

BRITISH AIRWAYS

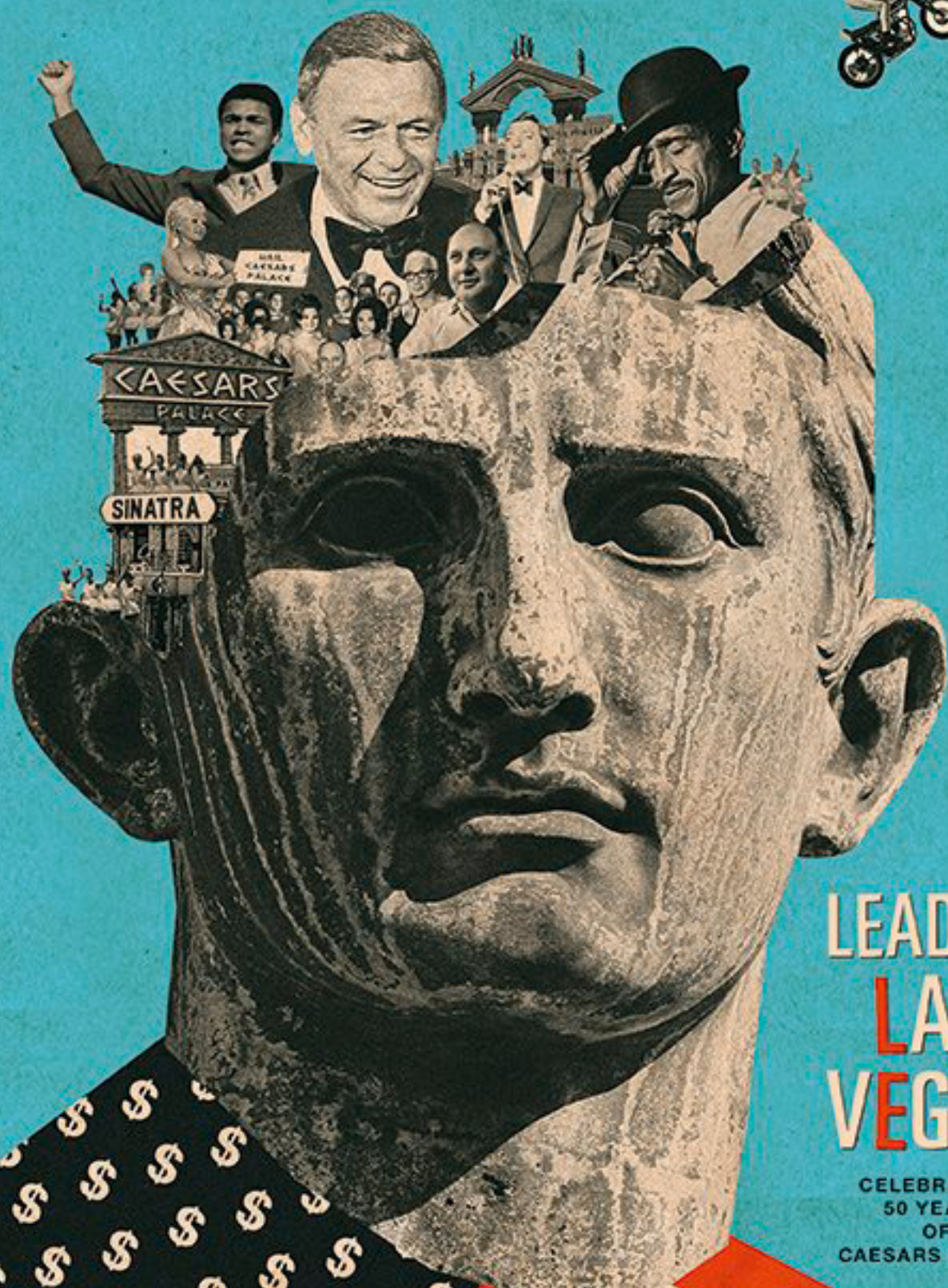


PROUD SUPPORTER

high life

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AUGUST 2016



LEADING
LAS
VEGAS

CELEBRATING
50 YEARS
OF
CAESARS PALACE



SPACE

Privileged produce

Clockwise from left: a lemon tree in San Lorenzo – lemons are the perfect accompaniment for ricotta; chefs hard at work at Los Enamorados – a restaurant, beach bar and boutique hotel; oysters at La Mezcaleria



