



El Cabrito 1950

El Cabrito is a small bay in the south-east of La Gomera at a distance of barely seven kilometres from the island's capital San Sebastián. The dry river-bed (barranco) "Juan de Vera" runs into the sea at El Cabrito. As early as 1743 the name of El Cabrito appears on a map, although designated "Punta de Cabrito" (Goat Kid's Point). As late as 1867 the place is named "Barranco del Cabrito" for the first time. The epithet "playa" (beach) is added in 1900 when people start to settle there. Basically, at the beginning of the 20th century the entire area is only a dry river-bed. And here on the few level parts at the mouth of this barranco the farmer R. Tugores Remon starts to grow cereal at the beginning of the 20th century.

1908

On July 31, 1908 Tugares lets El Cabrito for two years to Filiberto Darias, a landowner from San Sebastián who above all wants to examine the profitability of the estate (finca) with the intention of a subsequent purchase. When the area turns out to be excellent Filiberto Darias buys the estate for 14.000 pesetas in 1909 and immediately starts to acquire the area of the adjoining properties. In order to secure the irrigation of the estates he has drilled two wells which allow him to extend the cultivation area.

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Furthermore, Darias has installed two packing halls for the agricultural crops and starts building dwellings for the workers who are leaving their mountain villages attracted to this up and coming place. The growing size of the estate demanding more water leads Darias to the decision to build a dam. For this venture he has to acquire more land which belongs to the Count of La Gomera.



El Cabrito 1954

In 1911 Filiberto Darias gives the architect of the Canary Islands provinces, Antonio Pintor the planning commission for a water dam. This is an exciting innovation because it will then only be the second dam to be built on the Canary archipelago. The entire material necessary is delivered by the company Orenstein & Koppel from Berlin who specialise in building traction engines, rails and similar pieces of equipment. The material is shipped from Antwerp and on La Gomera transported on camel-back to the top end of the barranco. All technical personnel necessary for the construction of the dam come over from Tenerife.



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Building the dam takes place during a period of lack of supplies since the Canary Islands suffer from a blockade from Germany during the First World War. However, with foresight Filiberto Darias has stockpiled the entire material necessary and thus the workers can accomplish the construction without interruption.

1923

However, El Cabrito does not belong to only one owner. Darias has founded a company together with his brother-in-law and friend José Veguero. Together they share the estate in a ratio of 1:3. This association turns out to be very productive has however a catch: The respective spouses of the two partners have irreparably fallen out with each other. Thus, following the death of Filiberto Darias in 1923 his wife Isabel Veguero decides quickly to dissolve the company and demands the division of the estate. This demand and the subsequent law-suit end with the total rift between her brother, the former partner and herself.



El Cabrito 1956

Isabel Veguero, a woman of firm character and with a distinctive sense for business turns El Cabrito into an agricultural model business. Through her sons who like their father hold high political offices on the island during the Spanish Civil War she also has influence on the local politics of La Gomera.



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1936

On 18th July in 1936 the Spanish military take up weapons to revolt against the Republican government in Spain. The coup comes from the Canary Islands. One of the first measures of the rebels consists in breaking any resistance of the islands towards them. However, the local authorities of La Gomera declare their loyalty with the constitutional government. The more radical among them meet in the night of 19th July in order to resist the Right. They decide on the abolition of private property, burn down the church and attempt with force of weapons to get to the leadership of the Right.

The Darias family who is connected with the Falange movement of the rebels decide in face of the looming danger to take their women to El Cabrito. There they make their part-tenants promise to defend them. Meanwhile however the members of the Left are eliminated by the military coup and the women can return to the island's capital San Sebastián. From now on the Darias family have deep trust in the working families at El Cabrito due to their loyalty.

Despite these far-reaching events the relationship between the siblings Isabel and José does not improve. Isabel who now owns two thirds of the estate finally succeeds in making José sell her his part in El Cabrito in the Forties.

Due to the development of the industrial law there grows a risk for estate owners of part-tenants to have rights which would reduce the ownership of the estate. Therefore, the management relationship is changed – not only at El Cabrito – from the traditional part tenancy (*medianería*) to a business with employed workers. Agricultural-wise this results in an upturn which exceeds all expectations. While the Spanish population suffers from famine for years following the country's autarky the Canary Islands are blossoming: The export of fruit awards the islands ruined by the Civil War the urgently needed currency. El Cabrito is growing too and employs more than 85 workers during the economic rise.



El Cabrito 1987

1955

On the death of Isabel Veduero however, El Cabrito is again going downhill. The matriarch dies in 1955, followed six years later by Alberto Darias and his brother Antonio in 1967 which leaves the family of the owners without leadership. New conflicts of interest emerge between the heirs which culminate in the division of the property. El Cabrito is now owned by four parties who have fallen out with each other. The result is the continuing decay of the area of cultivation. The workers are leaving the finca one by one, the technical equipment for cultivation goes to rack and ruin and above all the international fruit commerce is in recession. The family face ruin and are looking for a buyer for El Cabrito. In May 1987 they manage to sell the entire estate to the Liligomera S.A.



