

# Site Visit: Ernesto Ventós, Barcelona

## Spanish essential oil heritage and new specialties

A recent visit to Ernesto Ventós in Barcelona, Spain, included a stop in the company's naturals plant, which is overseen by production manager Josep Maria Viñas. While many of the company's ingredients are steam distilled in-field, the plant performs short-path molecular distillation, rectification and acetylation. In addition to the Spanish essential oils that comprise the company's legacy, Ernesto Ventós produces new specialty products such as vetiveryl from Haitian vetiver, guaiyl acetate from Paraguayan guaiacwood and patchouli acetate.

The family owned company was founded in 1916, producing Spanish essential oils. Today, the company sources raw materials from around the world—Peru balsam from Guatemala, vetiver from Brazil, cinnamon leaf oil from Sri Lanka (safrole-free) and nutmeg from Indonesia (safrole-free). In addition, Ernest Ventós distributes natural aromatics, aroma chemicals and essential oils for companies such as Firmenich, IFF, Kao, Zeon, BASF and Indesso, offering repackaging service for solids, liquids and powders.

### Spanish Essential Oils

The Spanish essential oils produced by the company include red thyme, cypress, lavandin, spike lavender, rosemary, marjoram, petitgrain lemon, hyssop and savory. Spain's varied climate, which includes tropical and alpine locales, accounts for the country's diversity of materials. While some materials such as spike lavender are still collected in the wild, Ernesto Ventós encourages the formation of plantations among growers. The need for such plantations is particularly acute as land is consumed by food agriculture, which can drive up costs.

Some quantities of Spanish Essential oils are quite limited; for example, less than 2 tons of petitgrain is produced each year and costs €90/kilo, according to managing director Jordi Calogne. Cypress, a by-product of regional landscaping trees that must be pruned twice a year, produces varying sensory qualities, depending upon the source. Calogne notes that northern oil is more aromatic and cedrol-rich than its southern counterpart. Cypress availability and quality is stable, and about 20–22 tons of its essential oil is produced each year.

### Global Reach

The company holds €200 of stock, comprising 1,600 chemicals in four warehouses separated by flammable, natural and synthetic materials, and those destined



*Patchouli processing in progress*



*From left, Ramon Rubau, sales director; Jordi Calogne (managing director) and Jordi Sort (executive manager) in Ventós' naturals facility*



*Jeb Gleason-Allured (P&F magazine), left, and naturals plant production manager Josep Maria Viñas*



*A view of the naturals plant overseen by Viñas; while many of the company's ingredients are steam distilled in-field, short-path molecular distillation takes place in the company's Barcelona site.*



*Ventós' quality control lab is equipped with GC/FID and GC/MS and performs organoleptic, chemical and physical analysis of the company's 1,600 materials; the company is ISO-certified for high-volume products.*

for repacking activities. Ernesto Ventós has more than 100 staffers, including 47 staff in Barcelona. The company has offices in Mexico, Shanghai and Cotia, Brazil to support global growth.

The company has €85 million in turnover a year. Its main business is in Europe, Latin America and Asia, serving the savory, snack, bakery, fragrance, cosmetic and other market segments. It does not currently serve the US market; its only US business is for specialties and volume products for companies with which they have global contracts.

On the subject of the current state of the flavor and fragrance industry, Calogne notes that customers are reducing stocks and putting pressure on sellers. However, he says, demand is not gone, but pricing pressures are growing. He adds that the Asian market is rising, particularly among flavor customers, while the more mature markets of Europe tend to be more fragrance oriented.

*Read more about Spanish essential oils in the April issue <https://subs.perfumerflavorist.com/offer>.*