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Analysis of innovation in Peru's gastronomic industry

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Analysis of innovation in Peru's gastronomic industry



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01

Introduction 3

02

**Analysis of the recent evolution in Peru's gastronomic industry
and its insertion in the global market 7**

03

**Conceptual framework of innovation and
creativity applied to productive processes 13**

04

Gastronomic revolution in Peru 19

05

The role of culture 25

06

Innovators 30

GASTÓN ACURIO, *Astrid & Gastón* • ISABEL ÁLVAREZ NOVOA, *El Señorío de Sulco*
MITSU HARU "MICA" TSUMURA, *Maido* • PEDRO SCHIAFFINO, *Malabar and ámaZ*
BERNARDO ROCA REY, Novoandina cuisine creator • MÓNICA HUERTA, *La Nueva Palomino*
TOMÁS "TOSHI" MATSUFUJI, *Al Toke Pez* • JOSÉ DEL CASTILLO, *Isolina Taberna Peruana*
ISRAEL LAURA, *Kañete* • FLAVIO SOLÓRZANO, *El Señorío de Sulco*
HÉCTOR SOLÍS, *Fiesta Miraflores Lima Gourmet* • JOSEPH RUIZ (*sommelier*), *Central*
MALENA MARTÍNEZ, head of *Mater Iniciativa*

07

Impacts on the agricultural sector 70

08

The institutions' role 76

09


Survey of agricultural producers 79

10

Lessons from the study 85

References 90

Annex 92

A person wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and a wide-brimmed hat is crouching in a field, sorting through a large pile of freshly harvested potatoes. The potatoes are small and round, with some showing reddish-brown skin and others being yellow. In the background, there are more potatoes scattered on the ground and a large black bag filled with potatoes. The landscape is hilly and dry, with some trees and a clear sky in the distance.

“We needed the people to understand that, behind all those wonderful dishes, there are people producing those ingredients, who need equitable conditions to stay in the market.”

GASTÓN ACURIO
(ACURIO, 2019)

01 Introduction

This is a study on great innovators in Peruvian gastronomy. It seeks to bring the reader closer to each one of them and to the process that led Peru's gastronomy to occupy a privileged place in international haute cuisine, as well as to understand its interaction with Peruvian agriculture. The economic approach was used to investigate the innovation process and understand the **gastronomic revolution** that occurred.

This approach is based on a case study and on the idea that, in order to understand the innovation process, it is necessary to pay close attention to understanding how innovators produce their findings, how artists create masterpieces, and how engineers and entrepreneurs create new technologies and products. The protagonists in this analysis are the innovators themselves.

This approach led to systematized interviews¹ to the main players of the gastronomic industry to analyze innovation and transformation in Peruvian gastronomy, and how this affected the production of its **agricultural inputs, such as potatoes, chili peppers and quinoa**. The role of cultural identity and the importance of revaluing local culture as a mechanism for product differentiation and as a motivation for innovation were also assessed.

The growth of Peruvian gastronomy on the international scene has been impressive: a decade ago, there were only about two hundred Peruvian restaurants abroad, while today there are nearly four thousand, including more than four hundred in the United States alone, according to data from the Peruvian Gastronomy Association (APEGA). Its growth implies both quality and quantity: in the annual list of The World's Best Restaurants of 2021, two of the first ten are Peruvian and are located in Lima (Central and Maido).

1. Between June and December 2020, twelve interviews were conducted with chefs, one with a sommelier, and four interviews with organizations linked to the agricultural sector. The interviews were conducted remotely through the Zoom platform due to the pandemic.

It is said that success has many parents, but in the case of the Peruvian gastronomic revolution, there is consensus that there is one: the chef and entrepreneur **Gastón Acurio**. His experimental approach and his conception of cooking as a research task led him to discover a new way of preparing and promoting Peruvian cuisine. Acurio renewed Peruvian cuisine and thus paved the way for a remarkable generation of Peruvian chefs, such as Virgilio Martínez, Micha, Pedro Schiaffino, Toshi and Héctor Solís. All of them acknowledge having a debt with him and consider him the builder and leader of their community.

Seeking differentiation through quality is one of the innovation and creativity engines that can enable productive sector reconversion.² The emergence of Peruvian gastronomy in the international market in the early 2000s occurred through a reconversion that combined native and foreign elements. This was based on innovation aimed at enhancing its cuisine by applying international haute cuisine techniques **supported by Peru's identity, cultural diversity and biodiversity**.

Its development occurred through a dynamic process that combined conceptual and experimental innovations in search for differentiation motivated by market incentives. A new generation of Peruvian chefs trained in the most important gastronomic centers in the world produced a revolution. The economic stability of Peru created an attractive market for these chefs to return and make investments and innovations using the human capital acquired abroad. This allowed to renew the Peruvian gastronomic sector and spread it internationally. This development was boosted by the great increase in international tourism and changes in local habits generated by international acknowledgment of Peru's gastronomy.

In a first stage, there was differentiation at an aggregate level in which Peruvian gastronomy was revalued and distinguished. Within this new category of cuisine, there was also a differentiation between the various chefs who rediscovered and modernized regional cuisines and the use of indigenous ingredients. This unconsciously reinforced and boosted these commonly used resources anew.

Differentiation based on culture allowed Peruvian gastronomy to appropriate the return to innovation at industry level in local and international markets, and differentiation among chefs allowed appropriation of return within the industry. Market size international expansion through the Peru brand allowed for generating and sustaining a wide variety of cuisines, brought about by specialization gains.

2. See, for example, Braguinsky et al. (2020) for the case of the cotton spinning industry in Japan at the beginning of the last century, and Elías et al. (2020) for the recent case of Argentine quality wine.

A survey was also carried out with small agricultural producers in July 2021 to understand how this innovation process affected farming. This revealed their positive perception of changes in gastronomy. According to the survey, the gastronomic revolution allowed valuation of products and activities carried out by farmers, and also of Peruvian culture and traditions.

Although institutions have played an important role in the development process stemming from the gastronomic revolution, gastronomic actors generally agree that the institutions that work on farming must be strengthened to generate a greater connection with producers, with the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation, and with INIA. A successful initiative that facilitated this connection was the Mistura fair.

In many cases, transformation processes are generated through introduction of new inputs (for example, new ingredients, such as quinoa and native potatoes), assets (for example, modern kitchen devices and instruments), human capital and technology (for example, new skills developed through formal education and practice in the best cooking institutions in Europe and the United States, and new techniques, such as French haute cuisine and flash cooking for ceviche, which today is an elementary culinary standard according to Gastón Acurio).

The traditional view of transformation in a sector is that it mainly occurs through human capital and technology acquisition. The case of the Peruvian gastronomy transformation is one that combines both factors and interacts with the culture and with the use of a great variety native ingredients and their quality. The connection between the Peruvian cultural identity and the gastronomy Gastón Acurio proposes and puts into practice produces a new resource for common use: **The Peru brand**.

An analysis of the gastronomic sector evolution is presented next, in section 2. Section 3 presents the economy of creativity analytical framework that will be used for studying innovation, illustrated with an art case, and a creativity test is included to know the type of innovator according to Galenson's classification. Sections 4 and 5 analyze the gastronomic revolution and they show how gastronomy was distinguished thanks to the Peruvian culture and identity. Section 6 uses the creativity economics approach to analyze some of the main innovators of Peruvian gastronomy. Sections 7, 8 and 9 analyze the effects of the gastronomic revolution on the agricultural sector, the role of institutions in this innovation process in the sector, and the results of a farmer survey. Finally, this report ends with a section on the study conclusions, both on stylized facts (hechos estilizados) and on policy for innovation and the agricultural sector.

A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a white chef's shirt and a dark apron, stands with his arms crossed against a textured stone wall. The image is in a dark, monochromatic style with the text overlaid in a contrasting color.

“Cooking is for me
a way of conveying
my relationship with
my country, my city and
my personal experiences.”

VIRGILIO MARTÍNEZ
(MARTÍNEZ AND BIANCHI, 2015)

02

Analysis of the recent evolution in Peru's gastronomic industry and its insertion in the global market



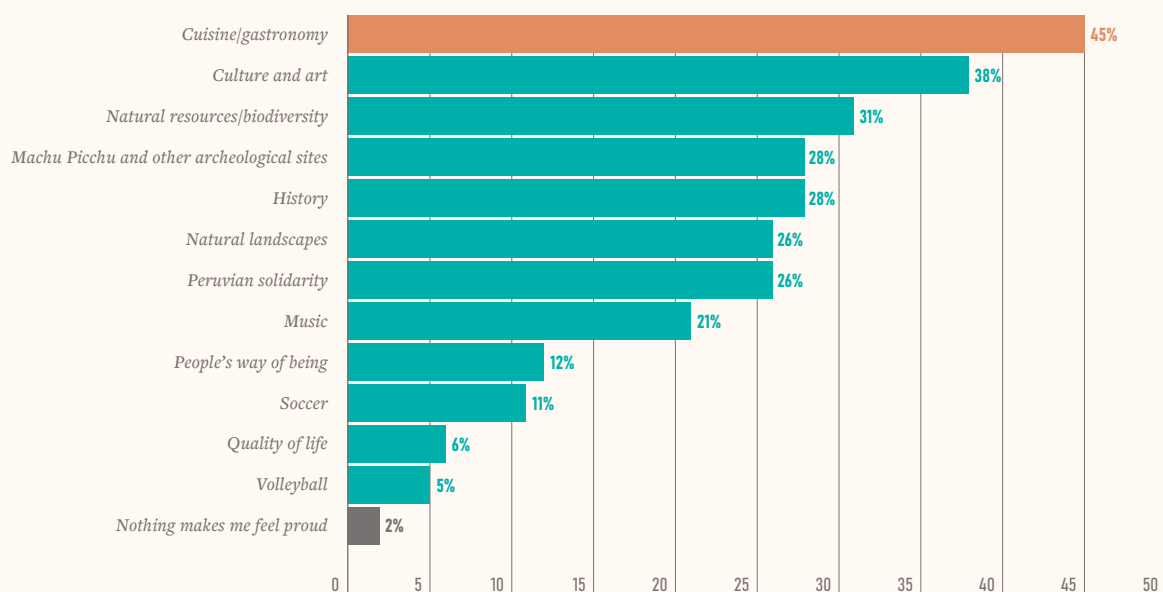
“Peruvian cuisine stems from a marvelous melting pot and we realized that it would allow us to show that we are capable of opening the way to a new country image, no longer fearing to meet our identity and creating value from it.”

GASTÓN ACURIO (ORTEGA, 2019)

According to sociologist Isabel Álvarez Novoa, “the resurgence of Peruvian food has allowed Peruvians to feel closer to their land and feel proud of who they are (Al Jazeera, 2017).” **Gastronomy and cuisine have become a source of pride and have become part of Peru’s identity.** In a 2020 survey on national identity conducted by Ipsos, 45% of Peru-

vians said that gastronomy was the main reason for which they were proud to be Peruvian. Culture and art came second, with 38% (Graph 1). This feeling was more evident among young people and women, which suggests that the development of gastronomy is a process that is alive and with which women feel identified.

GRAPH 1. REASONS WHY RESPONDENTS FEEL PROUD ABOUT BEING PERUVIAN (JULY 2020)



Source: Ipsos, 2020.

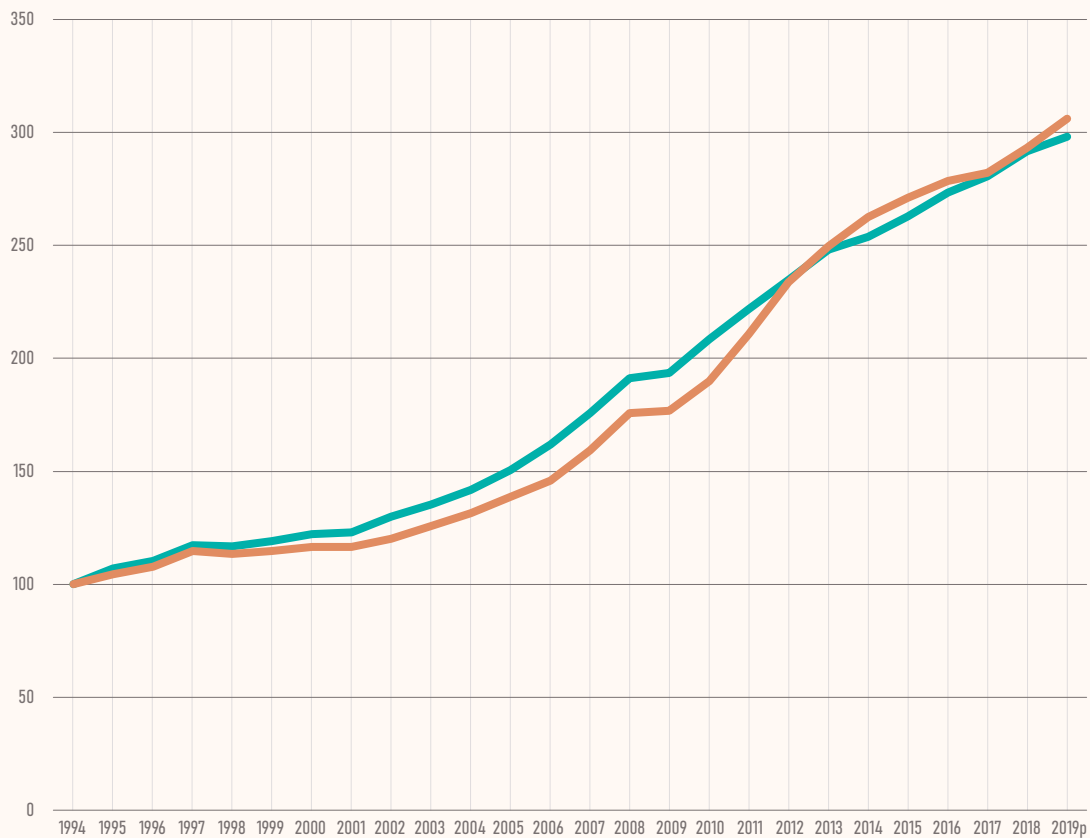
Although it is risky to speak of causality, this feeling is not surprising when analyzing the foundations of Peruvian cuisine revolution. The cuisine vision proposed by chef Gastón Acurio in the early 2000s is that this is a creative industry that interacts with the Latin American culture. This assessment has been reflected in the evolution of gastronomy economic activities and the agricultural products associated with them, of agricultural product exports with a Peruvian identity, and of their importance as an attractor for tourism.

During the 1994-2000 period, the gross domestic product (GDP) of the accommodation and restaurant sector grew at 2.6% per year, below the growth of the economy, which grew at 3.3% per

year (Graph 2). This was reversed as from 2000, when the transformation of Peruvian gastronomy began. During the 2000-2019 period, the accommodation and restaurants sector grew at 5.1% per year, above the 4.7% growth of the economy. Its importance in the gross domestic product remained around 3% during the period and reached 3.2% in 2019.

Until 2019, gastronomy had become a key driver of employment. In Lima alone, about 5% of the economically active population worked for the restaurant and hotel industry, about 135,000 jobs in restaurants. Employment growth in the Restaurants and Hotels sector in Lima accelerated during the 2000s and exceeded total employment growth

GRAPH 2. NATIONAL AND ACCOMMODATION AND RESTAURANT GDP EVOLUTION IN PERU (1994-2019)



Source: National Statistics and Information Institute, 2021.

Note: Base 1994 = 100

(Manufacturing, Trade and Services) during the 2010 decade (Graph 3).

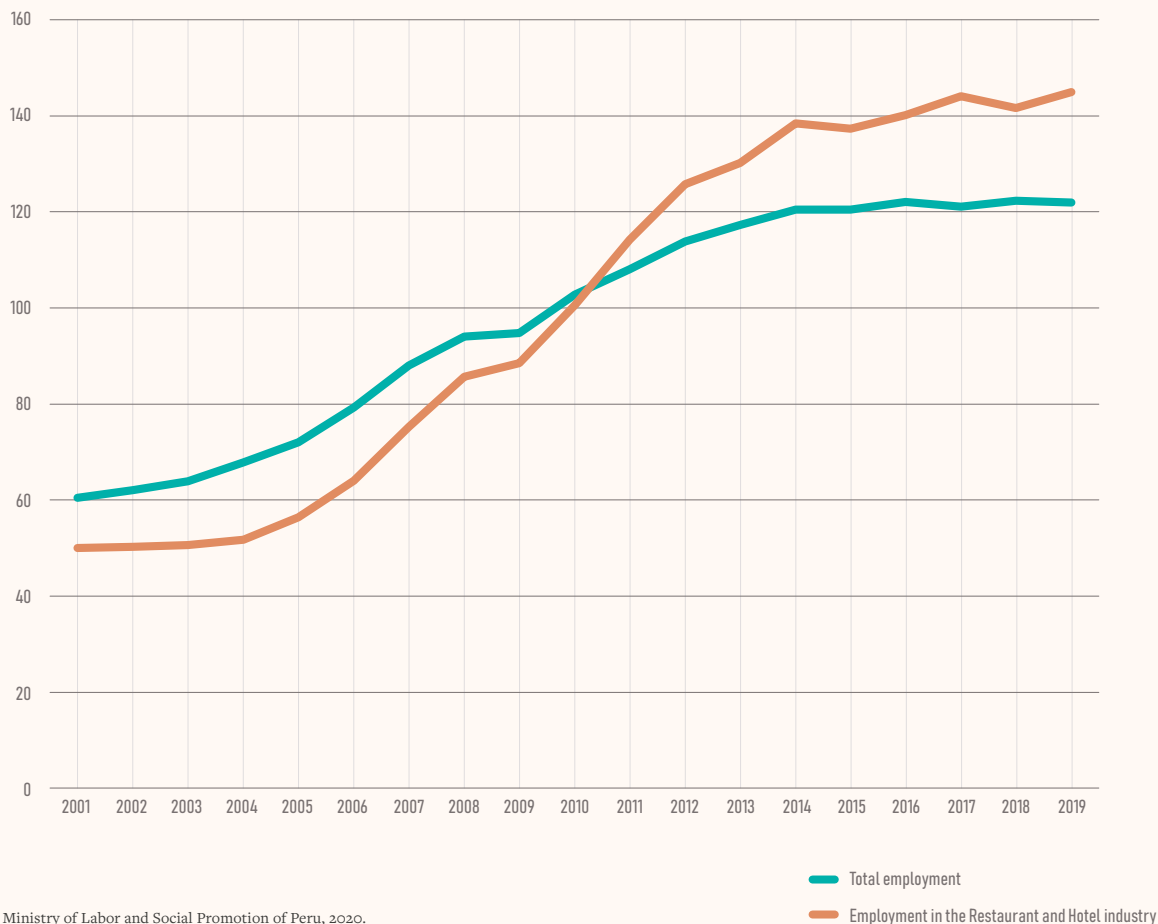
Peruvian food has always been recognized in Latin America, but only in recent years has the rest of the world begun to appreciate it. Peru is one of the few countries that, in the last twenty years, has managed **to position its gastronomy at an international level** in a way that has allowed it to compete directly with already internationalized gastronomies, such as French, Italian, Mexican³, Japanese and Chi-

3. "Traditional Mexican cuisine: A communal, ancestral culture and alive - The paradigm of Michoacán" was declared World Heritage Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2010.

nese cuisines. A decade ago, Peruvian restaurants abroad did not exceed two hundred; today alone in the United States they add up to more than four hundred, according to data from the Peruvian Association of Gastronomy (APEGA). Chef Gastón Acurio says: "We went from forty Peruvian restaurants in 2004 in the world, to four thousand in 2019. But we are still far from the sixty thousand Japanese and three hundred thousand Italian restaurants and that is where the true economic transformation is."

The arrival of **international tourism in Peru** had a significant impact on the development of the gastronomic sector. Between 2004 and 2019, the number of international tourists increased from

GRAPH 3. EMPLOYMENT EVOLUTION IN FORMAL PRIVATE COMPANIES OF FIFTY TO MORE WORKERS AS COMPARED TO THE TOTAL AND TO THE RESTAURANT AND HOTEL INDUSTRY IN METROPOLITAN LIMA (2001-2019)



1.3 to 4.4 million people (Mincetur, 2022). Tourism promoted the development of the new Peruvian gastronomy and transformed it into an attraction in itself through the increased demand it generated and the change it produced in it.

On the phenomenon of gastronomic tourism, the Peruvian writer and Nobel Prize winner Mario Vargas Llosa (2009) points out:

«If someone had told me a few years ago that one day I was going to see “gastronomic tourist trips” to Peru being organized abroad, I would not have believed it. But it has happened and I suspect that the chupes de camarones, the piqueos, the causa, the pachamancas, the ceviches, the lomito saltado, the ají de gallina, the picarones, the suspiro a la Limeña, etc., now bring as many tourists to the country as the colonial and pre-Hispanic palaces of Cusco and the stones of Machu Picchu.»

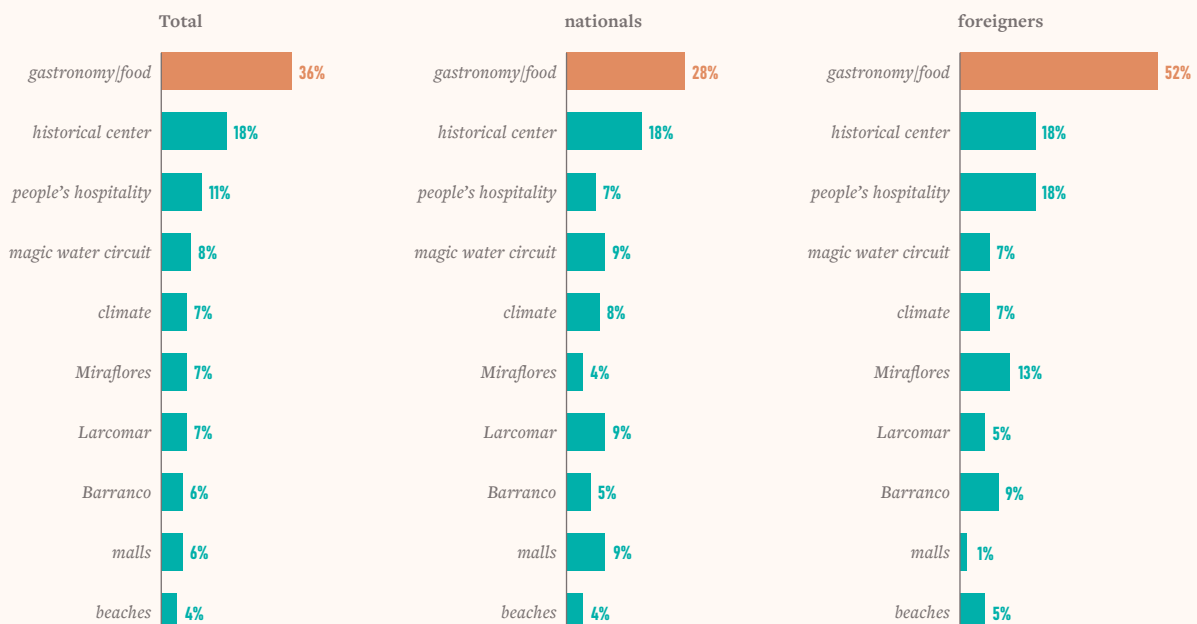
In 2018 and 2019, the arrival of international tourists to Peru reached 4.4 million, a growth of 9.6% com-

pared to 2017. This performance was mainly driven by the arrival of tourists from Chile (+8.6%) and the US (+9.7%). These countries accounted for more than 40% of the total arrivals in Peru (Mincetur, 2019).

