

SYNOPSIS

At the start of the 21st century, a silent revolution began in the Spanish province of Jaen. A land of olive groves since Roman times, when this province supplied the Empire, it has gradually become the world's largest olive oil producer. But that mass production has focused more on quantity than quality and has failed to highlight the value of its extra virgin olive oil. Only recently, in the last few years, has a group of talented entrepreneurs set out to prove that the most symbolic of its varieties, Picual, can be used to produce an extra virgin oil that is just as good, if not better, as any other olive oil in the world.

It was a question of changing old habits and persuading the markets and consumers. This documentary shows the challenges that this revolution had to overcome, the difficulties that its protagonists faced, through the eyes of Jaen's olive world, the cooks who witnessed the gastronomic revolution, as well as entrepreneurs and consumers, allowing us to discover the rich heritage of olive oil, a product which, despite being far less famous than wine, could compete with it in the depth of its taste and the debate it generates.

The documentary also uncovers the inner world of this important product, revealing the hidden beauty of one of Spain's least-known provinces.

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

José Luis López-Linares is a director and producer of documentaries. He began his career in cinema as director of photography, working with famous Spanish and foreign directors (Carlos Saura, Fernando Trueba, Jaime Chávarri, Alain Tanner and Víctor Erice).

For over twenty years, his work has been featured in countries around the world. He has been nominated for Emmy awards and selected for numerous international festivals (Berlin, San Francisco, Venice, Tribeca, New York, Sydney, Toronto, Montreal, Buenos Aires, Tokyo and San Sebastian, among others).

López-Linares' films have garnered a significant number of awards, including three Goya awards from Spain's Film Academy.

His first big hit, ***Asaltar los cielos*** (Ondas award, 1997) was endorsed by critics and is considered as the precursor of feature documentaries in our country.

His most recent works include ***El corazón del Teatro Real, CA2M, 10 Años en Móstoles, El guardian de la cueva, Altamira, el origen del Arte, El Bosco***. In 2016, ***El jardín de los sueños*** in collaboration with El Prado Museum, was nominated for Goya, Forqué and CEC (Circle of Cinema Writers) awards, for best documentary, while ***Jerez & el Misterio del Palo Cortado***, which premiered at the 2015 Berlin International Film Festival, is still touring the world (Malaga Film Festival, Buenos Aires FABICI, Toronto, Edinburgh...).

In November 2018, López-Linares presented ***Jaen, Virgen & Extra***, a film about the history and recent rise of Jaen's olive oil, which have placed this product at the forefront of Extra Virgin Olive Oils around the world.

He is currently shooting ***"El misterio de Goya"***.

López-Linares' collaboration with El Prado Museum has been developed over several years. He has directed various documentaries on Art and History for them:

- *El primer siglo del Prado*
- *Sorolla, la emoción del natural*
- *La bella durmiente (Sleeping Beauty)*
- *Maíno. Un maestro por descubrir*
- *El arte del poder*

Since 1994, López-Linares has produced and directed over forty documentaries, including:

- *A propósito de Buñuel* (Telluride 1989)
- *Extranjeros de sí mismos* (Nominated for Best Documentary, **Goya** 2002)
- *Un instante en la vida ajena* (Best feature-length documentary, **Goya** 2004)
- *Extras* (Best documentary short, **Goya** 2005)
- *Lorca, así que pasen cien años* (Nominated for an **Emmy**, 1998).

His most recent works include:

- *El corazón del Teatro Real*
- *El Bosco. El jardín de los sueños.*
- *Dancing Beethoven, directed by Arantxa Aguirre (Producer)*
- *Altamira, el origen del Arte*
- *El guardián de la cueva*
- *Jerez & el Misterio del Palo Cortado*
- *¡Campeones! La Roja*
- *El pollo, el pez y el cangrejo real*
- *A propósito de Buñuel*
- *Extranjeros de sí mismos*
- *Un instante en la vida ajena*
- *Lorca, así que pasen cien años*
- *Asaltar los cielos*

Biographies:

- ***El amor y la muerte. Historia de Enrique Granados, directed by Arantxa Aguirre (Producer)***
- ***Una Rosa para Soler, directed by Arantxa Aguirre (Producer)***
- ***Isaac Albéniz. El color de la música***
- ***Roberto Bolaño: el último maldito***
- ***Gregorio Marañón. Médico, Humanista y Liberal***
- ***Nuria Espert. Una mujer de teatro, directed by Arantxa Aguirre (Producer)***

TV series:

- ***La voz de la imagen***
- ***Una mirada fotográfica***

And various productions for museums and exhibitions:

- **Spanish National Library, Spanish National Archaeological Museum.**
- **Telefónica Foundation, Botín Foundation.**

Interview with the director

“I MAKE FILMS TO DISCOVER THINGS I AM INTERESTED IN AND THEN TELL EVERYONE ABOUT THEM”

Where did the idea for *Jaen, Virgen & Extra* come from?

