

BLANK PALATE

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I'M ASKING.

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I'M SAYING.

know
what a
calçot
is?
<http://t.co/MneaikKonf>
about 12
hours
ago

Thanks
to
[@beleniz](#)
for my
new
teeth.
Now
where's
Smoothie
King
when
you
need
it?!
about 18
hours
ago

Calçotada
en
casa,
antes
de que
se
acabe
la
temporada!
<http://t.co/SoqGarK2Ec>
about a
day ago

waaaaaaa
RT
[@diariovasco](#)
El
invierno
vuelve
esta

I'M READING.

-

Open:
An
Autobiography

NAVIGATION

- [archives](#)

semana
con
mucho
frío y
nieve en
cotas
bajas
<http://t.co/Fn7pzk38Bx>
about a
day ago



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2012 2013

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can roca
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chefs
chestnuts
chocolate
cider
cider
house
cinema
cinnamon
rolls
classic
cocktail
coffee
condedelamaza
cook&fashion
cookie
cooking
class
cooks
copa con
cote
courses

drinks

dyi eaj

easy

egoitz

zapiain

el lagar

el txakoli

elena

arzak

elizondo

eli bulli

entree

espelette

essencia

ethnic

etxebarri

euskadi

event

extremadura

fall

fashion

festival

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foie

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world

forage

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friends

frutategia

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sebastian

san
sebastián

san

sebastian

san

sebastian

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san telmo

santo

tomas

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savory

scene

scenery

seafood

seasonality

semana

grande

senra

sevilla

sherry

sidra

sidrería

sirmini

snack

soup

south

southern

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the
world's
50 best
tolosa
tonic
top ten
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tourism
tradition
travel
trend
ttapa
tthe
world's 50
best
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komertzioa
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txoko
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via fora
vidania
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village



It's Tuesday. That means it's time for 'A Copa Con...', and this week I sat with Egoitz Zapiain, the third generation cidemaker of Zapiain cider. Basque cider is quite different than its anglophone counterparts, and it's shrouded in a definite tradition, that of going to enjoy cider straight from the barrels during the season, with a meal of steak, omelettes, cod, cheese and nuts.

Apart from being one of the only cider makers in Basque Country trained under an enologist, he is one of the most passionate, hard-working people I know. The fact he STILL reports to his ciderhouse every night to tap the cider barrels for jovial diners is the epitome of inspiration. So join us as we chat and taste the season's very first cider (it's going to be a good year).

What do you do?

I call myself a "chico para todo" {handyman}. My position is an investment in quality. Before, the cider was much more variable. Achieving that homogeneity is a lot of work. In October and November, I don't have friends, I don't have family.

What of your accomplishments are you most proud of?

The secret is knowing each barrel individually. It's a living product. Nowadays, I can know what the product in the barrel will be like three months from now.

What do you think about txotx season, when everyone fills the ciderhouse to sample the fruits of the year's labor?

The season of txotx is hard, but gratifying. You see people appreciate all the work you've done.

Why is this so popular in Basque Country?

It's a ritual, but people come most of all because they like it. It's a unique atmosphere. If you tell someone foreign you're taking them to a restaurant where you can't order, you have to stand up, it's cold, and to drink you have to walk...? I think it's a beautiful thing to be with people different from you and talk with them.

Your hobby is foraging. What attracts you to looking for mushrooms?

It's something I've been grateful for, because you learn about nature, about survival.

Do you prefer to forage alone or with people?

I don't like to go alone. Generally I go to enjoy, and you don't want to enjoy alone. One time I took my son, and he said "Look, a mushroom!" Because of my height I didn't see it and my son did. It's cool. It gets you fired up, too, because he saw it and you didn't.

Food holds an important part in the people's lives here. Why?

In other places life is in the living room. Here the

life is in the kitchen. It's almost like a religion. A saying in euskara: what you see, you do.

*Thanks to Egoitz for his time **and** his cider. Have any questions for me or Egoitz? Leave them in the comments section.*

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