

was confronted, especially when she was starting out, with the common notion that the wine business was no place for a woman. Eventually, her tenacity and business acumen helped her overcome this bias, and she became the best-known ambassador of Spanish wines in America.

Marimar has made a name for herself thanks to the Chardonnays and Pinot Noirs that come from the vineyards that she started planting in 1986. The Don Miguel Vineyard, a 56-acre property which was originally cleared out for an apple orchard, has a cool micro-climate ideally suited to these grapes. The 2006 Marimar Estate Chardonnay that we sampled had subtle floral aromas of jasmine and honeysuckle. The acidity was bright and crisp, while the mouth feel was creamy, lees-y and complex. The smoked salmon cigarillo harmonized well with the wine's toasty oak and elegant finish.

Marimar said the Pinot Noir is like a "bespoke wine" – everything has to be perfect. We tasted three exceptional Pinot Noirs with the main course and dessert that Chef Jasline had so painstakingly crafted. The 2005 Don Miguel vineyard, 2006 Marimar Estate



Marimar Torres and her daughter, Cristina

Mas Cavalls Dona Margarita vineyard, and Marimar's favourite Reserve, the 2005 Marimar Estate Cristina – named after her daughter. The palates were silky and elegant, with layers of complexity that followed through in the finish.

The wines, made entirely from estate-grown grapes, are truly an expression of their unique terroir. Marimar told us that self-sustained vineyards are similar to the philosophy of India, as they lay emphasis on organics and bio-dynamics.

Marimar's dedication to the family business, however, has not come at the expense of other pursuits. An authority on Spanish cuisine, her first book, *The Spanish Table: the Cuisines and Wines of Spain*, was published in 1986. Her second book, *The Catalan Country Kitchen: Food and Wine from the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean Seacoast of Barcelona*, came out in April 1992.

Marimar lives in Sausalito, California, in the vineyard house with her daughter, Cristina. Her hobbies include skiing, horse riding, jogging and biking. ♦



Marc Perello of Prestige Wines & Spirits, Cristina Torres, Suneeta Kanga and Marimar Torres at a Torres wine dinner in Mumbai

Sommelier INDIA 11

## Passing Through

# MARIMAR TORRES

## Ambassador of Spanish WINES in America

Having already met the charming Miguel Torres, on behalf of *Sommelier India*, **Suneeta Sodhi Kanga** was pleased to meet his sister, Marimar, who was recently in India on a short visit

**D**uring Marimar Torres's stay in India an elegant vintner's dinner was arranged for a few select guests at the Chambers at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Mumbai. Marimar and her daughter delighted everyone present when they made a fashionably late entrance attired in beautiful Indian sarees. Both mother and daughter were happy to converse with the guests about their vineyards in California and about their wines.

While sipping the welcome drink, a 2007 "Acero" Chardonnay, Don Miguel Vineyard, estate-grown and bottled, we learnt that Marimar

Torres has been involved in the wine business all her life. (Acero is the Spanish word for steel and refers to the fact that this wine has never seen any oak).

Born in 1945 to the illustrious Torres family who own Spanish and Chilean wine conglomerates, she is fluent in six languages and holds a degree in Business and Economics from the University of Barcelona. She is also a graduate of the Stanford Executive Program, and has studied Enology and Viticulture for a year at the University of California in Davis. At Marimar Torres Estate, she directs the activities of the winery and

its two vineyards, the Don Miguel Vineyard (named after her late father) in Sonoma County's Russian River/Green Valley, and the Dona Margarita Vineyard, named after her mother.

Over dinner, Marimar told us that prior to her involvement in the Sonoma operation, she had travelled extensively promoting Torres wines, first in Spain as the company's export director and later in North America, when California became her home in 1975. At that time, shipments of Torres wines to the US totalled 15,000 cases annually; ten years later they reached 150,000 cases. To achieve this was not easy. Marimar