I had previously made *Jerez, el misterio del Palo Cortado*, and it seemed to me that olive oil was another great Spanish product. With Jerez (sherry) we chose a wine that was representative and with oil we found a product that could be equally fascinating. That is where the idea came from: thinking that olive oil is another wonderful Spanish product.

In fact, we could almost say that our production company develops the Spain Brand (although I don't really like that concept). We are currently making a film about [the painter] Zurbaran, we made one about El Bosco, El Prado Museum, the Royal Theatre, [the cave of] Altamira... When I look back at my track record I see almost 80 works and nearly all of them are related to our culture.

In the field of gastronomy specifically, we started with *El Pollo, el pez y el cangrejo real*, always in collaboration with Antonio Saura, and then we made *Jerez*, which was quite successful. The truth is that that I enjoy it when my films also have a useful side to them. Beyond being rewarding for the creators and for the audience, I enjoy it when a documentary has some form of practical application. Documentaries contribute to spread a message that can be useful. For example, the success of our *Jerez* documentary has contributed to change the perception of Jerez sherry, not just in Spain but throughout the world.

Regarding olive oil, did making this documentary change your own perception about it or did you already know the product in depth before that?

For me, creating a documentary is a learning process. In the case of *Jaen*, the first thing we did was meet Santiago Botas (olive oil consultant and film advisor). He was the one who introduced me to this world. Before that, I had taken for granted numerous common ideas, errors, mistaken perceptions. This has been a master class in olive oil. We have spent a year tasting the best oils in the world, travelling throughout Jaen, discovering how olive oil is made, how it should be consumed, all of its possibilities... and not just me, the entire production team, even the editors –who were not present during the filming– have changed their habits. My children think I am crazy because I now put oil on everything, even ice cream.

What has been the most surprising thing that you have learned?

The extraordinary quality of the oils that are being produced in Jaen nowadays. And also being able to distinguish between different types of olives... delving deeper into the topic. A little bit like in the world of wine. Once you open that door, you find multiple branching paths.

What has been the reaction among the people you have worked with: cooks, producers, tasters...?

Some of the people featured in the film attended the screening in San Sebastian Festival and were deeply moved. I even saw some tears. Regarding people's reaction during the filming process, we have worked with producers who are making the best olive oils and that can only be achieved with huge doses of passion, so that is what the film reflects, that passion.

What projects are you currently working on?

We are making a film about [the Spanish painter] Zurbaran for *Hispanic Europe Foundation*. It will be directed by Arantxa Aguirre. Also, another one about Goya for French TV station Arte... we will be working a lot on art this year. We are also preparing a film about the Spanish Black Legend, María Elvira Roca Barea's book, which is on its 24th edition. We haven't approached this from a nationalist nor victimised perspective, but rather sought to present the national complex we have and all the lies that have been told and that we have believed about our history.

To wrap up, how would you summarise your experience with *Jaen, Virgen & Extra*?

For me, it has been a journey of discovery. But then again, I make films in order to discover things that interest me and then tell them as I unravel them. That is why I love documentary cinema. And olive oil has proven to be a fascinating subject.

TECHNICAL SPECS

ORIGINAL TITLE: JAEN. VIRGEN & EXTRA

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE: Spanish/English/Italian

TYPE OF FILM: Feature-length documentary

PRODUCTION YEAR: 2018

DATE OF RELEASE: 25 November 2018

COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION: Spain

COLOUR-B/W: Colour

FORMAT: Digital 2K

DURATION: 94 m.

ASPECT RATIO: 16:9

PRODUCED BY: JAEN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT / CAJA RURAL DE JAEN / LÓPEZ-LI FILMS / ZAMPA AUDIOVISUAL

TECHNICAL TEAM

DIRECTOR: José Luis López-Linares

SCRIPT: José Luis López-Linares / Jesús del Campo

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: José Luis López -Linares

MUSIC: Jorge Magaz

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Antonio Saura

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Cristina Moñívar / Pilar Barbat

EDITING: Pablo Blanco / Valeria Gentile

LIVE SOUND: Juan Carlos Cid Torrejón

DRAWINGS: Ximena Maier

OLIVE OIL CONSULTANT: Santiago Botas

CAMERA: Andrés Recio Illán

ARTISTIC TEAM

NARRATOR: Antonio Valero

SONG: Carmen Linares