Differentiating gastronomy through its cultural identity has allowed gastronomy to be complemented with other great tourist attractions and become one of the greatest attractions in Peru. In 2019, 39.6% of tourists who visited Lima reported “nice and varied gastronomy” as the reason for liking their visit, this being the first reason, followed by the historic center with 18.6% (Graph 4).

The pandemic outbreak at the beginning of 2020 had a significant impact on the economy in general and particularly on activities in large urban concentrations and tourism, which entailed an impact on the gastronomic sector. During 2020, the Peruvian economy decreased by 11.1% and total employment at the national level recorded a drop of 13% (Annual Employment Report in Peru 2020). International tourism fell dramatically from 4.4 million tourists in

GRAPH 4. 2019 SURVEY ON THE SATISFACTION OF VISITORS TO LIMA ON WHY THEY LIKED TO VISIT THE LIMA REGION



Source: Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru, 2019.

2019 to 0.9 million in 2020 and 0.4 million in 2021 (Mincetur, 2022).

The huge contraction in demand for gastronomic services in establishments due to the pandemic and Government imposed restrictions led restaurants to focus innovation and creativity efforts on adapting business organization and processes to new circumstances (e.g. innovation and development of delivery, digital menus, reassignment of personnel and creation of new tasks geared to food delivery).

Sector recovery and innovation revitalization aimed at developing Peru's trademark gastronomy, which offers consumers a unique experience, will largely depend on the recovery of market size, especially in tourism. One of the policy lessons from this study is the importance of promoting (not hindering) domestic and international tourism for innovation in the gastronomy sector. Bearing in mind that the pandemic has not changed the great tourist attributes that Peru offers, nor the identity or attractiveness of its cuisine, the tourism recovery and growth poses a great challenge for the future in terms of the policy of opening and facilitating tourism, both nationally and internationally. The policy recommendation for developing a stable and flexible economic framework that facilitates investment and spillover between different sectors is also reinforced.

Economist Edward Glaeser, a leader in the economics of cities, is optimistic about the recovery of cities and the activities that make them attractive:

«The long-term history of cities cannot help but make us optimistic. For 2,500 years, urban connections have produced new technologies, great works of art, and profound social changes. For 1,000 years, cities have survived bombings, the Black Death, cholera, earthquakes, and fires. They have often rebuilt better. While not all cities will escape COVID-19 unscathed, most will surely thrive again (2022).»

Virgilio Martínez shares this optimism. The pandemic did not stop his expansion plans and, currently, he is preparing to open two restaurants in large cities: Olluco in Moscow and MAZ in Tokyo, one of the capitals of gastronomy.

The next section examines how Peruvian gastronomy became more than a folk attraction—which not only expresses its identity history, but is used in a thoughtful and creative way—through an innovation process that has common elements to those developed in other areas, such as the arts and business.

03

Conceptual framework of innovation and creativity applied to productive processes



For Gary Becker (2005)⁴, **the knowledge revolution** consisted of systematic application of knowledge to business and economics. This led to a productivity explosion, fueled by advances in scientific and other knowledge relevant to economies. Romer and Galenson's economic approach to innovation is presented next. This approach will serve as a framework for analysis to understand how innovation developed and its mechanisms in the Peruvian gastronomic sector, and to organize the analysis of individual innovator cases, such as Gastón Acurio and Isabel Álvarez Novoa, which are presented in Section 6.

3.1. INCENTIVES FOR INNOVATION

Paul Romer's⁵ approach considers that incentives are important to innovate and emphasizes the role for profit investments linked to finding new products or processes. According to Romer (1990), ideas differ from private economic assets and particularly from physical and human capital in that these are not "rival" assets: the use of an idea by a person does not prevent other people from using the same idea. Due to this, the search for differentiation is one of the main incentives for innovation. Differentiation, for example, through a brand or a particular aspect of the product or service, is what allows innovators to appropriate the return. In the case of Peruvian gastronomy, differentiation was produced based on quality, use of the great variety

of local ingredients, return to origins and Peruvian cultural identity. This change allowed an expansion of the local and international market, which reinforced the incentives to differentiate and innovate.

To understand and characterize the innovation process in greater detail, Romer's characterization of the innovation process was combined with the University of Chicago economist **David Galenson's** classification of innovators, who distinguishes between conceptual and experimental innovators, according to how innovators work and their conception of the discipline.

3.2. PLANNERS VERSUS IMPROVISERS⁶

The Lego Idea Book, Lipkowitz (2011), points out that, on some occasions, to start a new project it is convenient to plan in advance, while, on others, it is better to start without a preconceived idea and to devise the new model on the go. The work clearly establishes two possible approaches to innovation, but immediately raises the question of what determines the convenience of one or the other approach. According to Galenson, the optimal strategy for innovating (planning or ideating from experimentation as you go) depends on the type of innovator you are. In the five-question test developed below, you can quickly find out what kind of innovator each person is according to Galenson's classification.

4. Economics Nobel Prize 1992..

5. Economics Nobel Prize 2018.

6. Based on Elías (2014).



What kind of innovator are you, conceptual or experimental?

TEST DESIGNED BY **COLIN STEWART**

Start in 5 points. Adjust the figure upwards or downwards as you answer the following questions. Skip those you think do not apply in your case.

PREGUNTA	RESPUESTA
1. Planning When you start a Project, do you first prepare a plan to carry it out step by step or do you start immediately and improvise on the way?	<i>I plan beforehand (Add 2 points)</i> <i>I improvise (Subtract 2 points)</i>
2. Starting Thinking back to the most welcome change in anything or in any procedure you ever made in your corner of the world (including your career, workplace, school, and home, but excluding self-improvement), did it all start with one bright idea that you put into practice or did you achieve it by trial and error without knowing well in advance what this change would be?	<i>Bright idea (Add 2 points)</i> <i>Trial and error (Subtract 2 points)</i> <i>A change of mine has never been well received (0 points)</i>
3. General or specific principles When you need to make a change or do something new, do you choose the course of action by first thinking about how general principles apply to the situation, or by first examining the details of the situation?	<i>General principles (Add 2 points)</i> <i>Specific (Subtract 2 points)</i>
4. Ending When a project nears completion, are you ready to close it and move on to another project, or do you want to keep making improvements?	<i>Change to another project (Add 2 points)</i> <i>Keep making improvements (Subtract 2 points)</i>
5. Looking back After a project is finished, are you usually satisfied or, more likely, dissatisfied with it?	<i>Satisfied (Add 2 points)</i> <i>Unsatisfied (Subtract 2 points)</i>

If you got less than 1 point, you are **AN EXTREMELY EXPERIMENTAL INNOVATOR**

If you got 1 to 3 points, you are..... **A MODERATELY EXPERIMENTAL INNOVATOR**

If you got 5 points, you are..... **AN INTERMEDIATE INNOVATOR**

If you got 7 to 9 points, you are..... **A MODERATELY CONCEPTUAL INNOVATOR**

If you got more than 9 points, you are **AN EXTREMELY CONCEPTUAL INNOVATOR**

In his quest to understand the creative and innovation process, David Galenson realized that art was an excellent laboratory to study creativity from the economic perspective. As in the case of researchers, **artists are also innovators**. Significant works of art contain substantial innovations. Regardless of the nature of the innovation, its relevance ultimately lies in its degree of influence on other artists. In art, as in all intellectual pursuits, only artists who influence their successors' practice are truly significant.

From detailed study of more than two hundred artists' careers, Galenson establishes that there are two very different types of art innovators: conceptual innovators, who minutely plan before making a work, and experimental innovators, who make important decisions about their work while they are making it.

Conceptual innovators use their art to accurately express ideas. The precision of their objectives allows them to plan their work and execute it deci-

sively. Pablo Picasso, Andy Warhol and Frida Kahlo were great conceptual innovators. Their conceptual innovations tend to be dramatic. In most cases, they consist of something completely different, which breaks the conventional rules of a discipline or activity. Their most radical new ideas, and consequently their greatest innovations, tend to come early in their careers.

For conceptual innovators, such as Pablo Picasso, the planning stage is essential in the innovation process. Picasso made hundreds of preliminary sketches and drawings to paint *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*. This fundamental work of modern art, which can be seen at the MOMA in New York, was made by him in 1907, at the age of twenty-six. "In my opinion, searching means nothing in painting. Finding is the thing" and "When I paint, my goal is to show what I have found, not what I am looking for" are some of Picasso's phrases that reveal him as a highly conceptual innovator.



GRAPH 5. PABLO PICASSO (CONCEPTUAL INNOVATOR), *LES DEMOISELLES D'AVIGNON*, 1907. MOMA.



GRAPH 6. PAUL CÉZANNE (EXPERIMENTAL INNOVATOR), *LE MONT SAINTE-VICTOIRE*, 1902-1904. PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART.

In contrast, **experimental innovators** seek to record their visual perceptions and lack a clear goal. They proceed tentatively, through trial and error, gradually building their skills as they go about their work, and tend to make their greatest contributions late in their career. Paul Cézanne, Georgia O'Keeffe and Jackson Pollock are some examples of great experimental innovators.

In a sort of extreme experimental improvisation for his paintings, Jackson Pollock would spread out the canvas on the ground and splash and drip paint onto it using hardened brushes, wands and syringes. Pollock explained that only after a kind of rec-

ognition period did he see what he had achieved. He avoided preconception to such an extent that only in the final stage of his work did he decide on the size and orientation of the painting. Pollock was an extreme experimentalist.

The categories of conceptual innovator and experimental innovator do not apply only to the art world. Later work shows that the same patterns are repeated in other areas, such as literature, music, business, the quality wine industry and economics. This report shows that, like art, Peruvian gastronomy is an excellent laboratory for learning about creativity through the study of its innovators "à la Galenson".

Steve Jobs was a great conceptual planner in the world of entrepreneurs. Steve Jobs had this to say about his approach to product development: "People don't know what they want until you show it to them. That is why I have never relied on market research" (Isaacson, 2011). In contrast, Muhammad Yunus (Nobel Peace Prize 2006), the "banker of the poor", explains: "The poor taught me an entirely new economy. I learned about the problems they face from their own perspective. I have tried a large number of things. Some worked, some didn't" (Yunus, 2003).

It is also worth noting that, although radical and disruptive changes in both art and business are usually the product of conceptual innovations, they are not always so. As will be shown in the next section, armed with his experimental approach and after years of trial and error, Acurio developed an entirely new cuisine in Peru. He really produced a disruptive movement in the gastronomic sector, just like the great experimental innovator Nicolás

Catena in the Argentine quality wine industry (Elías et al., 2020).

For an experimental innovator, like Gastón Acurio or "Micha" Tsumura, there is no such thing as a finished project. His skills, and therefore his work, improve over time; one job leads to another. This is why his careers are dominated by work on the same theme or problem, and by the pursuit of a single goal.

In contrast, for a conceptual innovator, experience accumulation can be a problem. Experience and habits impair your ability to break existing rules. Tackling new problems allows you to discover the benefits of extreme deviations. As Steve Jobs said to his biographer: "You always have to keep striving to innovate. Dylan could have sung protest songs forever and probably made a lot of money, but he didn't. He had to move on..." (Isaacson, 2011).

Table 1 summarizes the objectives, methods, and nature of the results in each type of innovator, and provides some examples.

TABLE 1. GALENSON'S INNOVATION TYPOLOGY APPLIED TO ARTISTIC CREATION

INNOVATORS	OBJECTIVES	METHODS	RESULTS	EXAMPLES
Experimental	Imprecise and evolutionary.	Tentative and incremental.	Slow development of skills leads to a work body.	· Paul Cézanne
	The objective is a theme or problem.	Trial and error.		· Jackson Pollock · Gastón Acurio · Nicolás Catena
Conceptual	Specific and sudden (discontinuous)	Targets established beforehand.	Systematically developed specific final work.	· Pablo Picasso
	The objective is precise.	Detailed preparatory plans.		· Frida Kahlo · Virgilio Martínez · Steve Jobs

Source: prepared by the authors, based on Elías and Ferro (2018).

04

Gastronomic revolution in Peru



The revolution in Peruvian gastronomy came about through a succession of experimental and conceptual innovations motivated by the search for **differentiation**. In the first stage, there was a differentiation at aggregate level in which Peruvian gastronomy was revalued and distinguished. The connection between Peruvian cultural identity and gastronomy that Gastón Acurio visualized and put into practice produced a new resource for common use: **The Peru brand**, which is developed and supported by those involved, **the chefs**. Incentives are generated to share knowledge and develop Peruvian gastronomy locally and internationally through partnerships and development of a community of chefs and other actors in the industry. Within this new category of cuisine, there are also chefs who rediscover and modernize **regional cuisines** and the use of **indigenous ingredients**. This also grows and strengthens the new resource for common use.

It is said that success has many parents, but in the case of the Peruvian gastronomic revolution, there is consensus that there is one main father: **chef and entrepreneur Gastón Acurio**. Although some of the most influential restaurants in the reimagining of Peruvian food were founded before Acurio's career (for example, the sociologist and cook Isabel Álvarez Novoa opened the illustrious El Señorío de Sulco in 1986 to recover, revalue, preserve and innovate the culinary expressions of Peru) and the bases of modern Peruvian gastronomy have existed for centuries, Peruvian chefs are almost unanimous when naming him the inspiration of the modern movement, both for creating new gastronomic ideas and for propagating them abroad. On this, almost everyone agrees (except Acurio himself).

To provide a date, it can be said that the revolution began to take shape in 1996. Upon returning to Peru after his studies and internships in Europe, in 1994, Acurio set up the Lima restaurant Así & Gastón with his wife, the German chef Así Gutsche. Quickly, the traditional French food restaurant became a success and the best French restaurant in Lima with a stable clientele. But despite success, Acurio had curiosity and, in 1996, he

began experimenting with Peruvian products and applying the techniques he had learned in Europe to the local cuisine. Acurio remembers that:

*«Instead of looking for raspberries that came from another country, we looked for local fruits to accompany the duck. And instead of looking for mushrooms that came dehydrated, or rice, we began to use a little of the ingredients of our land. And we began to “add” some traditional Peruvian dishes to French cuisine, from which we looked down on everything.»**

That same year, chef **Héctor Solís** opened the Lima branch of his family's restaurant, Fiesta, where he applied gourmet concepts to the regional Peruvian cuisine of his native Chiclayo. Although the luxurious Miraflores district in Lima seemed like it was not a good place for a regional food restaurant, the restaurant was a success and broke with the belief that regional food could not be included in the menu of the main gourmet restaurants.

(*) Quote taken from the interviews conducted for this work. The headings that do not have a reference (author, year) belong to the unpublished interviews carried out for this report.

This first stage of introducing Peruvian food in gourmet menus of the country —more precisely, in Lima neighborhoods with high purchasing power— was vital but difficult. The realization that there was a growing demand for the incipient Peruvian haute cuisine encouraged other chefs to embark on similar ventures. The success of these pioneers allowed them to raise capital to take the risk of trying their luck abroad. According to Acurio:

«The need for Peruvian cuisine to be acknowledged for its excellence began to become clear in 1999. At the beginning, it was from the perspective of chefs who use local products or are inspired by Peruvian recipes to make something new, but somehow Peruvian. I remember that in 2000 we made a deep change, incorporating more and more ingredients and influences, and that began to cause us a loss of clients who tend to look at our identity with disdain and look at foreign cultures with admiration. But we did it anyway.»

In that, Acurio emphasizes that he was not the only one, either in Peru or the world:

«Such questioning was also beginning in other countries. It wasn't me alone, but it happened with chefs in New York who wondered why they didn't use local products and recipes, why not replicate what the French do, but with their culture, the principles of excellence, of valuing, of innovation, of love for the land.»

From that moment on, the Peruvian gastronomic revolution evolved rapidly. Acurio says that, he and Astrid had very clear ideas in 2002, but they did not know how to implement them, so he decided to tour all of Peru. He took a gap year and toured the country town by town with a photographer friend. On his tour of Peru, the puzzle was completely assembled. Acurio perceived the neglect of small farmers in the countryside and the economic loss of their lands' products because they did not have international recognition. He saw how quinoa plantations had no buyers and rotted on





the ground. Cocoa remained unseen. The fantastic regional recipes that revealed this unique, magical Peruvian diversity were hidden. He wondered what would happen if the cuisine and the products around it gained a recognition that they didn't have at the moment. For him, these farmers were pioneers who lived off their land, undervalued and misunderstood by chefs like Acurio, who had studied abroad and looked at them with a certain indifference when, in reality, they were the ones who had a clear path.

Upon returning from the trip, Acurio published his first book, *Peru. A Culinary Adventure*, and he launched his TV show, *Culinary Adventure*, both based on his experiences. Those exhibits showcased the work of small farmers and cooks. After the trip, he began to open branches of Astrid & Gastón in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and other places. He was also a co-founder of the Peruvian Gastronomy Association (APEGA), which launched **Mistura**, a Peruvian gastronomic fair that, in its first

edition in 2009, was a great success with the Peruvian public—from all social classes—who wanted to get to know their own food. This is why there was already a queue of three thousand people before the inauguration. "In a way, for a moment, we were all one country," says Acurio.

Engineer **Miguel Ordinola**, Projects Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean at the International Potato Center (CIP) of Peru, considers that the event marked a turning point. The potato sector, particularly native varieties used in gastronomy, gained great visibility among consumers in Mistura. It was massive: 250,000 people visiting an unprecedented fair around gastronomy in Lima. "It gives other actors in the chain an image of functioning", he said. According to Ordinola, the influx to the first Mistura was due to several factors: academic revaluation of gastronomy, participation of well-known chefs and use of innovative ingredients. In this regard, he refers: "Everything that gave a kind of visibility to all that latency that existed before."

These achievements led to several fundamental changes inside and outside of Peru, changes that came at the right time. Before the work of Acurio, Álvarez Novoa, Solís and other pioneers of the Peruvian gastronomic revolution, Peru was immersed in a war against Shining Path terrorism and a difficult economic period. However, with the Shining Path defeated and the economy stabilized, the pioneers found themselves in a new country, at peace, richer, more connected (through the internet) and more open to their message of vindication of Peruvian cuisine and culture.

Like other chefs who had had vital experiences abroad, upon returning to Peru after years in Spain, chef **Israel Laura** put into practice what he had learned in Europe about the value of products—how to appreciate a product regardless of whether it is cheap or expensive—and gastronomic culture. “What helped me in going abroad was to see cuisine here from another perspective,” says Israel Laura. “In Peru, there is a lot of culinary history, but there is no gastronomic culture.”

Combining these changes with the success of chefs abroad—mainly Acurio in the early years—the Peruvian public found itself more than willing to embrace a new world of local, proud, innovative, and gourmet Peruvian food, using a mix of local techniques and products with lessons from the best culinary institutes in the US and Europe.

Businessman **Carlos Zamorano** of the Agricultural Producers Association of Peru (AGAP), a union of exporting producers, maintains that the trips of young people abroad during bad times in Peru had a great impact.

«Because of their roots, many ended up linked to gastronomy and working in Italy, working in Spain, working in France, working in New York, working in great kitchens around the world and then returned to Peru when Peru opened up again. And they began to apply these modern cooking techniques that they learned.»

A new generation of star chefs was thus launched, young people who extended what the first pioneers



had done and created truly innovative spaces, always motivated by the search for differentiation.

In 2003, one of these innovators, chef **Pedro Schiaffino**, spent a few months traveling through the Peruvian Amazon, near Iquitos, stockpiling fish, and ended up selling two tons of paiche or pirarucu (an Amazonian fish) to the Lima market. In 2004, he opened his own restaurant, Malabar, in the Lima neighborhood of San Isidro. Regarding this, he refers: "I applied all this mess in my head on local products."

Early Malabar menus had many Amazonian dishes with many ingredients from that region. Schiaffino refers that this was "without knowing the Amazon in depth and the complexity of its people, its culture, its traditions, and its gastronomy." It was the first step in a path that led him to the decision to immerse himself fully in the Amazon, its regions and communities. This ended up in the opening, in 2012, of ámaZ, a Lima restaurant dedicated to Amazonian cuisine. His nickname, "jungle chef," came from there.

Another great innovator, chef **Virgilio Martínez**, launched the Central restaurant in 2008, after many years abroad, to vindicate both the food and the geography of Peru. Martínez had the conceptual idea of combining ingredients in the same dish in as they are gathered in the ecosystem. "Here at Central we have a proposal that brings you closer to the Peruvian territory, tells you about ecosystems, tells you about the altitude of Peru and then focuses you on different geographical spaces," says **Malena Martínez**, Virgilio's sister, who is in charge of research in their Mater Initiative, the interdisciplinary research group linked to Central.

"This new generation began to work together, inventing, discovering and sharing techniques," says **Mónica Huerta**, a renowned chef from Arequipa who works, maintains and spreads ancestral cooking techniques in her La Nueva Palomino "picantería" in Arequipa. Huerta believes that uniting and making up a community of chefs has allowed the world to know them through their own food, their techniques and the supplies they use. When Peru opened up to the world, people realized that there was not only excellent Lima gastronomy, but also traditional cuisine in the regions that was very valuable, a cuisine with ancestral techniques.