AT THE TABLE

Ibiza is fast becoming a food destination to rival Copenhagen and San Sebastián, with cooks such as Anne Sijmonsbergen bringing the sensibilities of a Massachusetts farmers' market to the party island. **Hardeep Singh Kohli** meets her and the other players making the White Isle more about cuisine than clubbing. Photography by **Adrian Morris**

Welcome to Ibiza: destination decadence. Growing up in the 1990s, Brand Balearic (with Ibiza at its heart) was the party proposition for the sun-slayer, soul-sharer, sound-blarer – famed for hedonism in all conceivable forms.

I'd always been attracted to Spain for its vast and varied food, from Galician octopus stew to Barcelona's sumptuously simple tapas, but it's no wonder that this fat lad from Glasgow (whose idea of a 'club night' involves a chocolate biscuit bar made by Jacob's) never considered donning a Pucci man-skirt and Louis Vuitton thong before heading for the Med. No, Ibiza was never for the likes of me.

Yet as dancers make shapes and revolve in the nightspots in the south of the island, up in the north people are clubbing together to create a food revolution that is shaping a parallel future for Ibiza. And this is food to both sing and dance about.

At the vanguard of this unexpected *coup de cuisine* is Anne Sijmonsbergen. Her cookbook *Eivissa* (Catalan for Ibiza) is the first to collect and curate the cooking of the White Isle, introducing Ibicencan food to a wider world.

Like so many of the main movers and shakers on the island, Sijmonsbergen is an incomer, a blow-in. 'I first set foot on the island with just a suitcase. It was meant to be a holiday but I



Herb's the word

Clockwise from top: Sijmonsbergen, and her dog Bobby, on her farm; 'Organic Annie' and our writer prepare dinner

knew then that I would never leave. That was ten years ago; now if I go away, I count down the days till my return.' But while most plunge headlong into the azure blue waters lapping the island, she dived headlong, heart-strong into rediscovering and innovating Ibiza's food culture.

Sijmonsbergen, who is from Vermont, and her Dutch husband moved here from London. She trained at the Cambridge School of Culinary Arts in Massachusetts and spent time in Bangkok learning the ways of Thai food from a Swedish chef who had married into the royal family. I lose track of the number of countries and cities she breezily drops into conversation. But her passion for growing perfect produce resides on this island.

'Organic Annie', as she is affectionately known, is the island's only organic tomato farmer. 'My obsession with tomatoes goes back to my grandfather's farm in Massachusetts. Tigger and Tom, the farm cats, and I would sit while I double-handed light-bulb tomatoes into my seven-year-old mouth.' Little did she realise that those childhood moments would echo so loudly into later life.

Sijmonsbergen has grown, nurtured and supplied pretty much every fruit and vegetable that can be grown on the island. At the season's height, her farm, Can Riero, produces 200kg of tomatoes a week across 100 different varieties.

A 450-year-old farmhouse, or *finca*, as the locals call it, Can Riero is also part of the burgeoning *agritourismo* sector of the island economy. These working farms provide great places for guests to stay in luxury's lap, surrounded by apricot trees, lemon groves and tomato plants. So many tomato plants...

'When I arrived it was all clubs and grill restaurants. The beach clubs served an almost identical menu of grilled fish, potatoes and salad. Most food was brought in to fulfil the tastes of the party people. That's changing. Some of these clubs are now at the heart of the culinary revolution, offering some of the best food in the Mediterranean.'

Driving the disparate dirt tracks of the north of the island you soon realise that in the days before club culture there had been ➔



PLACES TO STAY:

→ | LA GRANJA IBIZA

Small country retreat with beautiful farm located in the heart of Ibiza's farmland. lagranjaibiza.com

→ | THE GIRI RESIDENCE

Stylish and intimate, with just five unique suites. thegiri.com

→ | ATZARO

Find opulence – complete with spa and kitchen garden – in the Ibizan countryside. atzaro.com

→ | LOS ENAMORADOS

Hip Los Enamorados overlooks one of the island's most beautiful ports and serves fish from its catch. losenamoradosibiza.com

→ | CAN MARTI

Eco-friendly finca set in peaceful, relaxed surroundings in north Ibiza's hills. canmarti.com