologies are a resource for the progress of cooking.

8. The family of stocks is being extended. Together with the classic ones, lighter stocks performing an identical function are now being used (waters, broths, consommés, clarified vegetable juses, nut milk, etc.).

9. The information given off by a dish is enjoyed through the senses; it is also enjoyed and interpreted by reflection.

10. Taste is not the only sense that can be stimulated: touch can also be played with (contrasts of temperatures and textures), as well as smell, sight (colours, shapes, trompe d'oeil, etc.), whereby the five senses become one of the main points of reference in the creative cooking process.

11. The technique-concept search is the apex of the creative pyramid.

12. Creation involves teamwork. In addition, research has become consolidated as a new feature of the culinary creative process.

13. The barriers between the sweet and savoury world are being broken down. Importance is being given to a new cold cuisine, particularly in the creation of the frozen savoury world.

14. The classical structure of dishes is being broken down: a veritable revolution is underway in first courses and desserts, closely bound up with the concept of symbiosis between the sweet and savoury world; in main dishes the "product-garnish-sauce" hierarchy is being broken down.

15. A new way of serving food is being promoted. The dishes are finished in the dining room by the serving staff. In other cases the diners themselves participate in this process.

16. Regional cuisine as a style is an expression of its own geographical and cultural context as well as its culinary traditions. Its bond with nature complements and enriches this relationship with its environment.

17. Products and preparations from other countries are subjected to one's particular style of cooking.

18. There are two main paths towards attaining harmony of products and flavours: through memory (connection with regional cooking traditions, adaptation, deconstruction, former modern recipes), or through new combinations.

19. A culinary language is being created which is becoming more and more ordered, that on some occasions establishes a relationship with the world and language of art.

20. Recipes are designed to ensure that harmony is to be found in small servings.

21. Decontextualisation, irony, spectacle, performance are completely legitimate, as long as they are not superficial but respond to, or are closely bound up with, a process of gastronomic reflection.

22. The *menu de dégustation* is the finest expression of avant-garde cooking. The structure is alive and subject to changes. Concepts such as snacks, *tapas*, pre-desserts, morphs, etc., are coming into their own.

23. Knowledge and/or collaboration with experts from different fields (gastronomic culture, history, industrial design, etc.) is essential for progress in cooking. In particular collaboration with the food industry and the scientific world has brought about fundamental advances. Sharing this knowledge among cooking professionals has contributed to this evolution.

[2006-hoy]
history in the making

2006. The press chooses the most influential chefs. The Madrid Fusión event led to a parallel initiative: 60 gastronomy journalists from various countries decided to draw up a list of the ten most influential chefs in the last ten years. The list was headed by Ferran Adrià, followed by the French chef, Alain Ducasse and the foremost exponent of Basque cuisine, Juan Mari Arzak.

[2006-hoy]
history in the making

2006. Participation in Documenta. One of the most common topics in recent years when talking about *haute cuisine* is its relationship with the world of art. This is a topic which, to tell the truth, chefs have usually avoided, but there is no doubt that there is a connection. In this respect, 2006 has seen us receive a proposal for 2007, to take part in the Kassel Documenta Fair, probably the most prestigious event in the world calendar as far as contemporary art is concerned. This is the first time that *haute cuisine* has been asked to take part in an event of this type and importance, and this will undeniably ensure that this art/cuisine topic will continue to be talked about, and almost certainly intensified.

[2006-hoy]
history in the making

2006. Albert Adrià opens *Inopia*. We have never made any secret of our love for *tapas* –in fact, far from it- and indeed the elBulli menu has sometimes been seen as a modernisation of this genuinely Spanish concept. So it is hardly surprising that when Albert Adrià decided to open a bar in Barcelona, he opted for somewhere to serve really traditional *tapas*. The *Inopia Classic Bar* has opened with the purpose of recreating not only recipes, but also a way of eating and even, as we have said on more than one occasion, a way of life. But an avant-garde chef opening a *tapas* bar goes beyond financial or business interests. In fact, we believe that the most important thing is that it implements a concept that is somewhat in danger of declining, and will probably clear the way for similar initiatives, while at the same time giving food for thought in the eternal dispute between tradition and creativity.

[2006-hoy]
 history in the making

2006. Best restaurant in the world. Every year *The Restaurant Magazine* draws up a list of the top fifty restaurants in the world, as voted by its writers and critics. ElBulli had already been named top restaurant in 2002. But there was a change in 2006. For the first time, the list was drawn up by over 500 critics, chefs and gourmets from all over the world, which gave it much greater prestige than in previous years. This sizable select jury named elBulli as the top restaurant.

The World's 50 Best Restaurants. 2006.