"That union was the most important thing for the revolution in Peruvian gastronomy," says **Mitsuharu**

"Micha" Tsumura, who opened Maido in 2009 (the best restaurant in Latin America for three consecutive years), where his main innovation was to introduce and deepen the identity of Peruvian food in Japanese cuisine and to revalue Nikkei cuisine (the food of Japanese immigrants in Peru). Tsumura says that:

«The success of one chef is the success of all, because we are not thinking only of Peru, we are thinking of the world. If Peruvian cuisine is doing well, if the world asks for Peruvian cuisine, what we are going to lack is chefs. Apart from being friends, we support each other because each one has their own cycle. Sharing knowledge is not copying; on the contrary, it is important to share knowledge.»

In 2005, he opened La Mar, a restaurant with less elaborate food, closer to the genuine flavors of popular cuisine, in Lima and later in Buenos Aires, Bogotá, Miami, San Francisco, Santiago and São Paulo. He continued with other chains, each with its own personality, which develops and promotes a branch of Peruvian cuisine, Tanta, Panchita, Pasquale Hermanos, La Juguería Peruana, La Pepa and Chicha. In this regard, Acurio states:

«Those years created the perception, wrong in my opinion, that I was the only one who carried the Peruvian flag on my back, opening a restaurant on the best street in Bogotá or in Madrid. But the truth was that a collective movement of people was already beginning to operate, trying to do the same thing in different ways, but with the same objective of valuing our culture, our cuisine, our products, either by exporting them or claiming them locally.»

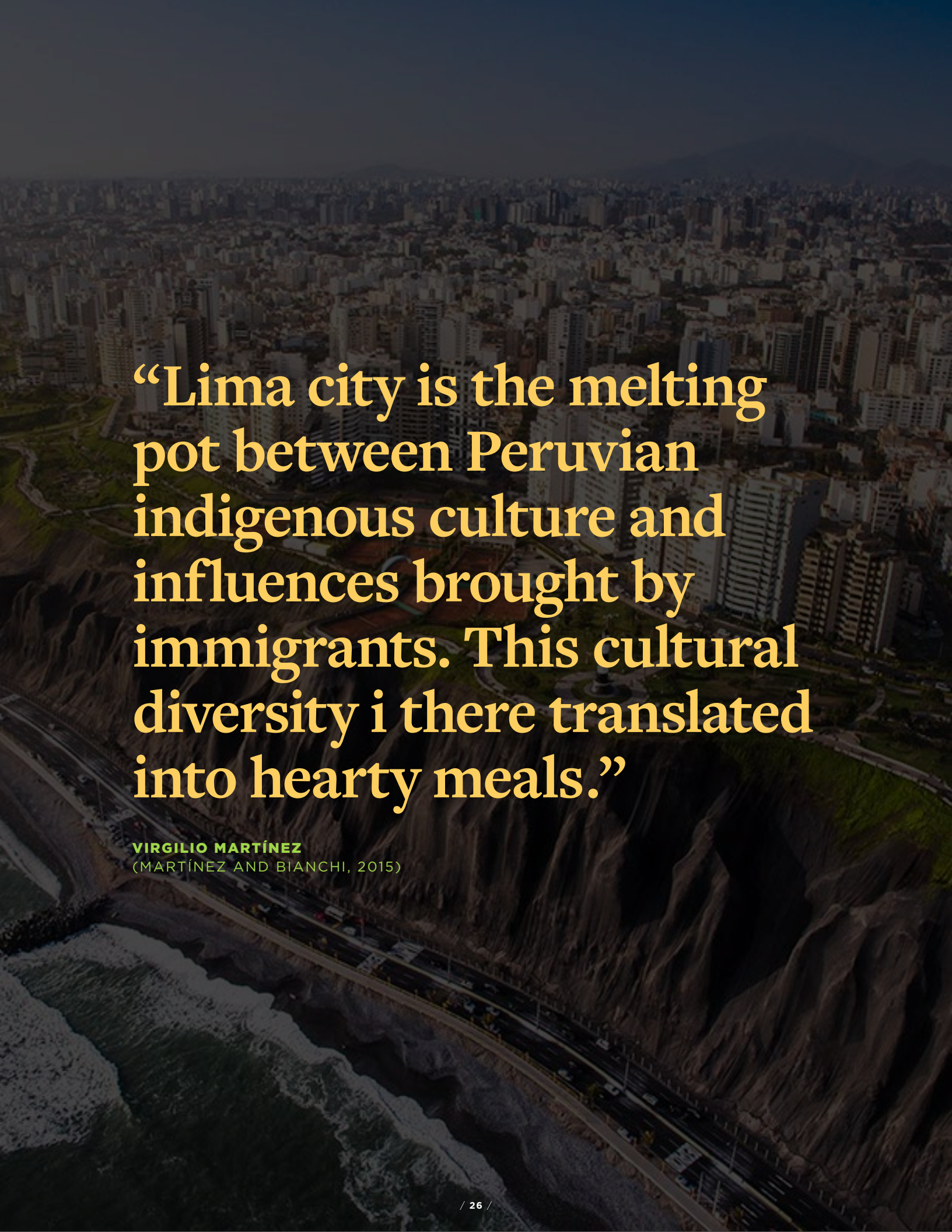
In 2019, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) chose him to teach the Enrique V. Iglesias Chair on Culture and Development. On that occasion, **Trinidad Zaldívar**, head of the IDB's Creativity and Culture Unit, said at its headquarters in Washington, DC:

«This was a recognition to Gastón for his work promoting progress of Latin America and the Caribbean through gastronomy. And we want it to also be an inspiration for the thousands of entrepreneurs and innovators in the region, who are committed to the potential of the Orange Economy to contribute to the economic and social development of their countries. (Ortega, 2019).»

05

The role of culture



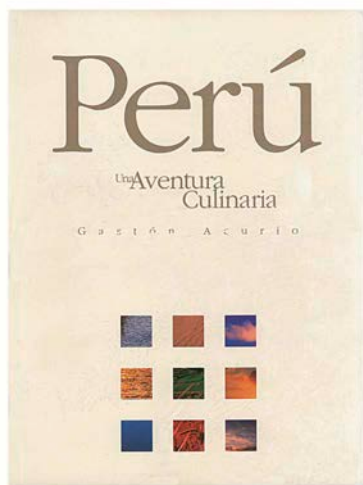
An aerial photograph of Lima, Peru, showing a dense urban landscape with numerous high-rise buildings and residential areas. The city is situated on a coastal plain, with steep, eroded hills visible in the foreground and background. The ocean is visible at the bottom left, with waves breaking on the shore. The overall scene is a mix of modern urban development and natural coastal features.

“Lima city is the melting pot between Peruvian indigenous culture and influences brought by immigrants. This cultural diversity i there translated into hearty meals.”

VIRGILIO MARTÍNEZ
(MARTÍNEZ AND BIANCHI, 2015)

One of the keys to developing Peruvian gastronomy was its **differentiation at international level** in connection with its ancient culture and the great population diversity throughout its territory. Gastón Acurio affirms that Peruvian culture —both in its miscegenation and in its “pure” expressions— played a central role in the country's gastronomic revolution. At the same time, he points out that this revolution expresses culture and values it, both abroad and in Peru. In the same year of its inauguration (2001), the Astrid & Gastón restaurant in Santiago de Chile was awarded as the best restaurant in Chile, overcoming the historical rivalry between Chile and Peru. Acurio states that this fact showed that the restaurant was not a business, but a representative of Peru “putting a Peruvian flag in the hearts of the most influential people elsewhere.”

Acurio's experimental innovation is reflected in his book *Peru. A culinary adventure*, published in 2002. At first glance, only the word Peru (the Peru brand) can be distinguished in large letters on the book's cover. Then, in smaller print, the book's subtitle alludes to culinary art (not gastronomy). **Culinary art** involves creatively preparing food and is closely linked to culture, especially with respect to food, its preparation, and the social rituals surrounding food. The message is that Peru is its cuisine; cuisine is in its cultural essence. The author's name appears -almost unnoticed- in even smaller letters.



Gastón Acurio's book cover (2002)

The main cuisine referents highlight the importance of culture in the development of its gastronomy. According to **Isabel Álvarez Novoa**, culture does not simply have a function in cuisine, but cuisine is culture.

“We need to understand that cuisine itself is culture. It is the product of centuries. In my restaurant there are pre-Hispanic iconographies. There are elements of the manifestations of culture and art in Peru that can be valued in these spaces. [...] We have one of the richest seas. We have an extraordinary biodiversity. Cuisines that have been born in Peru are home cuisines, very well done [...]. “Picanterías”⁷ are the primeval spaces, Peru's cuisine DNA, then comes regional cuisine with all the miscegenation process.”

7. Picanterías in Peru, also called chicherías, are small food establishments run mainly by women. Some of their common characteristics are the sale of chicha de jora, cooking based on firewood, grinding by hand and varieties of chili. Traditionally, they are distributed in different Peruvian regions, such as Arequipa, Ayacucho, Cajamarca, Cuzco and Piura.

Arequipa's "picanterías" are a legacy that has been inherited from generation to generation of women called "picanteras." **Mónica Huerta** highlights the importance of their tradition and heritage, and whose care is also provided through the development of farmers that produce traditional inputs, such as the germinated black corn that is used to make guiñaño chicha.⁸ Huerta points out the following:

"What we want is to be able to convey culture through our tradition, link products to our past, so that young people understand the importance of techniques and that they can value them, that they want to know more about them and that they can respect and love what is theirs."

Chef **Mitsuharu "Micha" Tsumura** said that at the same time he developed his Maido restaurant:

"Gastón [Acurio] was already working with many chefs on the subject of what the identity of Peruvian cuisine was. We did not know Peruvian cuisine. We did not understand it. Traveling through Peru, understanding how Peruvian cuisine is made up, something that has always been there, but this is something we, chefs, learned to value no more than fifteen years ago. With those studies that gradually started, we learned that Peruvian cuisine had many sub-cuisines, such as Italian-Peruvian, Creole, regional, Chifa, Nikkei cuisines, among others."

Peru accepts other cuisines. It does not reject them; integrates them into their recipes. If you see, ancient culture, biodiversity, diverse cultures added to the joint work with universities, media, historians, anthropologists, and the population. I thus think you have a pretty good recipe to generate a strong impact in Peru and worldwide with your cuisine."

8. Chicha de guiñaño is the quintessential drink of Arequipa people – Arequipa's flag is crimson red. It is an ancestral preparation that has symbolic, ritual, religious, medicinal and festive meanings. This chicha is obtained by fermenting germinated and ground black corn, also known as guiñaño, which after several hours of cooking, is allowed to cool and rest in large clay pots (*The ancestral guiñaño chicha: pure Arequipa flavor*, 2018).

In his book *Lima* (2015), **Virgilio Martínez** points out the following:

"On top of all this abundance of products, modern Peruvian cuisine is the result of cultural exchange between foreign immigrants and native Peruvians, which has resulted in new flavors and new dishes, an evolutionary process that is still going on today."

Chef **Pedro Schiaffino** seeks to highlight jungle foods and Amazon cuisine. Regarding it, he says:

"The main idea for me was to show such diversity and the potential of Peruvian cuisine through its ingredients and through its culture, its traditions, its gastronomic traditions, that ancestral knowledge, that traditional knowledge."

I believe that the basis and the future of an exemplary cuisine is a cuisine that has an identity, that has personality, that uses its produce, respects techniques or uses techniques and, in some way, respects and values tradition."

José del Castillo, chef and owner of the restaurant Isolina Taberna Peruana, says that Peruvian cuisine was undervalued for a long time despite the fact that it is an ancestral cuisine with lots of history.

"We have always thought that those potatoes or that stew were not as good as French or Italian cuisine, or cuisine that came from abroad. I think that when we realized how valuable and important this legacy -that we all receive from our ancestors and from the rich history of cooking- is when change occurs."

This is added to tremendous actors who are in the kitchens and to authors. I am referring to that ancestral work of peasants, producers, to that hard and vigorous work of fishers, of that sacrificed work. When we realized that there was so much to convey and so much to feel happy and proud of, that is when everything began to change."



Cuisine is a cultural fact, adds **Israel Laura**, who studied at the Hofmann Hostelry School in Barcelona, before returning to Peru.

“I define Peruvian cuisine as the mirror image of the average Peruvian... Racially, we are a mix and food is a reflection of who we are. The problem is that we have accepted food, but we are still in the process of accepting ourselves.”

Malena Martínez says that, at some point, the Mater Initiative began to explore other cultural visibility routes beyond food. About this, she says the following: “So, we find that art is a precious route, because art and crafts are also closely related to identity.” About the sustained growth of Peruvian gastronomy, she adds that it is: “Largely because Peruvian gastronomy has become an important part of Peruvian identity and because we are proud of our cuisine.”

The diversity of Peruvian cultures also entered the menus that Central designed through Mater. Malena Martínez tells us:

“We began to offer a tasting menu connected to consuming from Peru’s ecosystems. The menu consisted of a trip through the Peruvian territory in which you traveled through different heights, and each dish was a different height and ecosystem. But also socially different. Because we were showing you that there were different cultures that made different preparations and that inspired our cuisine’s dishes.”

CEBICHE. An example of the impact on gastronomy of culture and population diversity throughout its territory—in which fishers, farmers and chefs come together—is the great variety of cebiches offered by Peruvian marine cuisine. *Ceviche* is one of the most emblematic dishes of Peruvian cuisine. The base products for its preparation are generally the same: fish (or some other marine ingredient), onion, lemon and chili, and, to prepare it perfectly, “there are two fundamental rules: use fresh ingredients and prepare it a few minutes before serving it” (Martínez, 2015). However, there is a great diversity of cebiches between different coastal regions in Peru and, within the same regions, between different beaches and fisher’s coves. “On the Peruvian coast, each town has its cebichería and each cebichería has its cebiche” (Acurio, 2002).

In his book *Cebiche Power* (2015), Acurio documents the different nuances through the tour of the cebiche route through Tumbes, Piura, Lambayeque, La Libertad, Áncash, the Lima coast, Lima, Ica, Arequipa, Moquegua and Tacna. This great diversity has motivated different chefs to create new types of cebiches. In *Cebiche Power* (2015), the reader finds forty-four different cebiche recipes prepared by outstanding chefs and cebiche masters, including Virgilio Martínez, with his Cebiche de Roca en Bolsa; Iván Matsufuji, with a Barnacle Cebiche; Israel Laura, with his Cebiche del Barrio, and the great ceviche master Javier Wong, with his Sole Fish Cebiche.

06

Innovators



Aiming at understanding the **innovation process** and learning about the main innovations that occurred in the sector, interviews were conducted between June and December 2020 with chefs, *sommeliers* and other actors in gastronomy and institutions related to the sector.

Next, a systematic analysis of **some of the main innovators who revolutionized Peruvian gastronomy** will be developed using the economic approach to creativity shown in section 3. Guided by this analysis framework, their beginnings, their human capital investment process, the type of innovator they are, their innovation and what their influences are were drawn for each innovator. Finally, each one explained what three products they would take if they had to spend a year on a desert island.

GASTÓN ACURIO · *Astrid & Gastón*

ISABEL ÁLVAREZ NOVOA · *El Señorío de Sulco*

MITSU HARU “MICA” TSUMURA · *Maido*

PEDRO SCHIAFFINO · *Malabar and ámaZ*

BERNARDO ROCA REY · Novoandina cuisine creator

MÓNICA HUERTA · *La Nueva Palomino*

TOMÁS “TOSHI” MATSUFUJI · *Al Toke Pez*

JOSÉ DEL CASTILLO · *Isolina Taberna Peruana*

ISRAEL LAURA · *Kañete*

FLAVIO SOLÓRZANO · *El Señorío de Sulco*

HÉCTOR SOLÍS · *Fiesta Miraflores Lima Gourmet*

JOSEPH RUIZ · *sommelier at Central*

MALENA MARTÍNEZ · head of *Mater Iniciativa*

Gastón. Acurio

— ASTRID & GASTÓN —



“For this chef, there are no chimeric adventures or proposals, his stubbornness, brio and vigor announce a good Scorpion native and of good prospects.”

“CUCHO” LA ROSA CABIZZA (ACURIO, 2002)

Gastón Acurio is the gastronomy development pioneer of Peru. His experimental approach and his conception of cooking as a research task led him to discover a new way of preparing and promoting Peruvian cuisine.

Acurio's influence on the cuisine of Peru and Latin America —where Europe has traditionally been regarded as a model of haute cuisine— has been very significant. More than anyone else, he renewed Peruvian cuisine and thus paved the way for a remarkable generation of Peruvian chefs. Other innovative chefs from Peru, such as Virgilio Martínez, Micha, Pedro Schiaffino, Toshi and Héctor Solís, have acknowledged a debt to him and consider him their community builder and leader.

BEGINNINGS

Born into a family of Lima's upper bourgeoisie — his father was Minister of Development and Public Works, and a national senator— Gastón Acurio developed a passion for cooking at a very early age, both for food and for its role as a shelter. Regarding his origins, Acurio says:

«I am the youngest son, the only man in the house. When I was seven or eight years old, the youngest of my four older sisters was already twelve and the oldest was sixteen; they had an adolescent world that bothered me a lot. So, I took refuge in the kitchen, the only space I had left in the house to hide from my sisters' boyfriends, from their friends.

I was always the kid who was there, watching, reading my grandmother's cookbooks. Until a time came when I started preparing my own dishes when I was eight or nine years old. I would take my bike and go buy my ingredients and make my own food, which was

probably horrible because no one wanted to eat it. It was the first germ. Already in adolescence, when we played sports or had a party and returned home late, it was clear to me that I was the one who had to cook among friends.»

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: FORMAL EDUCATION

Acurio began studying law at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú and then continued on to law school at the Complutense University of Madrid in 1987. But after two years in Madrid, he left the university and enrolled in the Madrid hospitality school, where he spent two years before going to study at the Cordon Bleu in Paris. Beyond that decision to study cooking and to do it abroad, he points out that the best investment he made in his life was spending a small amount of money that he had inherited from his grandmother in all the restaurants in Spain to which no young person his age could usually access.

«The first day of classes of the third year [at the Complutense University of Madrid], I sat down and that same day I got up and left. It became clear to me that I had to move from college somewhere to study cooking, but since I didn't know how to deal with it, I just didn't say anything to my family. I dropped out of law school, enrolled in cooking, in hospitality, and spent a couple of years in hiding.

I confessed to them later and, at that moment, my father, in a very generous gesture, asked me: “Now, where do you want to go?”, as if defeated. At that time, every cook's dream anywhere in the world was to go to France, the country that had influenced haute cuisine

in the world for two centuries. He supported me to be able to go to France and thus I began a path rather the other way around. To prove all the time that I had not been wrong, I got the best grades, I got first place in Paris, I also worked at night, I helped the teachers in the school in the morning. The family that had the Cordon Bleu gave me the representation of their school when I returned to Peru, so that I could set it up there, which happened, but not with me because my dream was to have my restaurant. I met my wife in Cordon Bleu and convinced her to go to Peru in 1993. We came back and that's where it all started.»

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: IN-HOUSE TRAINING

He worked in Paris while studying at the Cordon Bleu, although he never managed to be accepted as an intern by one of his idols (the French chef Alain Ducasse, the chef with the most Michelin stars in the world). After returning to Peru, he inadvertently initiated a new form of on-the-job training by founding his first restaurant, Astrid & Gastón, with his wife, Astrid Gutsche. There he started with a fairly traditional concept: French cuisine, which meant haute cuisine for the upper classes of Lima. But that training with a traditional concept changed his ideas.

«When we came back, we had a dream of opening a restaurant. There was one slight problem: we didn't have a penny. As we had very good training, we got a job very quickly. That allowed us to have time to know the appropriate places in the city. We are talking about 1993. Sendero Luminoso was still very present. The economy was just beginning to find stability. It was a very difficult situation for a couple of crazy kids who had come from Europe to open their restaurant in Peru, moreover, for a small elite. We had no alternative but to pass the hat. We managed to raise USD 40,000. That was our loan. All convinced that we were never going to pay them. In fact, we paid them all in three months. It went well for us at the beginning. Within a week the restaurant was full. French cuisine in a very precarious restaurant. Second-hand refrigerators bought from households, the cement work tables because we did not have stainless steel tables. Within a week we began to be successful with the public. That lasted, without question, two years, from 1994 to 1996.»

RESTAURANTS AND INNOVATION

In 1996, Acurio became curious about a number of things: although he had a regular clientele, it seemed to him that something was not working. He began experimenting with Peruvian products and applying the techniques he had learned in Europe to the local cuisine, despite knowing that he was going to lose many of his steady customers. In the introduction to his book *Peru. A culinary adventure* (2002), Acurio tells us:

«Our menu was full of French words that only the ambassador understood and our portions were small because that is what the Michelin said with Bocuse as its defender... Fortunately, that inert state did not last long and little by little we discovered that overwhelming truth that today illuminates and gives meaning to our work.»

About the innovation Gastón Acurio introduced in his first restaurants, Vargas Llosa pointed out:

«In these restaurants, traditional Peruvian food is the starting but not the arrival point: it has been refined and enriched with personal touches that make it subtle and adapt it to modern life demands, to today's circumstances and opportunities, without betraying its origins, but also without renouncing invention and renewal (2009).»

WHO INFLUENCED HIM?

Acurio had many influences: from Juana, his family's cook in his youth, to Alain Ducasse. But the person who most made his career as a chef possible was the Spanish chef Juan Mari Arzak. Owner of a restaurant with three Michelin stars in San Sebastián, in the Spanish Basque Country (Restaurante Arzak), he was the founder of the new Basque cuisine that would later become Spanish haute cuisine, a cuisine that ended up, in some way, leading world haute cuisine after two centuries of French leadership. Starting in the 1990s, the most innovative and creative great chefs began to appear in Spain and influence the rest of the world.

«When I was still a law student, I remember seeing a cook dressed in white on the cover of a Sunday magazine in the El País newspaper for the first time. It was Juan Mari Arzak. That was decisive for me. It was a revelation. He solved all my dilemmas. It was not true that you were never going to have recognition as a cook.