El Cabrito 1987

1987

The Liligomera S.A. is a public limited company founded especially for the purchase of El Cabrito by an Austrian commune of artists. The commune around Otto Mühl, co-founder of the Viennese Actionism, develops in the Seventies from several house-sharers in Vienna and spreads to Germany, France and Switzerland. Its over 300 members who live in the centre Friedrichshof near Vienna as well as in several European towns are looking for a place to live not too far from Mid-Europe but still safe from radioactive contamination after the total meltdown of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

In only three years the commune renovates all existing buildings, repairs the natural stone terraces as well as the three reservoirs and the wells and reactivates agriculture.

Many of the original furnishings and buildings of the old finca are kept and stay witness to the pre-industrial, rural character of the site until today. New installations then comprise a kitchen, a biological sewage system, solar panels, modern irrigation system, workshops, painting studios and offices. But profound changes in the commune already during the reconstruction works finally lead to its disbanding. El Cabrito is its last communal project.



El Cabrito 1988

1991

The commune's assets including the Liligomera S.A. are invested in a co-operative. The former members of the commune receive shares in this new company.

Otto Mühl who is convicted to seven years of jail for sexual abuse in Austria in 1991 will never see El Cabrito again and dies in Portugal in 2013. The former members of the commune distance themselves unambiguously from Otto Mühl and vigorously drive forward their independence.



El Cabrito 1988

In 1991 efforts are made to turn El Cabrito into a self-sustaining ecological enterprise. Furthermore, the development of a concept to make the Finca El Cabrito a family and environmentally friendly holiday centre. Fortunately, this mixture of intact environment, simple comforts and the family-friendly seclusion turns out to appeal strongly to guests mostly from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Over the years many of them become faithful regulars which – together with clients of selected travel agencies who specialise in seminars, family- and eco-tourism – provides for stable utilization.



El Cabrito 1989

2001

In 2001 the holiday business is disincorporated from the co-operative and since then regular guests can obtain shares in the Holding Company Allmende S.A. in Luxembourg. Today more than 350 faithful clients are co-owners of El Cabrito. On the occasion of two capital increases in the years 2008/2009 and 2016/2017 they provide further means for the construction of a modern kitchen with storage rooms, a bar and a new buffet area. Being involved regular guests, the shareholders continue to forgo dividends. Therefore, the entire generated means can be reinvested into the expansion and improvement of the Finca and Hotel El Cabrito thereby securing the independence of the estate from banks and financial markets.

Meanwhile the finca has become a natural, subtropical garden comprising an area with replanted local trees – palms, dragon trees and tamarisks.



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The ecological agriculture with its palms, avocado and mango trees, banana and papaya shrubs and its vegetable fields supplies the hotel's buffets with fresh and healthy produce.

In another part of the finca is a goat enclosure with approximately 30 goats. Their milk is made into cheese and yoghurt for the hotel's own needs. Furthermore, the finca comprises a shed for the approximately 50 free-range chickens whose eggs very nearly cover the hotel kitchen's requirements.

All dwellings and service buildings are maintained with much love to detail. Old and disused materials will be used again creatively. Examples are the illumination along the paths covered with former water pipes and the sunshades made from palm fronds.

One of the most important construction projects dating as far back as the 1990s is the extension of the mole. The original distinctively shorter mole from 1962 did by no means meet any longer the new demands for a regular boat transfer for guests and supplies for the finca. In addition, a second boat is acquired in 2012 – the *Pardela* – larger and faster than the *San Borondon*. Both boats are used for the daily transfer of guests and goods.

El Cabrito and the Arts: All guest houses and rooms of the Hotel Finca El Cabrito as well as the rooms of the banana hall and the bar are decorated mostly with original works of art. Apart from the artistic and aesthetic aspects the history of the finca plays a part. The black and white photographs stem from the time when the finca was purely agricultural land. They were taken by Filiberto Darias Veguero, the oldest son of El Cabrito's founder.

The works of art by contemporary artists come from exhibitions held here between 1987 and 2004 – all of them inspired by El Cabrito.

2011

In 2011 the Hotel Finca El Cabrito joins the "European Carta for Sustainable Tourism". This underlines the claim to be a place which realises the vision of togetherness of human beings and nature. This is supported by El Cabrito's decision to work not for gains but for reinvestment and maintenance.

Hotel Finca El Cabrito, May 2019

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*Would you like to know more about our ecological commitment? Everything on the topic **"Our driving force: Our way from ecological agriculture to sustainable tourism"** you will find in a little brochure in the guest rooms of El Cabrito.*