N.	Restauran	Region	Awards
1	El Bulli	Spain	The World's Best Restaurant / Best Restaurant in Europe
2	The Fat Duck	UK	
3	Pierre Gagnaire	France	Chefs' Choice
4	French Laundry	USA	Best Restaurant in the Americas
5	Tetsuya	Australia	Best Restaurant in Australasia
6	Michel Bras	France	
7	Alain Ducasse - Le Louis XV	Monaco	
8	Per Se	New York	
9	Arzak	Spain	
10	Mugaritz	Spain	Highest New Entrant
11	El Raco de Can Fabes	Spain	
12	Nobu	London	
13	Gambero Rosso	Italy	Highest Climber
14	Gordon Ramsay [Ryl Hosp Rd]	London	
15	Alain Ducasse - Plaza Athenee	France, Paris	
16	Jean Georges	New York	
17	Le Cinq	France	
18	Daniel	New York	

19	Oud Sluis	Holland	
20	Chez Panisse	USA	
21	El Celler de Can Roca	Spain	
22	Pascal Barbot - L'Astrance	France	
23	Hof Van Cleve	Belgium	
24	Troisgos	France	
25	L'Atelier de Joel Rebuchon	France	
26	Charlie Trotters	USA	
27	Le Gavroche	UK	Outstanding Value
28	La Colombe	South Africa	Best Restaurant in the Middle East & Africa
29	Enoteca	Italy	
30	Rockpool	Australia	
31	Le Calandre	Italy	
32	Le Bernardin	New York	
33	Noma	Denmark	
34	Dieter Muller	Germany	
35	St John	UK	
36	Hakkasan	UK	
37	Martin Berasategui	Spain	
38	Le Quartier	South Africa	
39	Chez Dominique	Finland	
40	L'Ambroisie	France	
41	Schwarzwaldstube	Deutschland	
42	Dal Pescatore	Italy	
43	Bocuse	France	
44	L'Arperge	France	
45	Gramercy Tavern	New York	
46	Bukhara	India	Best Restaurant in Asia
47	De Karmeliet	Belgium	
48	Oaxen	Sweden	
49	Comme Chez Soi	Belgium	
50	DOM	Brazil	

[2006-hoy]
history in the making

2007. Best Restaurant in the world. For the second consecutive year, the *Restaurant Magazine* awards elBulli with the Best Restaurant in the world award. As the previous year, a jury compound by more than 500 critics, cooks and gourmets agree that the cala Montjoi restaurant deserves the Best Restaurant award, which it had already won in 2002.

[2006-hoy]
history in the making

2007. Ferran Adrià in a Disney film. In May of the current year, Walt Disney Productions suggested that Ferran Adrià lends his voice to one of the characters of his new cartoon's production. It is about the *Ratatouille* film, which is set in Paris and concerns with the world of high cuisine. Ferran lends his voice to the touchy costumer of a restaurant, in a minor role. Although it could just seem a curious and funny anecdote, the fact that the high-cuisine plays the lead, for the first time, in a film intended for the youngest, and with the spread of a Disney production, it implies a recognition that could mean a before and an after in the children's audience point of view about gastronomy.

[2006-hoy]
history in the making

2007. Two new books. In a year where there has not appeared a new series of the General Catalogue, we can find two new books in bookshops concerning with elBulli and which complement this work. First of all, *Un día en elBulli (A Day in elBulli)*, a work edited by elBullibooks, and which recollects, in more than three hundred pages, the 24 hours' history of the restaurant, through hundreds of photographs. Secondly, and simultaneously, RBA Books publishes *elBulli desde dentro. Biografía de un restaurante. (elBulli from inside. Biography of a restaurant)*, a book by the journalist and writer Xavier Moret, for which he received the Sent Soví of Gastronomic Literature award in 2006, a personal view about elBulli's history and its main characters.

[2006-hoy]
history in the making

2007. Contribution in Documenta 12. On 16th June, the arts exhibition Documenta 12 opens in Kassel. Ferran Adrià is invited by its director, Roger Buerger, to participate in it. The contribution consists of turning elBulli, in cala Montjoi, into the pavilion G of the exhibition; a very reflected decision that tries, on one hand, to show up that elBulli experience can not be decontextualized from the restaurant, and on the other hand, it tries to suggest the debate about the artistic disciplines which can not be inside a museum. Every day, during the 100 days of Documenta, two people will come to have dinner from Kassel, exercising so as a link between the two headquarters, Kassel and cala Montjoi.

[2006-hoy]
history in the making

2007. The headquarter of Alicia is opened. After more than three years of intense work in the provisional headquarters on Casp street in Barcelona and in elBullitaller on Portaferrissa street, the Alicia's Foundation is already able to carry out completely its tasks in Sant Benet de Bages. In October 2007, the modern installations are opened. From now on, they will house the Health and Food Habits Department and the Scientific and Gastronomic Investigation Department.