What is that man doing here, on this page, being a cook and talking about many things? Then I remember that the following weekend I took a bus and went to San Sebastián alone, at the age of eighteen, and I sat down at a table in his Three-Michelin-starred restaurant for lunch on a Saturday. So I was sitting there alone and this man dressed in white appears talking to each client at each table asking: "How was the food?". Clearly, that moment was definitive to say: "This is the life that I want for myself, that is what I have dreamed of being for a long time and I was not very clear about it; Now it's clear to me." At that time, when I was a student, the two of them [Arzak and Ducasse] were my references. Without realizing that, in the case of Arzak, what was attracting me was his ability to unite a movement and take it to the top, and in the case of Alain Ducasse, that ability to replicate his work stemming from excellence at maximum levels.»

INNOVATOR TYPE: EXPERIMENTAL

Although he is the creator of the new Peruvian cuisine concept, his story reveals Gastón Acurio as a highly experimental innovator, who, instead of taking a great leap at a very young age, began with the sure thing, French cuisine, and later took innovative risks step by step, trial and error. He refers that those steps were "gut feelings [...] [like] the mistakes that inspiration leads you to make, and the feeling that you are playing for everything or nothing". These made him what he is, although today, Acurio says that he has a slightly "less gut feeling" view.

«It's true that if we hadn't used our gut feelings and been spontaneous in the beginning, we probably wouldn't have done most of the things we did, right? From the fact of leaving Law to study Cooking; or open a restaurant in the midst of the Sendero Luminoso times; or to stop using French products to use Peruvian products, knowing that your customers were going to leave; or of making a television program where your business was not shown, but those of other people were and everyone told you that you were helping the competition with that. Or take a rental of USD 80,000 on the San Francisco piers because the place was facing the sea, in a city that did not know Peruvian food, and set up a restaurant with two hundred and fifty chairs and the day you open is Black Monday 2008, the day the US economy crashed. Having survived Black

Monday in San Francisco, we felt invincible, moved to New York the following year and closed within four months. We made so many mistakes because of overconfidence. But mistakes are also invaluable because they give you very important lessons. We learned that, before starting a new project, we have to study if it is the right time, if it is the right concept, if it is the right place, if the conditions are right for that moment... I imagine that it is normal that, with time, you become more of a planner, more cautious.»

THREE PRODUCTS YOU WOULD TAKE TO SPEND A YEAR ON A DESERT ISLAND

Acurio answers this question as follows:

«Well, potatoes and chili. It's because all the dishes in Peru have potatoes and chili. Virtually every one of them. And since it's an island, lemon, right? Because you're going to eat fish? If I add lemon, I already have my ceviche.»



Isabel Álvarez Novoa

EL SEÑORÍO DE SULCO

“Peru is a culture melting pot and one can see that in food.”

ÁLVAREZ NOVOA

A sociologist and cook, Isabel Álvarez Novoa is among the pioneers of Peruvian cuisine who worked to preserve its identity. She is one of the great promoters of traditional Peruvian cuisine. Álvarez, together with her mother Julia Novoa, were the founders of the El Señorío de Sulco restaurant in 1986. She is led the way to the Andean Countries Cuisine Congresses and was head of the research team that achieved the declaration of the *picanteras* and *chicherías* in Peru as cultural heritage. She is convinced that, in recent years, no cultural expression in Peru unites Peruvians of all social sectors and all generations more genuinely than cooking.

Currently, the cuisine of Señorío de Sulco is in charge of her son, chef Flavio Solórzano.

BEGINNINGS

Isabel Álvarez is Julia Novoa's daughter, a separated woman who, at the age of twenty, had to take care of her three children on her own. “My mother was a magnificent cook for us,” Álvarez says, but not professionally. Upon becoming a sociologist, Álvarez surprisingly discovered the disdain with which her profession viewed cooking.

«This is why I got into cooking, a constructive protest. Universities in general do not take up the subject of cooking. An example: The Latin American Association of Sociologists is about seventy years old, and had never included a working table on cooking or food, until recently.»

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: FORMAL EDUCATION

She toured Peru in the eighties while working on an academic project as a communicator. “There I drank, I understood, I felt, I suffered, I was happy and I projected what my country could be,” she says. Back then, when Isabel Álvarez began studying

Peruvian food, the Andean mountain region of Sulco was isolated from the rest of the country and little was known about its products and culinary history. Regarding this, Álvarez points out: “I toured Peru and there I understood even more the historical value of biodiversity, the link between the peasant and the land and the potential that Peru had, which was invisible in the cities.”

To deepen and understand the inward look that occurred in the cuisine of Peru, Álvarez has led an ambitious multidisciplinary research project entitled *Recognizing and Revaluing the Regional Cuisines of Peru*. The project generated research papers on the cuisine of six regions of Peru (Apurímac, Ayacucho, Cajamarca, Huánuco, Junín and Lima) and was published by the School of Communication Sciences, Tourism and Psychology of the San Martín de Porres University. The research process continues and she is currently working on four more regions (Arequipa, Cuzco, Tacna and Ica).

«In 2003, at the San Martín de Porres University, we created a movement that we took to all of the Americas. It marks a milestone in the Americas. Why? Because we brought together social science researchers with natural science researchers. We considered cooking from two fundamental sides... The great evil of culture is the one-dimensional view.»

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: IN-HOUSE TRAINING

She has no formal cooking training, but says she is a “manager” by her mother, a “great cook of very well done home-made things.”

She refers to her childhood: “I had no father and my mother sacrificed herself for her three children. On my birthdays, everyone wanted to come because they knew my mother cooked.” When an institutional crisis erupted in the country in the late 1980s, Álvarez considered opening a restaurant. Regarding her

intention, she said: "... that it had to translate the essence of what I saw in Peru [and that it served] the same things we do every day, but very well done." Álvarez opened El Señorío de Sulco together with her mother in 1986, in the traditional Surco district downtown area. The development of this undertaking was a natural continuity in her line of research and prior to the international recognition of Peruvian cuisine.

Three months later, the Peruvian newspaper, *El Comercio*, published almost an entire page about the restaurant, titled: "A new temple of Peruvian food has emerged."

«Why? Because of our belief. That food that one may see as very simple and homemade, I see it on another level because that's what it is. That heritage we have had of everything pre-Hispanic that we look down at, that was never in me. I am very proud to be Peruvian of Andean origin. That's what we did.»

In 1992, El Señorío de Sulco moved to the Miraflores district, where it is until today.

RESTAURANTS AND INNOVATION

The philosophy that marked and continues to mark the line of El Señorío de Sulco is to recover, revalue, preserve, and innovate Peru's culinary expressions, respecting the essence of its flavors. In other words, as Álvarez puts it, you have to innovate, but with memory.

«When I hear the word new, I have my reservations. Because the sign of the modern is perverse. Novelty has become a value. And that's not true. Zygmunt Bauman, the great sociologist, says that novelty has been made a value and that forces us to believe that if it is not new, it has no value [...].

When it comes to the new, I have my objections because it happens that, when talking about the new cuisine, it seems as if the great cuisine had just emerged now. But we are heirs to a tradition, we are continuators. Please notice that I do not want to say that we are stuck to the past. But if you don't recognize where you're coming from, how do you know where you're standing and, even less, how do you know where you're going? [...].

For example, when one makes a Causa that is hundreds of years old and suddenly demands that the shape be better, and the filling go outside, we do give

it touches of modernity because some are sharing that Causa, that yellow potato we work with in Peru, so that some external elements make it more compatible with today's visual practice. Today we see this very much. Everything has to be nice, new. I relativize that in cooking, because cooking is not done overnight. These are historical processes, slow, where everyone participates. There are no personal creators. Of course, tradition is innovated without asking permission, but you have to first monitor that process.»

WHO INFLUENCED HER?

For Álvarez, her influences come both from the world of sociology (such as from Zygmunt Bauman), from her family (her mother) and from unknown regional chefs whom she met on her trips throughout Peru. Álvarez says: "It is important to acknowledge heritage, tradition, history. Cuisines are living, mutating historical processes".

INNOVATOR TYPE: EXPERIMENTAL

Isabel Álvarez's cuisine, which she conceives as a research process, is based on an experimental approach. Having said this, she says that she incorporates the two ways of innovation, since every project has that duality.

«For example, when the first congress of all the Andean cuisines was held, the congress came about because I integrated an intuition, because I worked with small farmers and I intensely saw the importance of biodiversity. This first congress pointed the way. We joined cuisine with biodiversity.

I'm not saying I'm discovering something; I simply emphasize that we look at it from an interdisciplinary perspective. All my projects have these characteristics. A sensation, I confirm it, I think about it, I think about it again, then suddenly I abandon it, suddenly I take it up again, and crack!»

THREE PRODUCTS YOU WOULD TAKE TO SPEND A YEAR ON A DESERT ISLAND

To this question, Álvarez responds by saying that she would bring an assortment of Peru's native potatoes ("one purple potato, one yellow..."); a Peruvian fruit, such as cherimoya, and a drink, corn *chicha*.

Mitsuharu “Micha” Tsumura

MAIDO



“To climb a step in the kitchen, you have to master the previous rung.”

MITSU HARU “MICA” TSUMURA

Mitsu haru Tsumura, who is known as “Mica”, is the great experimental innovator of Nikkei food in Peru. He is the owner and creator of the Maida restaurant, where he fuses Japanese and Peruvian traditions, a restaurant that was chosen for three consecutive years as the best in Latin America's 50 Best Restaurants and eighth in the world in The World's 50 Best Restaurants.

BEGINNINGS

Tsumura was born in Lima in 1981 to a Japanese father from Osaka and a Nikkei mother, that is, born in Peru from Japanese descent. He speaks Japanese, since he went to visit his grandparents in Osaka every year. Although there was no background of the gastronomic business in his family, he developed a passion for cooking at a very early age. He said his mother had told him that his grandmother cooked very well and that it was something that kept the family united. He did not meet his grandmother, but she was able to convey him her knowledge through Maura, the person who worked wither at home for many years and who came back to work for Tsumura's family when he was 10 years old.

The passion for cooking that Maura awakened in him made Tsumura stop attending soccer training to stay and cook with her. From then on, he cooked for whatever occasion came his way for his family and friends. Regarding this, he refers: “I think that, if you want to define the act of cooking, one cooks and decides to be a cook, in principle, to make people happy. It is a way of delivering happiness.”

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: FORMAL EDUCATION

Despite his passion for cooking, he never thought he could make a career out of it. It was his father who, seeing that passion, made it a condition for him to do so through a university career outside of Peru, so that he would become independent.

He decided to enroll in the Johnson and Wells school in Rhode Island, in the United States, where

he completed four years of college with great success, two years of Culinary Arts and two of Food Service Management. He learned the cuisine of various countries, which he always tried to combine with Peruvian recipes. From this extensive training and his experience, he points out that he has both parts, the chef who seeks to create without thinking about costs and the manager who imposes limits. He highlights the importance of cost management and that many very popular restaurants end up going bankrupt due to poor administrative management.

He always recommends that young people who are starting out in cooking go to study and get experience abroad, and then return and materialize what they have learned in Peru, to generate employment and contribute to knowledge.

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: IN-HOUSE TRAINING

At the age of twenty-one, he returned to Peru and, taking into account his interest in Japanese cuisine, his father advised him that it would be convenient for him to get some experience in Osaka, where he could stay with his grandparents.

He worked two years in restaurants in Osaka. There, an acquaintance of his grandfather introduced him to Mr. Hirai, chef and owner of Seto Sushi, a small place with ten counter chairs inside a commercial area. After giving him a test to make an omelet (a test that demonstrates technique and handling of fire) and to cut some fish, Mr. Hirai informed him that he had to start from scratch washing dishes, that he would not be paid, but that he could eat in the restaurant. “In Japan you begin by looking, without touching anything,” says Tsumura.

Little by little, he worked his way up: he went from cleaning shellfish to understanding Japanese philosophy on how to treat products. He recounts that Mr. Hirai explained the following to him: “If you cook the product badly, you are disrespecting this specimen that has given its life to feed us.” In this way, he learned the importance of taking care of each ingredient and also of recycling the part that is not

used. A part of Maido's creativity is precisely aimed at taking advantage of the shells and scales that are thrown away in other places.

«In Japan I understood that doing things a thousand times is important. That that common phrase that "practice makes perfect" is totally valid. To climb a step in the kitchen, you have to master the previous rung. You cannot skip phases.»

When he came back to Peru, he worked at the Lima Sheraton for six years, where he cooked for US President Barack Obama on his visit to Peru and, as food and beverage manager, hosted banquets for four thousand people. Managing these large events gave him a great insight into logistics and handling large numbers of staff.

Ultimately, he left the hotel at a crossroads when, at the age of twenty-seven, he was offered intensive training to become a general manager, a highly rewarding position. Knowing that he would be leaving to open his restaurant, he took a big risk of not accepting the position.

RESTAURANTS AND INNOVATION

In 2009, he opened Maido, his first restaurant. His main innovation was to introduce and deepen the identity of Peruvian food in Japanese cuisine and revalue Nikkei cuisine. His concept about devising Maido gradually changed. At first, he wanted to do something purely Japanese, but then he decided that he should also have a lot of Peruvian so that he would be unique.

«When I opened Maido, people didn't really know what Nikkei was. What we did first was to make a menu with the classic Nikkei dishes... 'You come to eat Nikkei food, not Japanese food, make it your own'". In the beginning, people ordered only Japanese food, mainly sushi. They didn't ask for the creative dishes. Therefore, he had to invite them. At that time, the public was more reluctant to experiment.»

Maido's first four years were difficult, as he recalls:

«At the beginning, we were making a Nikkei cuisine that was not so well known. It has been no more than five years since this concept has been spread in the world (and we have contributed a grain of sand to make it happen), but, at that time, it was difficult to explain that it was Peruvian cuisine with a Japanese influence. Conceiving, communicating and capturing it cost us, but there are proposals everywhere now.»

WHO INFLUENCED HIM?

His father was the one who always advised him in decisive moments: he encouraged him to study abroad for a university degree; then pushed him to do on-the-job training in Osaka and supported him with his first venture. A clear example of the importance of family environment and its impact on the development of cognitive and non-cognitive skills in people.

In his early days, when he was ten years old, he began to watch a cooking program by Carlos Arguiñano, a great Basque chef, a pioneer of cooking on TV, and by Teresa Ocampo, a Peruvian cook. His programs were very educational and fun at the same time.

«What I really liked and that is why I took a liking to cooking was that Carlos Arguiñano makes cooking look like an act of love, that cooking is fun. While he cooks, he tells a story, a joke, sings, dances, and cooks. This made me associate cooking with joy. I apply that until now. The days that I'm not well, I don't go into the kitchen.»

INNOVATOR TYPE: EXPERIMENTAL

For Tsumura, his experience in Japan allowed him to understand that cooking was difficult and he gradually modeled his experimental and perfectionist approach to the discipline.

«I realized that cutting fish was the most difficult thing in the world. [...] Perfection in cooking does not exist, because otherwise there would be no evolution. If something is perfect it would not be evolutionary, there would be no creativity. Like technology, cooking is always evolving. In the world of creativity and innovation, there is always the fact that you are never satisfied with what you have done. When you reach the highest point, you always realize that you can take it one step further. If you settle for what you've done, you stagnate.»

He considers that having everything planned for the development of a restaurant is almost impossible: "You adjust as things happen. When I plan, nothing ever comes out. I'm a lot into momentum. People who work with me tell me that they often don't know what to expect."

THREE PRODUCTS YOU WOULD TAKE TO SPEND A YEAR ON A DESERT ISLAND

To this question, Tsumura responds:

«Rice, yellow hot pepper and oil. I like to fish, so not fish. I would get everything else.»



Pedro Schiaffino

— MALABAR AND ámaz —

Chef Pedro Schiaffino from Lima has worked to highlight foods from the jungle and Amazon cuisine. He is the owner of the Malabar and ámaZ restaurants in Lima. He is also Executive Chef aboard the M/V Aqua. Schiaffino is known as the “jungle chef” and has been compared to René Redzepi, who renewed Nordic cuisine by developing a cuisine based on the roots of the land, combining local products with new techniques. Sadly, he closed both Malabar and ámaZ due to the pandemic's effects. “We cannot keep the operation without tourism. For us, tourism was 70% of our turnover. Without it, it is not viable. There is no way. We will not open until tourism returns and is consistent.

BEGINNINGS

Pedro Schiaffino was born in the Lima neighborhood of Miraflores in an economically comfortable environment. He grew up in a family led by women, “by a matriarchy”: his great-grandmother, grandmother, mother and three aunts. “One of the reasons why I decided to be a chef is because of this influence from a very young age, at home. For any celebration at home, the food was prepared from scratch,” says Schiaffino. His grandmother dedicated herself to pastry making as a job and he has memories of arriving at his grandmother's house and seeing a very large kitchen with three working mixers, the ovens and all the desserts on top of some counters.

During his childhood, he spent part of the year at the Punta Hermosa beach, where they received many guests and his mother cooked for twenty or thirty people. Another part of the year he spent in Chosica, on the outskirts of Lima, where his maternal family originated and where great celebrations were held, great lunches, prepared entirely by the family. His father, Schiaffino points out, was a collector by nature and collected many objects, including animals. They had a garden in Pachacámac and a butcher shop where many of the animals were sold. His father also collected wines, says Schiaffino.

«He loved drinking wine and had an underground cellar built in the house with a bar. He was among the first in Lima interested in wine and imported wines from Europe and the United States to drink.»

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: FORMAL EDUCATION

Schiaffino graduated from **The Culinary Institute of America** (New York) in 1997, and did a master's degree at the Italian Culinary Institute for Foreigners.

“Things just happened very naturally,” says Schiaffino. He was not a very good student because he suffered from attention deficit disorder and was hyperactive. His great dream was to be a veterinary biologist, but he had to admit that pursuing that career was going to be very difficult for him. While he was selling fish, a friend of his (the also well-known chef Carlos Testino) told him that he was going to work in a restaurant and Pedro followed him in the summer of 1994.

«I actually started to work out of obligation, but then I realized that I liked cooking and I decided to take it up. I was looking for something that would make me happy and that would allow me to build future economic success.»

Schiaffino relates that he went to study in the United States because his father told him that if he was going to dedicate to gastronomy, he should go to the best places. At that time there were already other people studying gastronomy and he began to talk about it as an interesting profession with a future. Coque Ossio, the son of the late Marisa Giulfo, a chef who was very active in the gastronomic scene, was in his last year, about to graduate from the Culinary Institute. “My father and I talked with Coque, he excited us a lot and I decided to apply”, summarizes Schiaffino.

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: IN-HOUSE TRAINING

Before leaving for the United States, Schiaffino worked at the Sheraton, Rosa Náutica, Pabellón de Caza and Muelle Uno in Lima. His first major jobs in cooking, however, came after his studies at the Culinary Institute. He had the idea of working in Asia, at the Raffles Hotel in Singapore, and was accepted as an intern: “I wanted to make a cuisine more linked to Asia than to Europe, a Peruvian cuisine.”

At that time, there were problems between Peru and Malaysia (an ally of Singapore) and Schiaffino could not get a visa. So his uncle Carlos Raffo, the former Peruvian ambassador in London, advised him to go to Italy and Schiaffino got a scholarship to do so. There, while in Italy, he worked at Dal Pescatore with chef Nadia Santini and with Piero Bertinotti at Ristorante Pinocchio (with two Michelin stars), a very difficult job to get, since Piero had never received students with that scholarship and was, generally, quite closed off.

«I lived in the restaurant basement for three years and then in an apartment next door. I was like part of the family and I didn't leave the place. There were months without me seeing the light of day. I didn't question much. I did it simply out of enthusiasm and the desire to learn and work.»

He tells that, after the service (which ended at midnight), Piero, he and others sat at the table in the room and stayed talking about gastronomy until dawn. "And we did this three times a week, at least," he says. During this period, he also began to look at what was happening in Spain, where it was the time of El Bulli's effervescence, and he wanted to go work there. But he reports that Piero told him not to go. According to him, he told him: "You need to train as a cook at home, in your city, in your country. You already have the foundation and an idea".

RESTAURANTS AND INNOVATION

Since he was in contact and worked with good products with a lot of local identity during his years in Italy, Schiaffino began to focus on finding the best local products when he returned to Peru. "So, I began to look for those ingredients in Peruvian cuisine, or more or less similar inputs that would allow me to build my own identity".

With this mentality, Schiaffino began to experiment with Amazonian ingredients in 2010. He is also a promoter, together with Andrea Ortiz de Zevallos, of the NGO Despensa Amazónica, which promotes projects to value these inputs. In 2019, he won the **American Express Latin America's 50 Best Restaurants Icon Award**.

WHO INFLUENCED HIM

His work with Nadia Santini and Piero Bertinotti in Italy had a great influence on his ideas about haute cuisine, since there he learned how a cook should think about his routine, work and supplies - a very important subject. Regarding this, he refers that "Italy has a lot in terms of locality, local products, identity and work with the territory". Through Bertinotti, he met Carlo Petrini, the preacher of slow food, and Petrini's ideas about "Kilometer Zero" and territory greatly influenced Schiaffino. The territory is a value of Italian cuisine and a tool to build the future and defend an identity and heritage, he refers. "That and working with Piero kind of gave me the tools to go back home and start building that myself."

In addition, during his stay in Italy, Schiaffino returned to Lima several times and, in an interim of eight months, he worked at La Gloria, a Mediterranean restaurant owned by Rafael Osterling. There he learned to understand the tastes of the richer Lima public who go to haute cuisine restaurants.

INNOVATOR TYPE: EXPERIMENTAL

Schiaffino is a classic experimental innovator, following his intuitions and learning through trial and error. When he started Malabar, he did not want to do Amazonian cuisine, but Peruvian cuisine. However, after a few years, he came to Amazonian cuisine.

«First you always do something out of inspiration and you have to do trial and error to understand. Concern, intuition, feeling what I do and believing that I can do it have always been there before making a decision or undertaking a project, a path or a job. So yes, I improvise.»

His projects from Malabar to ámaZ began both with his trips to Iquitos and with the need for them to be economically attractive for producers in the area.

«I wanted a product and I wanted to develop that product and have it in my kitchen. I was trying to do it with Malabar, but I realized that I needed much more purchasing power or have more consumption as a restaurant. So I said: "I am going to create a concept to be able to move this diversity more and to be able to contribute more to the development of Amazonian cuisine." And this is how ámaZ was created.»

Schiaffino points out that he didn't think much about the concept before and it was only in ámaZ that he began to understand what a restaurant concept was. About this, he points out: "So for many in Lima it was somehow innovative because no one had conceptualized Amazonian cuisine or taken it to a professional level."

THREE PRODUCTS YOU WOULD TAKE TO SPEND A YEAR ON A DESERT ISLAND

To this question, Schiaffino answers between laughs:

«Hot yellow pepper, by all means. I cannot live without chili. With chili I am happy and, well, with whatever is found on the island. I think I could survive just fine on an island.» Then he adds cassava: *«Cassava is everything.»*

Bernardo RocaRey

NOVOANDINA CUISINE CREATOR



“I called Novoandina food with the intention of showing Peruvian culture.”

BERNARDO ROCA REY

Bernardo Roca Rey produced innovations in a wide variety of activities, gastronomy, viticulture and journalism. With a degree in Biological Sciences from the University of Seville (Spain) and a diploma in Chemistry from the University of Lausanne (Switzerland), he was a member of the Board of Directors of Empresa Editora El Comercio SA, president of the Peruvian Society of Gastronomy (APEGA) and founding member and journalistic director of Portal Espacio360. He was also elected president of the Peruvian Press Council. Outstanding journalist and prominent gastronomy promoter, died in 2022 at the age of 77.

BEGINNINGS

Member of a family of journalists, publishers of *El Comercio* daily of the El Comercio group when he was thirteen years old, his grandfather, who was the daily's director, would take him to the newspaper at the end of the afternoon and he would help him close it. From a very early age, he learned the trade, to take photographs and at the age of seventeen he was already signing articles and taking photographs.

In addition, he started two television channels (one of which is the TN channel, a news channel) and three newspapers: *Gestión*, *Perú21* and *Trome* (a tabloid).

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL

He went to school in Switzerland and later returned to study journalism but ended up studying subjects that he had not studied back home. "I decided to cultivate that other part of me that had not been cultivated and I began to study chemistry."

Some of his roommates were studying at L'Ecole Hotelier, which made hospitality a second career while he was studying chemistry. He also completed a Bachelor's degree in biology. His microbiology studies were useful for him to create the wines that his winery produces in Peru.

This training linked to the exact sciences provided him with the scientific methodology to engage in gastronomy. "Not as a restaurateur wanting to

make money but wanting to work for my country. I reached a point where gastronomy became essential in my life," he added.

INNOVATION

In Switzerland he imagined **Novoandina** (Novo-Andean) cuisine.

«I really missed my life in Lima, the food from Lima, and I even ended up making pachamanca, which is food cooked in a pit in the ground. I gave almost all the dishes a very hotel profile and invented something that, when I returned to Peru, I called Novoandina food with the intention of showing Peruvian culture, which is a millenary culture. The fact that it is one of the cradles of human culture means that we have very deep roots, and what Novo-Andean cuisine was trying to do was bring out that culture that is held captive in the Andes.»

He created a winery where he made wines with Peruvian strains. Some of his wines were reviewed in the Washington Post and other international media. His most successful wine is the Plenilunium de Luna Negra, which currently is the most important in Peru. This wine is served in restaurants like Central and other great restaurants.

TYPE OF INNOVATOR: CONCEPTUAL

Roca Rey used the scientific method to develop a new type of Peruvian cuisine: Novoandina.

THREE PRODUCTS YOU WOULD TAKE TO SPEND A YEAR ON A DESERT ISLAND

With his conceptual approach, he pointed out that the products would undoubtedly have to be cultivable to be able to reproduce them. He emphasized:

«They must be reproducible endlessly. In other words, I would have to bring some of the best protein-rich products we can grow. I am referring to proteins like lysine, which is the essential amino acid, and this could be quinoa, for example.»



Mónica Huerta

LA NUEVA PALOMINO

“Visit our past, and send it to the future, to innovate based on our past.”

MÓNICA HUERTA

Mónica Huerta is a renowned chef from Arequipa who works with ancestral cooking techniques in her La Nueva Palomino “picantería”, in addition to preserving and disseminating them. She also seeks to highlight the value of Arequipa’s typical products, such as black corn, which is almost not grown anymore.

BEGINNINGS

Mónica Huerta was born into a family with a long tradition of “picantera” cooks. She proudly tells that her mother, her aunts, grandmothers, great-great-grandmother were all cooks at the traditional *picanterías*, restaurants where regional spicy hot food and chicha de *guiñapos* (black corn beer), both pre-Hispanic legacy preparations, are served, she points out. However, she says that as a child she did not like the spicy hot food because she felt that it took her mother’s attention away from her.

Huerta did not want to carry on her family tradition. When her mother was diagnosed with a terminal illness, the two months she had left to live gave them the opportunity to get to know each other and learn about the family tradition.

«Those two months were very, very beautiful. She allowed me to caress her. They (the picanteras women) were not used to physical contact; their work was very hard. They were women leaders. There was always a matriarchy. For a long time, society never forgave them for being so independent. That made them tough, but at the same time very loving. The greatest expression of love for them was serving a plate of food.»

Through a notary, her mother expressed the wish that Huerta continue running the restaurant for six years. While doing some paperwork for the will in the public records, she found a will from 1895 where a great aunt had left the *picantería* to her

grandmother and one from the 1930s, in which her grandmother bequeathed it to her mother. In all cases, the successor was asked not to close it for six years. “That changed my life. I definitely understood that I had to continue. The legacy was me.” However, she didn’t know how, since she didn’t have the resources or the knowledge, and besides, she didn’t like the job.

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: IN-HOUSE TRAINING

Learning the ancient cooking techniques was mainly through on-the-job training and learning by doing. After buying her part from her sister, who lived in the United States, to continue with the family tradition, she went notebook in hand to her aunt’s house to see and learn how the dishes were cooked. As she went through the process, she began to remember how her mother did things. That experience helped her realize that the flavors created by her mother, her aunts and her grandmother were engraved on her palate.

«And I cooked. And I felt that she did it well. And that encouraged me so much. Almost no people came to the picantería. We started with a table with four clients. The room had ten tables, but we could barely fill one table... And that’s how this story begins, this story full of love.»

RESTAURANTS AND INNOVATION

The distinctive feature of La Nueva Palomino is innovation based on tradition: knowing each ancestral technique, each product and adding value on it. All their techniques use pre-Hispanic utensils. All is prepared by hand, like hundreds of years ago. They do not have a technical kitchen; they do not use electric tools.

Value is also added through improved customer service at La Nueva Palomino:

«So, we did everything the way we would like it ourselves. And this is how, for example, people came in and were welcomed by someone who took them to a table especially set for them. Service and security. And easy paying.»

Improving service while preserving the old ways was a great challenge and is part of the innovations in restaurant organization, which required a great effort.

Cooks and media from other countries began to pay attention to traditional cuisine with ancestral techniques even if La Nueva Palomino had not made any publicity efforts. They wanted to see how they those techniques were both preserved and innovated.

«...that these same cooks can learn to mutiky, a Quechua word that means 'roast, toast, clear a garlic clove', and can, in their recipes, get more out of a dish, that is, visit our past, and send it to the future, to innovate based on our past.»

WHO INFLUENCED HER?

Her greatest influence comes from her ancestors. Mónica Huerta comes from a family tradition passed from generation to generation. Her husband Rudy, who manages the restaurant, has accompanied her throughout her journey.

TYPE OF INNOVATOR: EXPERIMENTAL

Monica Huerta is an experimental innovator. She grew professionally without planning. The Nueva Palomino evolved gradually, always supported by the permanent search for the origins of the spicy food. She does not believe in generalizations and recognizes the difficulty of transmitting experimental knowledge. "We never looked at another person because we know that every business is unique. It's like a person. So, my business is unique and it must have my essence, it must have my soul, it must have my spirit".

She considers that one of the keys to her experimentation was always targeting the local Arequipa public. "It is advice that I also give to some chef friends, because I believe that, fundamentally,

before thinking of an outside public, you the local public have to like you. That is basic, so that you do not lose your essence".

THREE PRODUCTS YOU WOULD TAKE TO SPEND A YEAR ON A DESERT ISLAND

To this question, Huerta answers:

«Chicha is so fundamental in its different stages of fermentation that it is used for all the picantería dishes. I cannot live without chicha. I would take my own corn to make chicha. I would get a mortar on that island, one big stone and another stone. I would take hot chilies and I think with that I would be happy.»

Tomás “Toshi” Matsufuji

AL TOKE PEZ



“I imagine a meal and in my mind, I already know how to fix it.”

TOMÁS “TOSHI” MATSUFUJI

Tomás “Toshi” Matsufuji is the son of Darío Matsufuji, one of the pioneers of Nikkei cuisine in Peru and founder of La Cocina de Darío restaurant. After the death of his father, he decided to close the famous restaurant and open Al Toke Pez, a very different restaurant from La Cocina de Darío. Regarding this risky decision and his commitment to innovation, he refers:

«My father's restaurant was kept alive with the idea of keeping the memory of him alive. But it had a cap. He would have to live with the customers who were already there and he was not going to be able to change the menu much. What happens is that he wanted to do something of his own. I quit chemistry to keep his legacy alive, but opening Al Toke Pez transformed that legacy. I use the same techniques, I value great products and have the knowledge necessary to work with them.»

BEGINNINGS

Tomás Matsufuji's family has been dedicated to gastronomy for several generations. His great-grandfather immigrated to Peru from Japan but made money in Bolivia with a restaurant. So, he brought his son, the father of Tomás's father. His grandmother was an excellent cook.

His father's family was also the founder of one of the first Japanese food restaurants in Peru, the Matsuei Sushi Bar. To do this, they brought two Japanese chefs to work in the restaurant. Both became famous: Nobu Matsuhisa, one of the most successful chefs in the world, and Toshiro Konishi, who became an icon in Peru. “These two started what would become, let's say, the basis of Nikkei food in Peru,” says Matsufuji.

His father passed away in 2009 and La Cocina de Darío closed on May 15, 2011, a decision taken by Matsufuji and his mother because, although the restaurant had a certain clientele and a good reputation, it was not an economic success.

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: FORMAL EDUCATION

After studying Agricultural Engineering at the La Molina National Agrarian University, he had the opportunity to go to England on an internship to develop macrocycles for seawater desalination and later get a Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of Surrey.

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: IN-HOUSE TRAINING

Matsufuji decided to join his father's restaurant after finishing his Ph. D. and returning to Peru, in part, because his specialty, pro molecular chemistry, was not a developed field in Peru.

Regarding his foray into cooking, he says: “A few months later, my father developed a heart condition. So [I started to work as] manager of the restaurant, and totally immersed in shopping, and learning”. He affirms that, for him, it was a really easy process because he had always worked with his father in the kitchen one way or another. “It was simply putting into practice what I had previously learned.” He realized that he liked that a lot even if before he had avoided getting into cooking because most of his cousins and nephews were already in that business, and he wanted to do something else.

RESTAURANTS AND INNOVATION

Tomás Matsufuji is persuaded cooking gives him the opportunity to innovate, whether with the ingredients or small refinements that may be imperceptible to the customer, but that make a big difference to him.

In addition, his father was one of the first to start making ceviche with raw fish on the spot. Before, fish was marinated in lime juice for five hours. “My father tried to introduce a bit of the sashimi technique, the cutting, the preservation of the fish, and always displaying the fresh fish in a display case.”

Upon closing La Cocina de Darío, Tomás decided to open another restaurant with a more massive concept – “totally popular”, he points out – not only for the high purchasing power fringe, but to have a better business. Taking inspiration from fish-and-chip takeaways, he designed a restaurant, Al Toke Pez, which was only open from 12 noon to 2 p.m. to serve good fast food to the growing middle class. It was a time of economic growth and changes in society. People didn't have much time to cook. “A lot of people loved this concept of a no-frills restaurant that serves good food,” he says.

With Al Toke Pez, Matsufuji says that his innovation was to limit his menu to no more than eight well-known dishes and not change them too often: “People don't want complicated things, names that they don't know and that you have to explain to them. They don't want to take risks. People's wishes and appetite are satisfied with three dishes that have different flavors, but complement each other well.”

WHO INFLUENCED HIM?

Matsufuji says that the two people who had the most influence on his career as a cook were his father and his mother.

«My mother is an amazing cook, and she knows as much as or more than my father. And my father has always been a talent in the kitchen, a genius. In other words, whatever he did, he did amazingly well. He had that talent for improvisation, for raw creativity that you don't see very often.»

From the world of Nikkei cuisine, he mentions Humberto Sato and Toshiro Konishi as references. He also professes admiration for Gastón Acurio: “He is someone who has done a lot for Peru.” He says that

he is not a big fan of international chefs: “I don't know much, I'm not one of those who follows what is being done around the world.”

TYPE OF INNOVATOR: CONCEPTUAL

Tomás Matsufuji has a conceptual approach to innovation and considers that “ideas come out ready-made”. He describes his way of working as a combination of the conceptual and the intuitive, based on experience. “I imagine a meal and in my mind, I already know how to fix it. Simply, the only thing I do is cook and make it real when cooking it.”

THREE PRODUCTS YOU WOULD TAKE TO SPEND A YEAR ON A DESERT ISLAND

Matsufuji answers:

«I would take dehydrated meat, either fish or beef, because it lasts a long time and gives you good protein value. I would definitely take water with me, because no one can live without water. And, well, the third one would have to be something fancy, right? I think it's not a good thing, but I would bring a bottle of Coke.»



/ 53 /

“Traditional cuisine, precisely because it is traditional, does not allow, sometimes, much innovation.”

JOSÉ DEL CASTILLO

José del Castillo learned at the D’Gallia Haute Cuisine school and has the experience of living a life-time in the restaurant founded by his mother, from whom he learned the secrets of ancient “criolla” cuisine. He is the owner of the restaurant La Red, in Lima. He developed his own style focused on fish and shellfish, combined with the original “criollo” touch. Currently, José del Castillo is chef and owner of the Isolina Taberna Peruana restaurant.

BEGINNINGS

When he was eight years old, his mother took the risk of opening a restaurant to earn a living, so from that age, he was involved in the cooking business. At no time did she think of it as a passion or to make a career in Peruvian gastronomy, since, at that time, Peruvian gastronomy did not enjoy its present status.

«For her it was that: to open a business that could pay for the education of her four children. The only thing she always had was the desire to have her own business. It could be a stationery store, a gift shop, a convenience shop, a pharmacy. But it ended up being a restaurant.»

So, I found myself from a very young age in that restaurant environment, never working or cooking because I was quite small, but we always had lunch at the restaurant. We lived nearby and then it was a lot of going to the house, coming back in the summers, helping her in the business.»

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: FORMAL EDUCATION AND IN-HOUSE TRAINING

He became fully involved in the business proper following his older brothers’ steps. “But more than anything to be with her and accompany her, more to be with her than because I liked the business.”

He studied business at the university, sharing his study hours with time at the restaurant working with his mother.

«At 48 years old, it has been the only job I have ever had, and she has been my only boss... one of the toughest bosses I can think of. I did not have any kind of privilege because I was her son, but on the contrary, work was much harder.»

When he got his business degree, he decided to go to cooking school. “To round out the profession a bit and knowing that I was going to run the restaurant.” That allowed him better understand how to run a restaurant. Studying gastronomy, he realized that he liked it, that he knew how to do it and that it was what he preferred to do. Around 1999, at the time when Peruvian cuisine began to take off, he began to get more into cooking and his mother made room for him to run the restaurant.

At one point, he decided to focus on cooking only. He gave up the administrative and financial side, first to his brothers and then also to other partners.

«I never ran the business directly again. Not because I did not know how to do it, but because I thought that we, cooks, have this passion that sometimes makes us not to pay attention to the bottom line ... that sometimes to do our job we don’t realize that obviously at the end of the day, this is business.»

RESTAURANTS AND INNOVATION

José del Castillo’s main innovation was to break away from the traditional ways of running a restaurant. He introduced concepts that he learned in his formal education stage, both in administration and in cooking.

«Traditional cuisine, precisely because it is traditional, does not allow, sometimes, much innovation, rather where we can make innovations is in the equipment, the

business processes, but not in designing the food itself; otherwise, we would be manipulating tradition and it would no longer be tradition.»

As for cuisine, he modified a menu that had remained unchanged for twenty years, to include new dishes, but preserving the homemade and traditional style of the restaurant. He shares that “cevichería dishes, adopted from seafood restaurants, but giving them a more homemade touch... I changed the tableware a little and introduced some dishes that I felt could be more attractive.”

He introduced a management and innovations system. “For example, in La Red costing was never well managed and there was no way of knowing if the business could be profitable or if we should push a dish that was more profitable than others.”

Authenticity is Isolina’s trademark.

«At Isolina we have not invented a story: Isolina is a true story, it all about my mother. So, this story that is told, this story that one lives when you go to the restaurant we have in Barranco, when you walk into the tavern, in this old house, you are learning about Isolina’s life.»

WHO INFLUENCED HIM?

His mother is the person he admires most. Like other chefs, he believes that Gastón Acurio has been a personal source of inspiration. He holds he is:

«...the person who managed to create real cooks, the person who made this change real [...].

Gastón had, at that time, a very important television program in which they called him King Midas, because all the businesses he touched became successful. So he contributed a lot at that time, he helped to make many chefs and their restaurants well known [...]. The Roca brothers are among the chefs that I admire a lot lately for their gift with people and for their career.»

TYPE OF INNOVATOR: CONCEPTUAL

Although he has an impulsive character, del Castillo is a great planner. He is very analytical, and his innovations consist of applying well-defined concepts. “I think that no matter how small the undertaking or idea that we have, we have to think about it a lot, we have to think about it, we have to analyze it, we have to ask and consult. You have to investigate, no matter how small.”

He considers teamwork very important and declares that Isolina was his idea, but that it is the product of teamwork with different styles of thinking.

«I used to think that, since I sourced from tradition, innovation and technology had absolutely nothing to do in my kitchen, but they decidedly do. Well, not for tradition itself, but to speed up the process. To improve processes. To enhance business profitability. To do more and better things. I do believe they are important.»

As a conceptual innovator, the transmission of clear concepts is easy and of utmost importance to him. “Not only do I believe that the language in cooking is the same as in the entire universe, in the entire world, but also in the characteristics of the cooks, in their personality.”

THREE PRODUCTS YOU WOULD TAKE TO SPEND A YEAR ON A DESERT ISLAND

To this question, he answers:

«A book, definitely. I would ask for a photo of my daughter so as never to stop seeing her, to always being able to look at her. But the product that has to do with the kitchen, I think is definitely a knife, a lighter and a pot. I think that with that I would not need anything else, besides I have a fire, I have the tool and I have the container. With that I could easily survive.».

Israel Laura

KAÑETE



“Hay que aunar y hacer que la gente acepte su propia identidad comiendo lo que siempre ha comido y que no se avergüence por comer quinua o mote”.

ISRAEL LAURA

Israel Laura studied at the Hofmann School of Hospitality, in Barcelona, where his studies of Catalan haute cuisine took him to know some of the best restaurants in the northeast of Spain.

This journey gave him a new perspective on the food of his home country: “I realized that Peru had a varied culinary tradition, just like Spain, or maybe even greater,” recalls Israel, who returned to Peru to create his own project. “So I started interpreting Peruvian cuisine in my own way and in my own style.”

Kañete, his Lima restaurant is what Laura defines as “the new criollo cuisine”. His cooking combines traditional flavors incorporating the creativity of the great restaurants of Barcelona. Like Gastón Acurio, his approach uses concepts and techniques that he learned in Europe and combines them with traditional techniques and ingredients from Peru.

He believes Peruvian society has to rediscover its own identity and history.

«It is necessary to unite and make people accept their own identity by eating what they have always eaten and not be ashamed to eat quinoa o, mote. That cultural mestizo blending of our cooking and races is our main wealth. The diversity of techniques, the diversity of products, the diversity of recipes.».

Laura divides the new Peruvian cuisine into two phases: the first is the era of Gastón Acurio, when he and other Peruvians began to show Peruvian cuisine to the world. “I think Gastón was at the right time. A character or someone that was missing and who became a standard-bearer”. The second phase, which still is in the making, is the inward opening of Peruvian cuisine for Peruvians. “I mean that it has to be a more open, more democratic type of cooking,” says Israel.

BEGINNINGS

Israel Laura is the youngest son of a couple whom he calls “humble [...] provincials” from the Andean region living in Lima. After closing her grocery store in downtown Lima, his mother took Israel to Barcelona in 1992, at the height of the Shining Path crisis, when he was fifteen. Israel finished high school in Barcelona, where he was the only foreigner in the school. “That gave clear ideas and make me see Peru from a different point of view.”

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: FORMAL EDUCATION

In Barcelona, he studied art and wood carving sculpture at the School of Arts and Crafts. His first choice was wood because he liked to work with his hands, but he didn’t pursue that path because a career in restoring antique furniture was too expensive. Since it was difficult for him to adapt to the educational system and the university scared him, he decided to pursue a technical degree and chose cooking. He had the means to pay because he had been working for two years in a factory, making high and medium voltage cable sheathings.

He studied cooking, specifically Catalan haute cuisine, at the Hofmann School of Hospitality in Barcelona. “That’s when I realized why cooking was really my thing,” he says.

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: IN-HOUSE TRAINING

He left the Hofmann School to work in a four-star hotel, washing greens, carrying onions and peeling vegetables. “Little by little I started as a kitchen assistant in that hotel. Then I went to another hotel

as a kitchen helper and dishwasher at the same time”, he refers. Later, he became head of the party and then head of the kitchen.

From that moment on, he decided to delve deeper into cooking. He worked in La Alameda, a Basque restaurant with a Michelin star and later in several restaurants in Catalonia with Michelin stars. He relates that, after a decade in the kitchen, after having lunch with a forty-year-old colleague who was suffering from extreme fatigue, he realized that his life as a chef in Barcelona “was not life” and decided to take a break and return to Peru in 2007. Upon his return, he found a booming gastronomic sector: “There were some compatriots and colleagues who told me about Gastón, Gastón, Gastón. When I arrived, there was a cooking boom that was totally unknown in Spain at that time”. His first encounter with Peruvian cuisine was an internship at Astrid & Gastón. “That was a year of reckoning with myself,” he refers to his return to Peru.

RESTAURANTS AND INNOVATION

After teaching cooking classes at various Peruvian universities, launching his television show and running a restaurant financed by an investor, he decided to open his own restaurant. In 2015, he opened Kañete restaurant in his mother's house, where he sold groceries and had an Internet cafe. Unlike most of the signature restaurants in Lima, in the well-off neighborhoods of Miraflores, San Isidro or the bohemian district of Barranco, Israel chose the historic district of Surquillo. “The gastronomic focus is centered on Lima and, within Lima, in San Isidro, Miraflores, Chacarilla (the nice neighborhoods), and this new phenomenon, this new Peruvian cuisine, is oblivious of all the other Lima neighborhoods.”

As an important part of his innovation process, Israel Laura keeps in touch with both chefs from all over Peru, through his television program, and he also periodically returns to Spain to work alongside the best chefs. He did two important internships: at Celler de Can Roca, several times chosen as the best restaurant in the world, and at Pakta, the Nikkei space run by brothers Albert and Ferran Adrià. “I have more than twenty years of experience running various kitchens, but I believe that a chef should always keep learning. It is important to try and visit other kitchens that are not your own”, says Israel.

WHO INFLUENCED HIM?

Although he does not have a person who has influenced him in particular, Israel Laura's mother had a great impact on his career, both from her example—as a woman from the Andean region with little education, who had a great capacity for business and for moving her family business forward—as the inspiration for his first restaurant, which Israel opened in her house.

TYPE OF INNOVATOR: EXPERIMENTAL

Israel Laura is, like many of the revolutionaries of Peruvian cuisine, an experimental innovator, always looking, almost intuitively, for the next step.

«I'm messy; I can't lie. I like to plan and plan things, but above all, I like to improvise,” he says with a laugh. “I like to improvise, and I am always eager to learn, I am curious, I want to see, read and, above all, learn from people. In other words, ‘I know that I know nothing’, as Socrates said.»

THREE PRODUCTS YOU WOULD TAKE TO SPEND A YEAR ON A DESERT ISLAND

To this question, he replies:

«I cannot live without wine. I am used to wine, at lunch and dinner, so I would bring Argentine wine, pisco from Cholo Matías and yellow potatoes.»



Flavio Solórzano

EL SEÑORÍO DE SULCO

**“Many people see it as creativity.
I always say that it is simply that the more you see,
the more you try, the more you know.”**

FLAVIO SOLÓRZANO

Flavio Solórzano is the son of Isabel Álvarez Novoa, the sociologist, cook and one of the great promoters of traditional Peruvian cuisine. He is one of the promoters of Peruvian cuisine who worked to preserve its identity. Currently, the pioneering restaurant that Álvarez Novoa founded, El Señorío de Sulco, is run by Solórzano, who calls it “the champion of the recovery of traditional Peruvian cuisine” and the restaurant that “put the fine linens on Peruvian food tables”. In this cooking, practice rather than theory is a family tradition. Solórzano brought to the restaurant the innovation, the dedication, the strict meticulousness that a technical kitchen demands, together with investigation, creativity and inspiration.

BEGINNINGS

Señorío de Sulco was founded in 1986 by his mother and grandmother when Solórzano was thirteen years old, but he developed a passion for cooking even earlier. He reports that between approximately 1982 and 1985, his grandmother was in great demand to cook for groups of up to thirty people. “She put me in the kitchen and made me her assistant,” he says.

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: FORMAL EDUCATION

Before Solórzano chose to be a cook, his father thought he would choose a more conventional profession. “My father told me ‘You have to be a good lawyer,’” says Flavio. Later, however, his father supported his interest in cooking. At that time, there were almost no professional cooking schools in Peru. Only hospitality training. Therefore, he learned the trade in the restaurant.

“To professionalize, one had to study abroad. But I saw the opportunity rather in the restaurant”, he recounts. However, although he did not study abroad, he made countless trips. “I was clear that I had to go out, learn, come back, go out, learn and come back. That has been a bit of my life.”

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: IN-HOUSE TRAINING

He began working weekends at El Señorío de Sulco since its opening and describes the four years he worked there before graduating from high school as the preparation for everything that came afterwards. He remembers how the restaurant’s concept came about.

«I am very clear about the issue of conceiving the concept, that is a now widespread. You don't create a restaurant if there isn't a concept. She [Álvarez Novoa] used to say: “We have to rescue Lima's cuisine” and she found Sulco, a town that she had already visited.»

After finishing school, he spent all his time at the restaurant. “I moved to the restaurant. I had a small room at the back of it, he says. He spent whole days at the restaurant. I woke up and went to sleep there”.

RESTAURANTS AND INNOVATION

Solórzano shares the innovation of his family restaurant was to bring together the knowledge that existed in Peru, contrary to what most cooks were doing at that time.

«At that time - the beginning of the 1990s - European cuisine, basically French, prevailed in Peru and Latin America. The Señorío de Sulco was the meeting of the wisdom of many women who were already leaving

us, women who were eighty, seventy, ninety years old. I remember all those old ladies who came to the restaurant every weekend to teach us.»

That experience taught him about many ingredients from the interior of Peru, such as fruits from the jungle, a decade before other cooks of his generation.

Regarding the innovations he brought to El Señorío del Sulco, Solórzano highlights he first expanded from Lima cuisine to Peruvian cuisine, which started a movement of sub-kitchens. In this regard, he refers: "We have to talk specifically about what kind of cuisine we fix, if it is from a province, a department. [And five years ago], a process of nationalization, regionalization, purification of cuisines begins."

WHO INFLUENCED HIM?

His mother and his grandmother are the ones who most influenced his career. He also mentions Alain Ducasse "because of the consistency of his proposal. He is firm. He has never been swayed by fads." On the contrary, he refers to admiring the famous chefs of modern innovation, but only up to a point.

TYPE OF INNOVATOR: MODERATE EXPERIMENTAL

In a basic sense, Solórzano has a strongly experimental side. He is one of those who popularized the practice of permanent search for quality and flavor, change for change: "The rice with duck that you ate here five years ago has changed at least twenty times today. So this is what I do."

He also has a conceptual facet. Flavio says that his travels are a source of innovation, that he collects ideas and then puts them into practice when the time is right. For example, he relates that his trips to the south of the United States, precisely to Texas, had a great impact on him. Specifically, the practice of cooking meat in large smokers for a long time at temperatures so low that the lids can be made of wood. That surprised him a lot. Now, years later, that idea came out of the bottom of his "refrigerator", as he calls it, and he is designing a large restaurant concept called Cultura Carne, not only for smoked meat, but a broad concept that also includes dishes such as artisanal hamburgers and whole roasted pork rib. He combines two types of the innovative personality. "There is knowledge that you acquire at work and meets the needs that arise," explains Solórzano.

«All you have is a series of tools there at your disposal that may have been tidied up and put away fifteen years ago. But, at some point, you open the door, pull them out and use them. Many people see it as creativity. I always say that it is simply that the more you see, the more you try, the more you know. It is a great opportunity that I had.»

THREE PRODUCTS YOU WOULD TAKE TO SPEND A YEAR ON A DESERT ISLAND

To this question, he replies:

«I think I would take garlic, onion and chili.»

Héctor Solís

FIESTA MIRAFLORES LIMA GOURMET



“I keep going back to my house and I keep cooking with my mom.”

HÉCTOR SOLÍS

Chef Héctor Solís elevated northern Peruvian food to the category of gourmet food. Solís belongs to the group of young chefs who have contributed to the second wave of the Peruvian food revolution.

Héctor owns the Fiesta Miraflores Lima Gourmet restaurant, which opened in 1996. Specializing in regional food from northern Peru, specifically from Chiclayo, and ranked among the best in its category.

Even though the Miraflores district seemed unsuitable for a regional food restaurant, this restaurant was a hit. Regional food was generally not considered on the menu of the main gourmet restaurants of those. However, Héctor Solís managed to get regional food into the category of great gourmet meals.

The Fiesta Gourmet restaurant opened a branch Tacna, in southern Peru, in 2004, and another branch in Trujillo in northern Peru in 2008. In 2013, it opened La Picantería in Lima, in Surquillo district. It is an informal restaurant in the style of the old northern “picanterías”, where traditional dishes are served. More “picanterías” are on the way.

Héctor Solís has also investigated food from Chiclayo and written a book *Lambayeque. Cooking of a great chieftain*, which took nearly two years of research and compilation of the different foods of the department of Lambayeque.

BEGINNINGS

Héctor Solís Cruz was born in Chiclayo, in the department of Lambayeque, in northern Peru. He has five siblings and is the son of a banker and a confectioner. He recounts that he grew up in family kitchens.

When Héctor was twelve years old, his father left his job at the bank because of undue political pressure and his parents turned the family house into a restaurant. Solís recalls his father told him: “We are going to do something that has never been done in Chiclayo”, the first high-end restaurant in the city serving local food, not European-style food.

«It was totally revolutionary. My father kept in touch with his friends who were still working at the bank and invited them to come to the restaurant. But people would come and he would say: “This one has gone nuts. He has set up a restaurant with rugs and linens, and just to sell seco de cabrito or arroz con pato.»

Héctor Solís started working at the Fiesta restaurant with his brothers and it became a success and a status symbol:

«When Peru’s President arrived in Chiclayo, everyone went to Fiesta. Then they also began to rate us as an expensive restaurant and that’s what we always wanted. [But] we are not just an expensive restaurant, but rather an expensive restaurant that is totally different.»

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: FORMAL EDUCATION

When he graduated from high school at fifteen (he started first grade at five), Héctor traveled to Lima to study economics. When he was offered a position at Banco de Crédito del Perú, his father told him that he wanted to start a business with him in Lima: The Fiesta restaurant in the Lima neighborhood of Miraflores. So, he decided to study cooking at the prestigious Le Cordon Blue institution in Lima. “I went to study there because I needed techniques and processes,” he says.

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: IN-HOUSE TRAINING

He has always worked in the family restaurants, from the opening of the first restaurant in Chiclayo, when he was twelve years old. In 1996, after declining a job offer from Banco de Crédito del Perú, he set up the Fiesta restaurant in Lima with his father, which he still owns.

RESTAURANTS AND INNOVATION

The innovation his family introduced was to adopt the gourmet cuisine concept in regional cuisine, says Héctor. "We transform the same dish into very fine things," he says. Regarding the Fiesta restaurants that the Solís family opened in Chiclayo, Lima, Tacna and Trujillo, he points out that before there was no typical Peruvian cooking at the level it deserved.

WHO INFLUENCED HIM?

Héctor Solís has been lucky enough to visit many kitchens around the world, meeting and cooking with many international chefs. But it is his mother who remains the most important influence in his cooking.

«I keep going back to my house and I keep cooking with my mom who, from a very early age, when I was eleven or fifteen years old, taught me things that I now see on my trips in Europe or Asia: "But I realize I already ate that thirty years ago at home with my mom!" And my mom had never been to any of those places.»

He says that she has a particular and natural gift for presentation, textures and finesse, cooking very refined things out of very humble dishes.

TYPE OF INNOVATOR: CONCEPTUAL

He shares his conceptual approach by noting that:

«First I had that vision and that imagination, the thinking, to be able to visualize something, see something and then land it and put it on paper [...].

But the first thing is, perhaps, an insight. A restaurant may be missing somewhere and you think you can build a restaurant there. For example, that happened to us in Surquillo. We waited until we found the right house for the picantería, but it was occupied. We waited as long as necessary." We kept an eye on the property for two years until the house was released.»

Another example of conceptual innovation is brewing. Since beer in Peru did not pair well with ceviche, he thought of making his own beer. "All was born as we were doing things, out of necessity," he says.

THREE PRODUCTS YOU WOULD TAKE TO SPEND A YEAR ON A DESERT ISLAND

To this question, he replies:

«I 'd have to take my family with me. I have to go with my family and a little water and nothing else.»



Joseph Ruiz

— SOMMELIER, CENTRAL —

Joseph Ruiz Costa graduated as a hotel manager at Cenfotur in 2012. He became salon head and chef sommelier at the Central restaurant owned by Virgilio Martínez and Pía León. Currently, he works at the Don Nico meat restaurant and gives talks and courses for the Wine and Pisco Institute (IDVP). He repeatedly won the award for the best sommelier in Peru. Currently, he is working on several new projects, including Wow Wines, an educational project in which customers receive a package with a couple of wines and Ruiz and his two partners give them a virtual wine tasting class on the Zoom platform.

BEGINNINGS

Born in Peru, Ruiz grew up straddling Lima and New York.

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: FORMAL EDUCATION

Upon returning to Peru in 2004, he began to study tourism and hospitality, which was fashionable at the time. Later, he trained as a sommelier at the IDVIP, in the Lima district of Surquillo.

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: IN-HOUSE TRAINING

While in New York, he started working at a restaurant where his uncle was a chef. "The truth is that it was very gratifying because I began to look at what they did in different services such as the bar, dining room and kitchen," he says. His career as a sommelier began in 2011 at Central, Virgilio Martínez's restaurant, when the hotel where he worked sent him to an event at the restaurant and, because he knew English, they offered him a job. He started as a waiter, but an assistant sommelier was needed and he was given the opportunity.

RESTAURANTS AND INNOVATION

At the time of opening Central, fights between the dining room and the kitchen were common. However, Central put together a team of four sommeliers and, seeing Central's success in teamwork, other restaurants in Lima began to copy that model, often aided by several sommeliers who had worked at Central. Another Central innovation was buying special batches of wine from Peruvian wineries. Later, Ruiz went on to look for small winemakers, something he still does. He says there

is much more research on topics such as the origin of Peru's strains and using pisco grape—normally for pisco—to make wine, a totally different process. "There has been an exchange of knowledge with some producers and even advice and winemakers who already come to Peru from other countries such as Argentina and Chile, which are completely changing the vision of Peruvian wine." He mentions the Tacama winery as a leading Peruvian wine.

WHO INFLUENCED HIM?

Ruiz shares that, of the team that took care of beverages at Central, he was greatly influenced by Gregory Smith, who was the director of beverages for the entire restaurant, and then José Miguel Burga, who was the chief sommelier and also, at that time, the best sommelier in Peru. Then Flor Rey arrived, an Argentine woman who came to Peru to learn about pisco and ended up settling in Peru. Today, she is head sommelier at Mayo, another well-known restaurant. "These three were the pillars that encouraged me to continue studying until now," he says.

TYPE OF INNOVATOR: CONCEPTUAL

Joseph Ruiz presents himself as a conceptual innovator. "It's like I worked in a bubble. I didn't see what was outside because I was completely focused on the restaurant. I practically lived in the restaurant," he explains. That changed when he left Central. "The world outside was something else and I learned a lot. To this day, I'm still learning. But I am more of process person. I try not to rush, but to plan what I have to study."

THREE PRODUCTS YOU WOULD TAKE TO SPEND A YEAR ON A DESERT ISLAND (WINES AND PISCO)

First, he mentions that he would take an Ambrosía Tacama rosé, made from Nielluccio, a grape from Corsica (known as Sangiovese in Italy). As for a white, he points out that he "would take from this same winery the Intipalka, which has totally changed its wines' concept thanks to young winemakers, Argentines in this case. Their Moscatel de Alejandría, is dry, very good, light, easy to drink." Regarding pisco, he mentions a bottle from Gran Maestro's: "It has a chocolaty one that is a blend and is very good."

Malena Martínez

HEAD OF MATER INICIATIVA



“We began to explore Peru looking for different ingredients and we began to travel around Peru.”

MALENA MARTÍNEZ

Malena Martínez is director of the interdisciplinary gastronomic research group known as Mater Initiative. She studied medicine and took courses in nutrition and food industries. Mater's methodologies are science-based and through her work she has brought back dozens of ingredients for plates featured on the menus of Central and other establishments created by innovative Virgilio Martínez and Pía León cooks. Mater Initiative is the think tank that is at the source of the ideas and guidelines that shape the group's projects.

“We focus on research and we are beginning to join the world of academia, always from a perspective that is linked to a specific location,” she says. Currently, Mater operates in Lima and Cusco, but they have plans to explore other regions. “The Amazon is exciting because it is a different ecosystem. There will be other challenges and it will take time”.

About Virgilio Martínez, Mario Vargas Llosa says that he “has skillfully captured the Peruvian essence and has shown the world the extraordinary diversity, richness and creativity of Peruvian cuisine” (Martínez and Bianchi, 2015).

BEGINNINGS

Malena is the sister of chef Virgilio Martínez, who studied and worked a lot outside of Peru. She noticed that Virgilio Martínez wanted to come to Peru to start his own restaurant, but that he had something interesting to offer, something different. Virgilio Martínez had the impression that looking for strange, exotic ingredients and showing them in a menu could be the way to go. The place he created in 2008 is the influential Central restaurant.

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: FORMAL EDUCATION

Malena Martínez graduated from medical school and was a general medical doctor before getting involved in gastronomy.

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: IN-HOUSE TRAINING

As a doctor, Malena worked in the rainforest and then as a general practitioner in Lima for three years.

RESTAURANTS AND INNOVATION

Six years ago, her brother Virgilio Martínez asked her to join him to start an interdisciplinary food-focused research outfit.

«We began to explore Peru looking for different ingredients and we began to travel around Peru. We chose different regions thinking we could broaden the spectrum of ingredient options.

The truth is, [we started] very naively. And I think that's the spirit that needs to be rescued: that naivety of curious people who simply want to know more for the pleasure of knowing more and for the pleasure of later finding ways to make it known.»

At first, it was just her brother and her. She contributed the scientific side and Virgilio the inquisitive side, the part that directed the exploration of the ingredients that were later collected and became part of a cooking proposal.

Later, Mater added research in biology, ecology, and art.

«In these last six years, we have already created a work structure, a methodology, and we have become more formal. So, a cross-disciplinary approach has been cornerstone in our growth, because adding other disciplines to look at the same thing makes our field-work much richer.»

For this reason, research on Peruvian cuisine has had as its foremost objective to make cuisine more interesting by registering biodiversity.

What she did with her brother is something "quite rare" in Peru, she avows.

«This research on food at that time was very new and I have to say that in Peru not much research is done, not many funds are channeled towards research. Many academics in Peru really want to publicize their work, of many years in some cases, and find that gastronomy is a very easy vehicle. Through cooking, it has been possible to pass many messages, about Peru's environment, geography and history.»

Mater's innovation means transferring these messages to gastronomy and making them transformable, turning them into a product.

«Nice academic research work can be done, but we feel that it becomes relevant when it becomes something related to cooking and that you can show it through any of the platforms that we have here.»

WHO INFLUENCED HER?

Virgilio, Malena and Pía are rich sources of mutual inspiration.

TYPE OF INNOVATOR: CONCEPTUAL

Mater has a strong conceptual side as is the design of gastronomic projects through interdisciplinary theories and ideas. For example, a project involves working together in dyeing with local botanics not to ingest, Malena notes, but to dye wool.

«They are projects that, although they are not linked to gastronomy, we find that there is a link, so we force it a bit. But we are thinking that food is also dyed in the kitchen and then we could get some ideas from there... like sending a message by putting some wool on the table, or putting a textile on the table... So, I think that those are messages we are putting into the heads of people who come to consume food.»

We think that we do not focus only on what is consumed, on what is ingested, but on thinking in your mind about what is consumed. A lot of this stuff is very conceptual and could be very ethereal. But, when it comes to materializing them at the table, they have to be understandable and they have to be something that the consumer identifies with.»

In that sense, the idea is to introduce people to difficult concepts through what they are familiar with.

«A certain level of discomfort is important. Discomfort with the unfamiliar. That's fine. That's fair. But it must be only to a certain extent, because if we cross the line and we create discomfort, we like it any-more, it makes me feel challenged. And I may not be willing to take the challenge. Then the experience is somewhat distorted.»

THREE PRODUCTS YOU WOULD TAKE TO SPEND A YEAR ON A DESERT ISLAND

Malena answers:

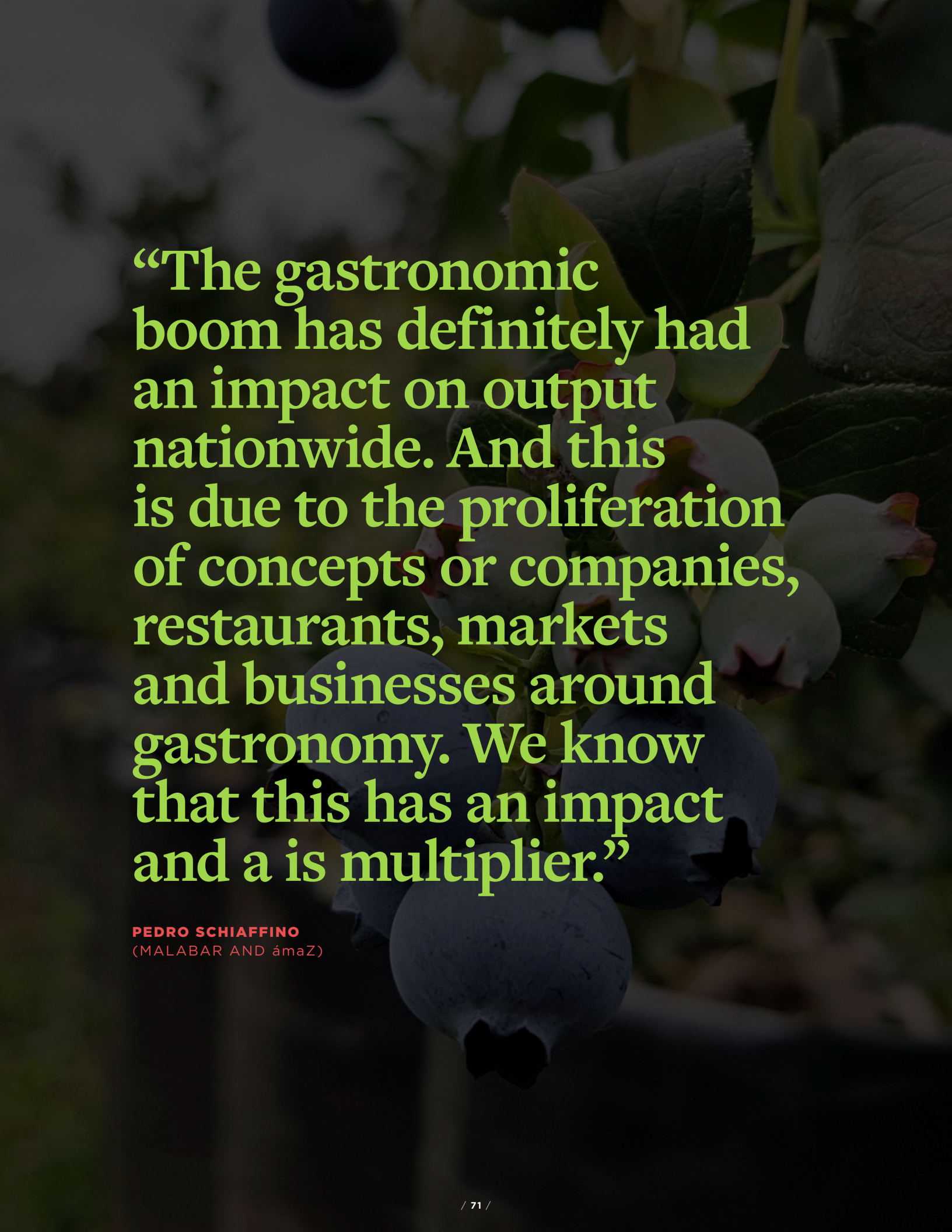
«Cocoa. Because I think it is a very versatile product. I would take also a root or a tuber, particularly mashua, because it seems to me that it concentrates many beneficial properties and has a very strong identity. It seems to me that the roots and tubers carry much of what we are and this level of resilience, this closeness to the land, of being up to the task, and growing stronger ever. I think it also speaks a lot about what we need and want to be.»

And what would be the third? It would have to be a plant because the world of plants and their medicinal uses are fascinating to me. Choosing just one is quite difficult for me. But if need be, it would have to be muña, because I find it to be an extremely interesting aromatic, with many little-known qualities.»

07

Impacts on the agricultural sector





“The gastronomic boom has definitely had an impact on output nationwide. And this is due to the proliferation of concepts or companies, restaurants, markets and businesses around gastronomy. We know that this has an impact and a is multiplier.”

PEDRO SCHIAFFINO
(MALABAR AND ámaZ)

It is not easy to rigorously determine the effects that the gastronomic revolution had on the agricultural sector, but there are several possible channels through which it may have benefited agriculture. In general, there is agreement among the main actors that the explosion of Peruvian gastronomy led to an appreciation of **traditional Peruvian inputs** through an expanded market for these produce that became known and spread locally and internationally.

Pedro Schiaffino points out that “(...) the gastronomic boom has definitely had an impact on output nationwide. And this is due to the proliferation of concepts or companies, restaurants, markets and businesses around gastronomy. We know that this has an impact and it is a multiplier.”

“The native potato, went from being unknown, to be known and sold in supermarkets. There were companies that made native potato chips and sell them abroad.” Israel Laura refers: “Before nobody wanted to eat them because they were small. Instead, now they are a premium product. We have gone from one end to the other [and] more and more are grown.” He adds that the same thing happens with quinoa.

Mónica Huerta considers that the diffusion of Peruvian gastronomy **redirected demand towards traditional agricultural products from Peru**, such as, for example, towards varieties of potatoes that were not well known or local products from Arequipa, such as the pumpkin from the Mina Valley, and onion and garlic from Arequipa. “In the last ten or fifteen years, the people from Lima, in their imagination, must have at least ten or a little more varieties [of potato],” says Héctor Solís.

Along the same lines, Malena Martínez points out that the exposure created by this revolution was extremely important both for Peruvian culture and producers.

“At a point in time, PromPerú and other agencies promoted the value of all these

unique products and for that uniqueness to be recognized abroad. I think that feeling unique is also a determining factor, because we really have unique products. We have products that have come out into the world even without us even noticing. We are the cradle of many products that the world uses today (potatoes, tomatoes), but also many other varieties of produce that are very exclusive and particular.”

She also mentions gastronomy has an effect on a greater production of elaborated inputs than before. “About five years ago, we started manufacturing quality chocolate and not having to wait for it to come from outside. We are becoming much needed specialty quality product manufacturers.”

Gastón Acurio considers that the **greater international focus on innovative and quality gastronomy** has played an important role in the prosperity of the agricultural sector away from with the traditional vision of promoting large-scale commodity industries, such as mining or large-scale production of homogeneous transgenic crops. Not because cooking is going to transform the economic structures of Peru, but because, according to him:

“(...) the example of how, by adding added value to what you have, you can bring opportunities to the world, and open doors and windows, and with that create prosperity in any activity that adds value based on innovation and creativity.”

The challenge posed by gastronomy based on highly heterogeneous artisanal inputs – and many of them produced on a small scale – is both **the preservation of the inputs and the traditional ways of producing them**. Acurio's expectation is that a phenomenon like the one that occurred in the Bordeaux wine region will be generated, where there was an enormous appreciation of small vineyards with particular and unique characteristics that made their preservation profitable.

“Peasant farmers are the guardians of biodiversity,” says Isabel Álvarez emphatically. We need to give producers the recognition they deserve. Without them, we are nothing. We cannot attribute the success of Peruvian cuisine in the last ten years only to our chefs.”

Preservation is easy when it is profitable. A major problem that threatens the profitability of small producers, says Malena Martínez, is the paperwork and regulations that prevent the direct purchase of inputs from small rural producers.

“The efforts of a producer who lives at 4,300 meters above sea level, who does not necessarily have access to a bank, who cannot open an account, are hampered because they have to travel to a distant town where they will find a bank or government agency. This is nonsense. What the state should do is, rather, make it easier to buy their products through a straightforward money transaction. These minor obstacles end up discouraging people from buying directly from a small producer.”

Throughout his career, Acurio has organized important initiatives **to promote and develop gastronomy in conjunction with Peruvian agriculture**, and to consolidate the gastronomic community of Peru. In 2007, he founded APEGA to promote Peru through its cuisine, supplies, and tourist destinations. That same year, he founded, together with the Pachacútec Foundation, the Pachacútec Cooking Institute. He was also the creator of the International Gastronomic Fair of Lima, Mistura 2009, one of the most important gastronomic fairs in the world.

However, Acurio refers:

“Clearly, this is not enough, right? Because our original task was to give visibility to the farmer, but now it is time to transform the social structures of farming. So, the reflection is how can cooking contribute to that, right? On the outside, how do we scale this? We went from forty Peruvian restaurants in 2004 in the world to four thousand in 2019. But we are still far from the sixty thousand Japanese and three hundred thousand Italian restaurants, and that is where the true economic transformation lies. In other words, if one day you were lucky enough to see that there are three hundred thousand Peruvian restaurants like the Italian ones around the world and that only each one of them buys a kilogram of native potatoes a day, that is three hundred thousand kilograms a day of premium potatoes that can change the lives of at least two departments (states) of Peru.”

“Definitely, if there is a market, the producer innovates, produces, maintains and gives you a quality product,” says Blanca Arce Barbosa, executive director of INIA's National Agricultural Innovation Program. According to her,

“Peru has a big opportunity in gastronomy and this has allowed make known certain products that were ignored, such as Andean or Amazon products, because the emphasis was previously on food security produce, conventional products for the family basket.”

She adds the Peruvian gastronomic revolution was precisely what created a market for these producers, and in turn encouraged introducing new technologies and improving outputs. Ancestral products, such as quinoa, and other tubers and Andean grains, she points out, were heavily promoted starting in the 1980s. Before that decade, they were regarded as Andean foods. The enhancement of ancestral products from the Peruvian interior has led Gastón Acurio and Isabel Álvarez to use gourmet guinea pig cuts —developed through INIA research— to “make exquisite guinea pig dishes, something that was not previously possible. They were never consumed in Lima”, says Arce Barbosa.

Another magnificent product from the Andes that reached markets is *tarwi*, a bean with 40% protein. Blanca Arce Barbosa refers that the INIA has released seeds of new varieties of potato, quinoa, *kiwicha*, wheat, and rice. Currently, INIA engages in research and technology transfer. They work together with producers through a participatory research approach.

“Cooperatives [of] cocoa farmers are set up to grow native cocoa varieties targeted at the Swiss market for chocolates because Switzerland buys those varieties,” he says. Right now, organic cocoa and specialty cocoa—for white chocolate, for example—are types of products that have found ways to add value.”

In a smaller market, many chefs, such as Gastón Acurio, Mónica Huerta, Héctor Solís, Virgilio Martínez, Matsofuji, approach growers directly. In 1996, Gastón Acurio introduced **the farm to table approach**, as is known elsewhere. This approach has been replicated widely and has broadened the Peruvian gastronomic horizon.

Over the last few years, Acurio Restaurantes, a group of twenty-five restaurants under various brands, has contacted small farmers, fishermen and other producers to include them into its value chain. These have become a fundamental piece to foster the consumption of local products in all its restaurants, such as anchovy, native cocoa, purple corn, cherimoya, quinoa and *loche* pumpkin. His company works with approximately 30 meat packers, 20 quinoa producers and 40 fishermen from Puno, Abancay, Ancash, Junín and Ayacucho, among others.

Héctor Solís relates that he himself and his restaurant chain have always worked directly with small producers. “We do not buy from middlemen. We buy directly from the farmer, for example, lemon, onion, cassava, potato. We buy directly from artisanal fishermen. We do not source at the large fishing terminals.”

Solís believes that the true boom in gastronomy will occur the day that this development allows rural families to have access to water and electricity, malnutrition is eliminated, and poverty is reduced in rural areas. The farm work can become more professional.

“The chosen ones are the children, these heirs to this great tradition and this culture, who can till the land in a professional manner, who can be trained and who can have a quality professional career, who can go back to the countryside to contribute what they have learned. I think it is very important that the legacy is not lost, but that it be inherited by these young professionals. I think that is very important.”

Carlos Zambrano, from AGAP, recognizes the importance of the gastronomic revolution led by Acurio, but has a totally different view of the development of the agricultural sector, which reflects **the tension between large-scale development and traditional farming.**

“We have a wonderful cuisine that is based on a whole gastronomic and agricultural history, and we have a great biodiversity. But that great biodiversity and the way they want to manage and control it is in turn what prevents much of the development of what could be Peruvian gastronomy in the world... For example, we have scientists in the country, but legislators have put a moratorium on genetic improvements in Peruvian products. That was decided by Gastón Acurio. He said that if genetic modification came, it would end gastronomy. The congressmen, who do not understand anything at all, said “No” and we have a moratorium, and we lag, well, behind the world.”

A great challenge that Zambrano sees in collaborating with small Peruvian producers is that many work informally and do not have the necessary technology or certifications to offer the necessary traceability, which limits the possibilities of exporting to countries in the developed world.

“Our wonderful potatoes need to adapt to world traceability standards. And there we have some conflicts, because once again there is the other face of Gastón Acurio and his famous defense of biodiversity, which

for me is a bit lacking foundations. What he does, in many cases, perhaps unintentionally, is to maintain certain conditions of poverty for many of the local producers who would have great possibilities of producing greater quantities and better products.”

As an example, he points out that the supply of potatoes for fast food chains such as McDonald's and Burger King is imported "(...) because potatoes originating in Peru and produced in the Andes by such ancient production systems cannot comply with certain quality controls, and everyone wants the french fries of a certain size and color once fried."

He says we must improve seeds and logistics, such as the conservation of the product. "Sometimes products do not reach Lima in good condition. Much worse still to think about taking produce to the United States." As an example of what can happen if Peru does not modernize its agriculture, he mentions the cotton industry. He points out that Peruvian native cotton, of up to seven colors, has almost disappeared because "no work has been done on improving seeds and the seeds would bring about better harvests."

AGAP is currently made up of seven guilds: Table grapes, Asparagus, Avocado, Citrus, Blueberries, Pomegranate and Mango.⁹ Peru is the world's third largest exporter of table grapes.

“Ten years ago, Peru had a table grape export supply where 80% was a single grape variety. Last year we exported more than fifty varieties of grapes, that is, the capacity for innovation and adaptation that private companies have is amazing, but each one of them works independently and there is no system that manages to incorporate this ability, and no one is taking advantage of that momentum [...]. In Peru, no one knew what a blueberry was. Today, we are the world's leading exporter of blueberries. But nobody in Peru eats blueberries.”

9. Peru is the world's leading exporter of quinoa, asparagus, and blueberries; it ranks second for table grapes, third for avocados, fourth for mangoes and eighth for coffee.

08

The institutions' role



«Our institutions are very weak. They are governed by incumbent administrations that decide what can or want to be done. So, making a state policy in this regard is extremely complicated... I'm not just talking about Peru. It seems to me that this is shared across Latin America. It is very difficult to devise a twenty-year state policy, but it should be possible.»— points out **Bernardo Roca Rey**.

In a similar tone, **Carlos Zamorano (de AGAP)** bemoans the lack of agriculture state policies in Peru.

«We have a country where the ministers of agriculture do not fully understand that they are absolutely critical officials for national development, together with the Minister of Transport and Communications to design the integration of the country, to connect the poles of farming. Allow trade and sales within the country. Taking a container from the high Andean range to Lima is harder than sending it from here to Korea. And more expensive.»

Pedro Schiaffino is even harsher. The problem, in his opinion, is that the State does not work and does not make the effort to acquire the knowledge to be able to understand and do the job. “It is incredible how the state still does not value the Amazonian population. And it has never made the effort to understand its tradition, its history, its lifestyle and, in some way, promote and value it.”

For several leaders of the Peruvian gastronomic revolution, the quintessential example of the problem is the vision of the raw material. From **Gastón Acurio's** point of view, Peruvian institutions such as INIA have made a mistake in seeking development and wealth in anonymous international crops instead of promoting indigenous Peruvian wealth. He says:

«In INIA, there is a majority current that transgenics are a salvation for Peru; that, for example, transgenic potatoes are going to help improve the profitability and productivity of small farmers in the Peruvian potato growing countryside. The danger in this view of INIA is that potato 58 would be brought to Peru from somewhere in the world and that this

is the potato would be planted throughout Peru, with a great potential cultural and economic loss because that is a generic potato and also is subsidized.»

This is a point of view shared by **Flavio Solórzano**, who believes that regional governments and the national government generally opt for technological solutions that ultimately end up negatively affecting the land and farmers. He considers that institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture allow transgenics to enter without understanding their effects on agriculture and the environment.

«They do not bother to put themselves in the farmer's shoes. It's thousands of years of work, thousands. And in this discussion, they - the farmers - are not included. “No, no, no, this is a scientific discussion. You do not belong here, they are told, because you are a peasant.»

However, not everyone agrees with this viewpoint. **Zamorano** points out in this regard:

«The map of poverty in Peru dramatically overlaps the map of traditional agriculture. They do not realize that what it costs them to produce potatoes and they do not get paid for their produce. When they sell a kilo of potatoes, they lose money. They want to produce more, but the more they produce, the poorer they are.»

Other members of the innovative wing of Peruvian gastronomy underline the lack of communication with the sector as the main present evil. Sommelier **Joseph Ruiz** holds institutions do not listen to the gastronomic sector and the latter do not know how to reach the entities or those who make the decisions so they can improve products.

Along the same lines, **Malena Martínez** highlights that the rigidity of Peruvian institutions makes it difficult to work with Mater.

«We have approached entities and institutions, public and private universities. But, unfortunately, they have such a complex bureaucracy that little is done. That's a shame.»

She also refers that even the institutes specifically focused on agricultural innovation, such as INIA, have the same problem.

«Being an agricultural innovation institute, [INIA] should have a very close link with gastronomy because we are necessarily related. However, red tape frustrates a lot of initiatives that should be carried forward. Our experience with INIA, for example, is of having many meetings and few concrete results.»

That said, there are some private initiatives that have helped a lot in reimagining our sector – most notably, the Mistura gastronomic fair. **Isabel Álvarez Novoa** shares “the Mistura fair went a long way because it brought forward and recognized small farmers who came to Lima (to the event).” **Mitsu-haru “Micha” Tsumura** agrees.

«It was Peru's showcase to the world. It was the event that made Peru known abroad. It made tourism grow a lot. Companies, banks, breweries, many companies that you would have never imagined would invest in advertising with chefs, in kitchens, with farmers, with street anticuchos vendors, made it possible for all of them to become part of the dream and a source of pride of Peruvians.»

Despite all the issues, the overall landscape is not negative at all and the institutions recognize that improvements are needed for Peru to advance even further.

INIA is the governing body of the National System of Agrarian Innovation. As a Specialized Technical Organization (OTE) attached to the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MINAGRI), it contributes to equitable, competitive, and sustainable economic growth through the provision of specialized services (research and technology transfer) for agricultural innovation.

Blanca Arce Barbosa regrets INIA's tiny budget and thinks that more investment in research and development is needed. “The government gives them very little money. Very few invest in research, less is invested in agricultural innovation”. In Peru, agricultural innovation is simply not given due importance. She says Peru has “the lowest budget in Latin America for research and innovation. Colombia and Chile spend more”. She adds that, back in the 1980s, INIA got a larger better and was better positioned.

«What has happened in recent years is that, by not having sufficient budget money, it has very few human resources, and insufficient adequately trained professional staff. Today, [they] are already retiring but there is no successors.»

Ultimately, this acknowledgment of the problem may be the first step toward substantial improvement.

“The institutional issue is key,” says **Miguel Ordinola of the International Potato Center (CIP)**, a development research organization founded in 1971 with a focus on potatoes, sweet potatoes, and Andean roots and tubers. Headquartered in Lima, Peru, CIP's research reaches more than twenty countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. “Of course, the technological, and commercial sides are also key. But the institutional side, in the particular case of Peru, would have to be examined more carefully. We can't have everything so disjointed.”

For its part, the **National Agricultural Health Service of Peru (SENASA)** is the institution responsible for protecting the country from the entry of pests and diseases, to preserve its agricultural and livestock wealth. In addition, it is the entity in charge of ensuring the safety of primary products, allowing Peruvian and world consumers to enjoy healthy and safe food. SENASA, through the multiple fruit fly campaigns that it has carried out in the last 20 years, as well as its work supporting agro-exporters in its supervisory role, has directly contributed to the transformation of the agricultural sector and the boom in agro-exports evidenced in the last decades. The successful work implemented by SENASA has led the institution to become a benchmark at the regional level for other national phytosanitary protection agencies.”

09

Survey of agricultural producers



**“Extraordinary farmers (the ancient Peruvians),
their contribution to humanity is incalculable.
They mastered tubers genetically,
developing hundreds of varieties of potatoes,
ocas, sweet potatoes... They found their source
of protein in quinoa, kiwicha and corn,
and gave flavor to their plates with chili, vanilla,
molle and huacatay. With all that and,
without knowing it, they were building the future
of what today constitutes the fundamental
basis of international gastronomy.”**

GASTÓN ACURIO (ACURIO, 2002)

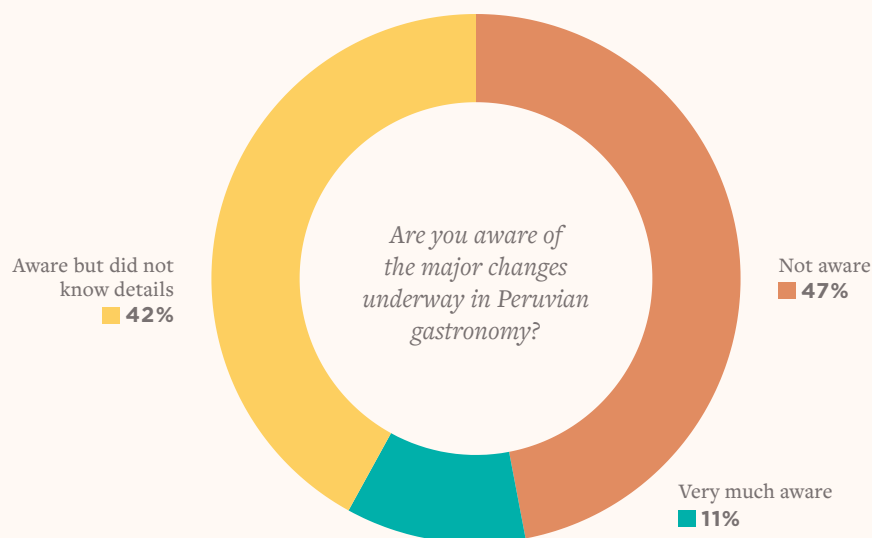
One hundred and thirty agricultural producers were surveyed **to capture their vision and knowledge of the gastronomic revolution, identifying how they responded to the changes it prompted, and learning about their assessment of the loss of traditional agricultural products and quality production.**

The survey¹⁰ was conducted in July and August 2021. Ten producers from each of the following regions were surveyed: Amazonas, Ayacucho, Cajamarca, Cusco, Junín, La Libertad, Lambayeque, Lima, Loreto, Piura, Puno, San Martín and Ucayali. The producers included in the sample were small agricultural producers with an average exploitation of 0.9 ha that were part of the value chains that provide gastronomy inputs; 55% of the producers were vegetable growers; 43% were engaged in overall agricultural production, and 2%

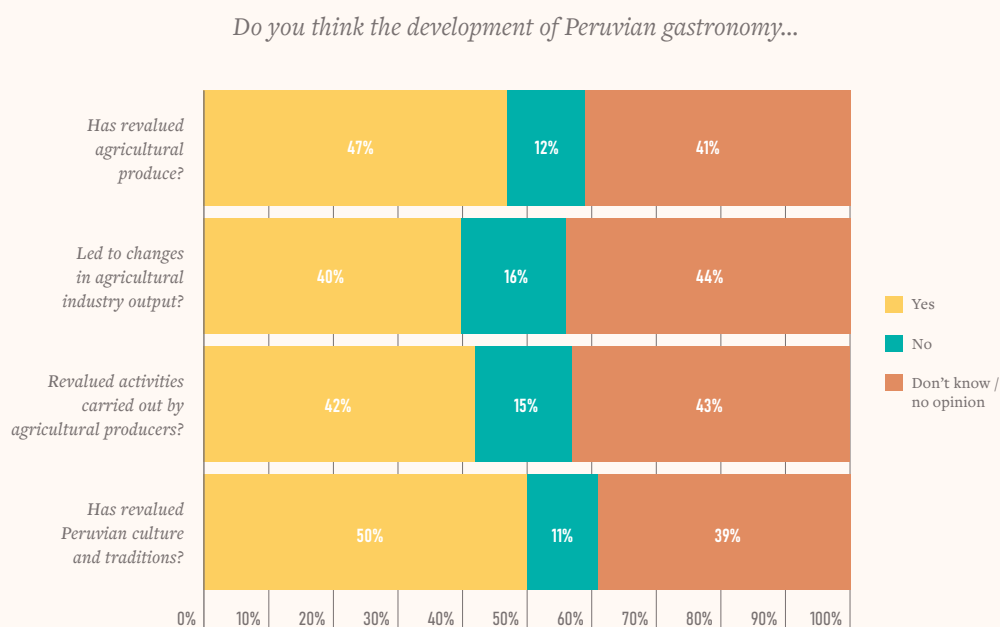
devoted to livestock products exclusively. Their produce included cocoa, coffee, quinoa, potato, hard yellow corn, guinea pigs, camelid fiber, camelid meat, beef and cow's milk. For the most part, the producers knew about INIA. 77% of the surveyed producers had adopted INIA technologies in the last three years and 31% had completed secondary school or pursued higher education. It should be noted that this is a small survey and, therefore, not expected to be representative of all producers in their region. The results appear in Table A1 in the annex.

One of the main purposes of the survey was to determine what producers knew about changes in gastronomy and their impact on their production. Remarkably, 53% of all producers were aware of the Peruvian gastronomic revolution. Although 83% thought that it did not affect them in any way, 40% indicated that it changed agricultural output. It is important to note that even if producers were not aware of the changes underway, they may have responded to and acted prompted by price signals. (Figure 5)

10. Carried out within the framework of the survey “Improvement of Strategic Services for Agricultural Innovation”, including a sample of the beneficiary producers of the National Program for Agricultural Innovation of INIA, a program for the adoption of technologies and good agricultural practices.

FIGURE 5. PRODUCERS' KNOWLEDGE OF THE GASTRONOMIC REVOLUTION IN PERU

Source: Survey of agricultural producers benefiting from the PNIA/INIA.

FIGURE 6. PERCEPTION OF THE PRODUCERS OF THE IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERUVIAN GASTRONOMY

Source: Survey of agricultural producers benefiting from the PNIA/INIA.

In general, producers revealed a positive perception of the changes in gastronomy. Most of the producers who were aware of this improvement that allowed a better appreciation of agricultural products, of the agricultural producers' activities and of Peruvian culture and traditions. (Figure 6)

Very few of the respondents supplied restaurants; only 4% of the producers were direct suppliers of a restaurant and they operate in Junín, Ayacucho, and San Martín, and, for the most part (60%), prioritized both quantity and quality. Only 0.8% of all producers were direct restaurant suppliers in Junín.

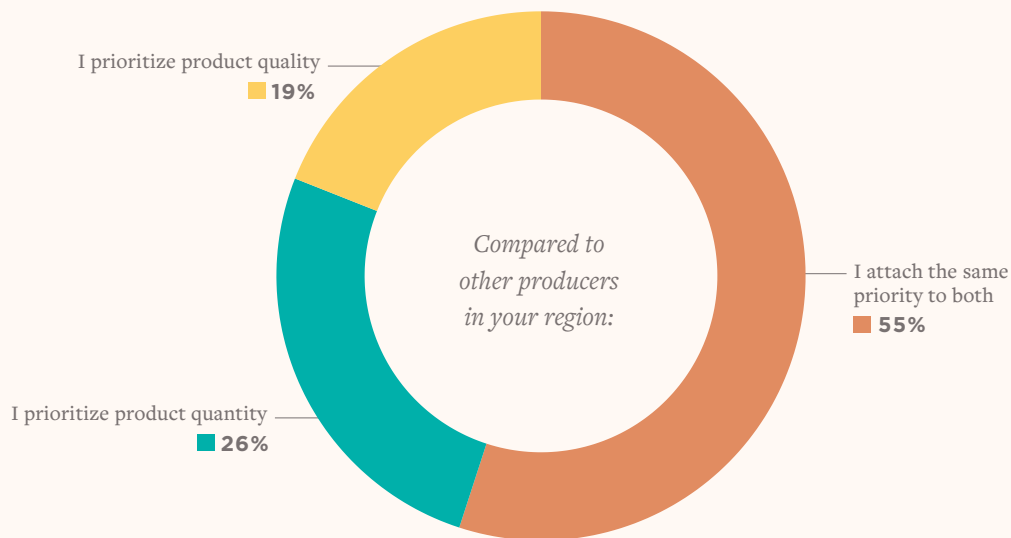
The previous sections discussed the great value that chefs give to traditional products, due to their

diversity and quality, one of the bases of this new gastronomy. The underlying idea is that higher producer's income should be based on their produce quality and not exclusively based on the increase in quantity.

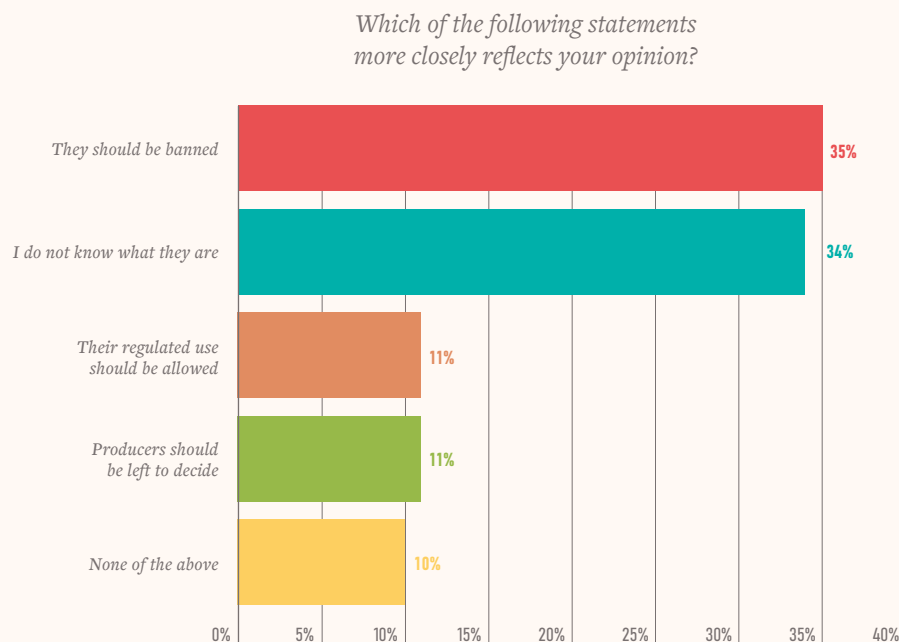
The survey revealed that the producers thought that was the right approach and acted accordingly. 67% of all the producers surveyed reported prioritizing the production of traditional agricultural products in their region.

Regarding the trade-off between quality and quantity, 19% reported prioritizing product quality, while 55% assigned the same importance to quantity and quality. (Figure 7)

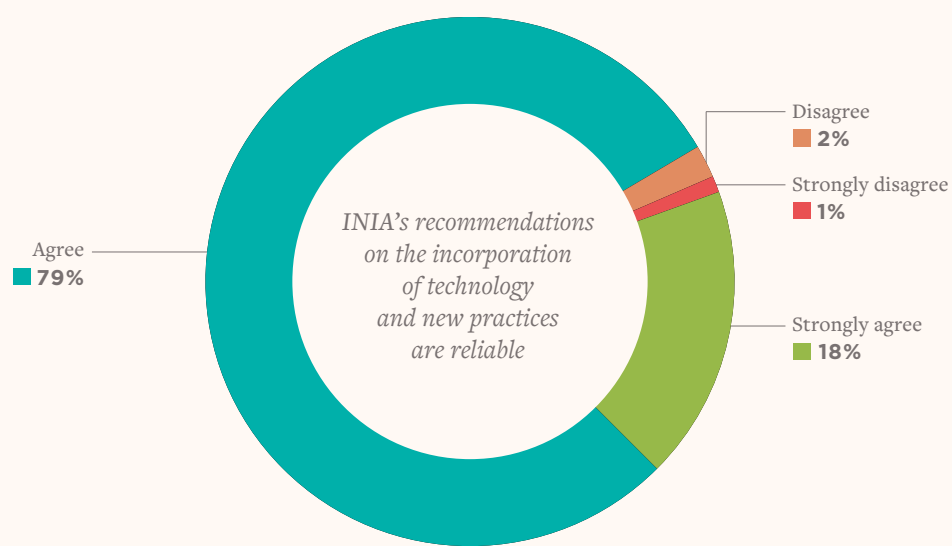
FIGURE 7. PRODUCERS' PRIORITIES REGARDING THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF PRODUCTION



Source: Survey of agricultural producers benefiting from the PNIA/INIA.

FIGURE 8. PRODUCERS OPINION ON THE INTRODUCTION OF TRANSGENIC CROPS

Source: Survey of agricultural producers benefiting from the PNIA/INIA.

FIGURE 9. RELIABILITY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE INCORPORATION OF TECHNOLOGY AND NEW PRACTICES PROVIDED BY INIA

Source: Survey of agricultural producers benefiting from the PNIA/INIA.

As mentioned above, like other chefs, Gastón Acurio believes that an aggressive development of transgenic crops can be negative for the agricultural and economic development of Peru. In this regard, 35% of those surveyed said that they considered that the government should ban transgenic crops. An important fact the survey revealed is that about a third of the producers were unaware of the subject. A minority (22%) considered that its development should be allowed. Of this percentage, half considered that it should be done, but regulated by the State, and the other half considered that the producer should be left to decide. Producers who favored the unregulated introduction of transgenics had, on average, larger farms than those who opposed them. The smallest size producers, in general, reported being unaware of transgenic crops or opposed their introduction. (Figure 8)

Dissemination of technology and new practices is of fundamental importance for agricultural development. The survey revealed that virtually all respondents agreed that INIA's recommendations in this regard were reliable, as were those of suppliers and other producers. (Figure 9)

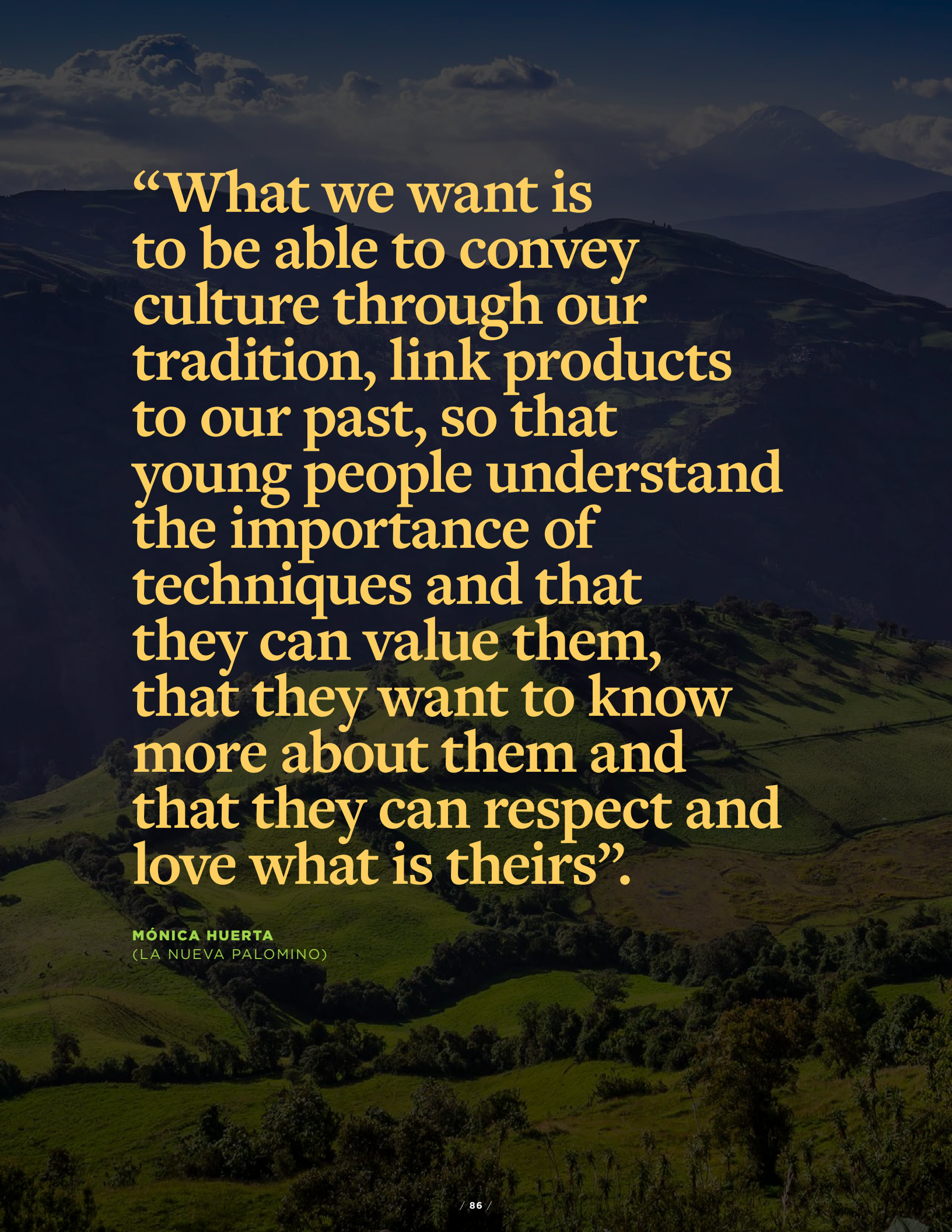
In summary, the results of the survey revealed **a positive perception of the producers about the impact of the changes in Peruvian gastronomy on the agricultural sector**, including a positive impact on different key aspects for food security, such as the development of good agricultural practices, the focus on increasing output, but without neglecting quality, and the search for the preservation and improvement of traditional agricultural products.



10

Lessons from the study





“What we want is to be able to convey culture through our tradition, link products to our past, so that young people understand the importance of techniques and that they can value them, that they want to know more about them and that they can respect and love what is theirs”.

MÓNICA HUERTA
(LA NUEVA PALOMINO)

The Galenson-Romer approach provides an economic framework for analyzing the development of innovation and knowledge. Galenson's classification combined with Romer's idea that incentives for innovation are important provides a guide for the design of public policies. The **main policy lessons** that emerge from the analysis are as follows:

1.

Favor (not hinder) investment in human capital abroad, both for formal education and for on-the-job training.

A common element that most of the chefs who revolutionized Peruvian cuisine have is that they were trained in the best cooking schools in the world and had experience working in the best restaurants in the world. This importation of human capital allowed them to renew the Peruvian gastronomic sector and spread it internationally.

2.

Favor (not hinder) domestic and international tourism.

Until the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, gastronomic tourism was considered one of the greatest tourist attractions in Peru. The differentiation of gastronomy through its cultural identity has allowed it to complement it with other great tourist attractions, such as Machu Picchu, its landscapes and its art, which further enhances the tourist attractions of Peru and the development of gastronomy. Bearing in mind that the pandemic has not modified the great tourist attributes that Peru offers, nor the identity or attractiveness of its cuisine, the recovery of tourism and its growth pose a great challenge for the future in terms of the policy of opening and facilitating tourism both domestic and foreign.

3.

Provide a stable and flexible economic framework that facilitates investment and spillover between different sectors, which indirectly impacts food security.

Peru's economic stability created an attractive market for Peruvian chefs to return and make investments and innovations using human capital acquired abroad. The creative developments of each of the chefs had effects within the gastronomic sector and on other sectors, such as tourism and agriculture. The survey carried out for this report revealed 40% of agricultural producers consider that the gastronomic revolution spurred a change in agricultural outputs and the majority of producers who were aware of such changes consider they have led to a revaluation of products, agricultural producer's activity and Peruvian culture and traditions. This positive impact on the agricultural sector contributes to food security by strengthening and improving the quality and variety of agricultural production.

4.

Facilitate (not hinder) the development of communities where knowledge is shared at all levels and spillover within the sector is enhanced.

The connection between Peruvian cultural identity and gastronomy that Gastón Acurio visualizes and puts into practice produces a new shared use resource: The Peru brand. Through associations and the development of a community of chefs and other actors in the sector, incentives are generated to share knowledge and develop Peruvian gastronomy locally and internationally.

5.

Facilitate (not hinder) the connection between agricultural producers and the end market for the product to facilitate the producer's development and their consequent contribution to food security.

The actors of the sector interviewed expressed the bureaucratic and infrastructure difficulties they face to be able to trade with small agricultural producers directly.

A successful initiative that facilitated this connection was the Mistura fair.

The development of the small producer through good agricultural practices, the improvement of the quantity of production, but without neglecting quality, and the search for the improvement of traditional agricultural products are factors that contribute directly to food security.

6.

Strengthening institutions linked to the agricultural sector and their communication with the different sectors, in particular, the gastronomic sector.

Although institutions have played an important role in the development process triggered by gastronomic revolution In general, the actors in this sector agree that the institutions that work in the agricultural sector, such as the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation, and INIA, should be strengthened. This would allow stable policies to be developed with a medium-term vision and greater coordination between institutions to make the measures put into practice more effective.

At the same time, it is pointed out that institutional strengthening should aim at making institutions more flexible and less bureaucratic to facilitate joint work with the private sector. Better communication between the institutions and the different actors in the sector is essential for the establishment of a suitable policy for agricultural development on transgenic crops, above all, taking into account the conflicting positions of the leading actors in the gastronomic sector concerned with maintaining biodiversity, agro-exporters, and public and private organizations in the agricultural sector, which determine productivity improvements and scale production. Both the preservation of biodiversity and improvements in productivity contribute to food security, so establishing a suitable policy in this regard is of utmost importance. Added to this is the lack of awareness on the subject among over a third of the producers surveyed.

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Annex

TABLE A1: SURVEY ON INNOVATION TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

A. IMPACT AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE GASTRONOMIC REVOLUTION IN PERU

1. In the last twenty years, there have been great changes in the gastronomy of Peru. These changes allowed Peruvian gastronomy to be revalued, transformed into a tourist attraction and positioned internationally, in a way that has allowed it to compete directly with already internationalized gastronomies such as French, Italian, Japanese and Chinese. Please select below for each section which statement best reflects your opinion on the matter:	
1a. Knowledge of the Peruvian gastronomic revolution	
<i>I was not aware that there were great changes in the gastronomy of Peru.</i>	47%
<i>I was very aware that great changes had taken place in the gastronomy of Peru.</i>	11%
<i>I was aware, but I don't know more details.</i>	42%
1b. Impact of the Peruvian gastronomic revolution	
<i>The changes in Peruvian gastronomy led me to improve production.</i>	11%
<i>The changes in Peruvian gastronomy negatively affected my production.</i>	5%
<i>The changes in Peruvian gastronomy did not affect me in any way.</i>	83%
1c. If in the previous section (section b) you chose the first statement, select all that apply from the following options:	
<i>The changes in Peruvian gastronomy allowed me to focus on improving the quality of the product.</i>	73%
<i>The changes in Peruvian gastronomy allowed me to increase production.</i>	13%
<i>The changes in Peruvian gastronomy allowed me to adopt new technologies.</i>	7%
<i>The changes in Peruvian gastronomy allowed me to continue with the production of traditional crops and products from the region.</i>	13%
<i>The changes in Peruvian gastronomy allowed me to go back to producing traditional crops and products from the region.</i>	7%
<i>Changes in Peruvian gastronomy allowed me to export part or all of my production.</i>	7%
2. Do you consider that the development of Peruvian gastronomy generated an appreciation of agricultural products?	
<i>Yes</i>	47%
<i>No</i>	12%
<i>Don't know / no opinion</i>	41%
3. Do you consider that the development of Peruvian gastronomy generated a change in what is produced in the agricultural sector?	
<i>Yes</i>	40%
<i>No</i>	16%
<i>Don't know / no opinion</i>	44%
4. Do you consider that the development of Peruvian gastronomy generated an appreciation of the activity carried out by the agricultural producer?	
<i>Yes</i>	42%
<i>No</i>	15%
<i>Don't know / no opinion</i>	43%
5. Do you consider that the development of Peruvian gastronomy generated an appreciation of Peruvian culture and traditions?	
<i>Yes</i>	50%
<i>No</i>	11%
<i>Don't know / no opinion</i>	39%
6. In the last ten years, have you ever been a direct supplier of a restaurant?	
<i>Yes, and I am currently a direct supplier to a single restaurant.</i>	1%
<i>Yes, and I am currently a direct supplier to several restaurants.</i>	0%
<i>Yes, but I am not currently a direct supplier to a restaurant.</i>	3%
<i>No, I have never catered to a restaurant.</i>	96%
7. If you have been a direct supplier to a restaurant, have you had any special requests or recommendations from the restaurant to introduce changes in the products you produce?	
<i>Yes</i>	8%
<i>No</i>	92%

B. FOCUS ON PRODUCTION, PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS TRANSGENIC CROPS

8. Production goals. Compared to other growers in your area, are you a grower who prioritizes quantity produced or a grower who prioritizes product quality?	
<i>Compared to other producers, I prioritize, above all, the quantity produced.</i>	26%
<i>Compared to other producers, I prioritize, above all, the quality of the product.</i>	19%
<i>Compared to other producers, I give equal importance to both quantity and quality.</i>	55%
9. Preservation of regional crops. Regarding the production of crops and livestock products, which of the following statements best fits what you do?	
<i>I am a producer looking for ways to preserve the production of traditional crops and agricultural products in my region and ways to improve them.</i>	67%
<i>I am a producer who is looking for non-traditional crops and livestock products from the region that allow me to increase production yields and obtain better prices.</i>	26%
<i>None of the above.</i>	7%
10. Development of transgenic crops. Some consider that the Government should prohibit the introduction of transgenic crops. Others consider that its development should be allowed, leaving the decision to the producer. Which of these positions is closest to yours?	
<i>The introduction of transgenic crops must be banned.</i>	35%
<i>The introduction of transgenic crops should be allowed but regulated by the Government.</i>	11%
<i>The introduction of transgenic crops should be allowed, leaving the decision to the producer.</i>	11%
<i>None of the above.</i>	10%
<i>I don't know what transgenic crops are.</i>	34%

C. ADOPTION OF TECHNOLOGY AND NEW PRACTICES

11. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	
11a. The recommendations for the incorporation of new technologies and practices provided by INIA are reliable.	
<i>I strongly agree.</i>	18%
<i>I agree.</i>	79%
<i>I do not agree.</i>	2%
<i>I strongly disagree.</i>	1%
11b. The recommendations for the incorporation of new technologies and practices provided by other agricultural producers are reliable.	
<i>I strongly agree.</i>	12%
<i>I agree.</i>	79%
<i>I do not agree.</i>	8%
<i>I strongly disagree.</i>	1%
11c. The recommendations for the incorporation of new technologies and practices provided by the companies that buy agricultural production are reliable.	
<i>I strongly agree.</i>	10%
<i>I agree.</i>	78%
<i>I do not agree.</i>	12%
<i>I strongly disagree.</i>	0%

