



Sarriegui, from a 15-square-meter fryer shop in San Sebastián to selling potato chips in more than 30 countries.



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Some brands are born with an industrial vocation, while others—almost without intending to—end up building their own narrative through excellence. [Patatas Fritas Sarriegui](#) belongs to the latter category. Its story begins in 1990 in a small 15-square-meter fryer shop at number 21 San Jerónimo Street, in the Old Town of San Sebastián—one of the country’s most iconic gastronomic enclaves. What started there as a local project, closely tied to the daily rhythm of a city accustomed

to fine produce, has since become a benchmark in the premium snack segment, with a presence in more than 30 markets.

The founding scene explains a great deal. San Sebastián—gastronomic tradition, pintxo bars, culinary rigor—and a small shop where the product had to speak for itself. There was no artifice. Just a potato chip made with care and discernment. Over time, some bars began asking for small bags to resell. That seemingly minor gesture marked the first turning point in the company's history.

Pablo Guardia, one of the voices of the firm, places the origin of growth there. **“The Patatas Fritas Sarriegui brand was born in 1990 in a small 15-square-meter frying shop located at number 21 San Jerónimo Street, in the Old Town of San Sebastián,”** he recalls. Demand continued to grow and, in 1998, production was moved to a small industrial unit in Usurbil, with a modest initial intention: to serve a local distribution network that was already beginning to outgrow the original space.

A name deeply rooted in San Sebastián

Before being called Sarriegui, the company was known as **Patatas San Jerónimo**, a direct reference to the street where it was born. However, the brand had to change its name after discovering that the designation was already registered. Far from becoming a mere setback, the change ultimately strengthened the company's connection to the cultural identity of San Sebastián



The choice of **Sarriegui** was not accidental. It refers to **Raimundo Sarriegui**, a composer deeply connected to Donostia's popular imagination and author, among other works, of the famous *March of San Sebastián*, inseparable from the Tamborrada that transforms the city every January 20th **"We chose the name Sarriegui because of its strong connection to the city of San Sebastián, and especially to the Old Town,"** explains Guardia. In that decision, there is more than branding: it is a way of declaring oneself the heir to a territory.

That rootedness remains one of the key pillars of the brand's narrative. At a time when many gourmet labels have tended to build neutral, internationalized, and almost placeless images, Sarriegui has done the opposite: it has embraced its origins as a point of differentiation. Its expansion has not come from diluting its identity, but from strengthening it.

Craftsmanship as a way of working, not just a narrative.

In the world of premium food, the word *artisanal* has sometimes become an empty expression. At Sarriegui, however, it represents a concrete way of working. The company's greatest achievement has been precisely this: transferring the philosophy with which it began in that small shop on San Jerónimo Street into a larger production structure.

"Fundamentally, we have brought into the factory the artisanal philosophy with which we started in our small but successful shop," says Pablo Guardia. The sentence captures a central idea: growing without breaking the model. For the company, this means paying attention to every detail of the process, from the selection of raw materials to the continuous supervision of the product at every stage.



The control is not rhetorical. The team inspects the raw potatoes before frying, examines them again immediately after frying, and carries out a final check before packaging. It is a system designed to ensure consistency without sacrificing character. The thin slicing and manual salting ultimately define a light, crispy texture, with a clean, balanced and distinctive flavor profile.

Guardia summarizes it with almost technical precision: **“We take care of every detail of the process, from the rigorous selection of raw materials to the constant supervision carried out by our team.”** This vigilance also extends to the oil, whose frying temperature and condition are monitored daily. When it is no longer at its optimal point, it is replaced. Afterwards, it is recycled, typically for biodiesel production.

The Fragility of a Living Raw Material

It is rarely explained in detail to what extent an excellent potato chip depends on factors that remain invisible to the consumer. In the case of Sarriegui, supplier selection is a structural matter. It is not simply about choosing a good potato variety or a suitable oil, but about maintaining consistent quality throughout the year—something particularly complex when working with a living raw material.



“Selecting suppliers—both for the type of potato and the oil used—is essential to ensuring consistent quality throughout the year,” says Guardia. Potatoes require strict temperature control from harvest through transport and storage at the factory. A sudden change can completely compromise the raw material.

The explanation is as straightforward as it is revealing: **“The potato is a living element that requires extreme temperature care.”** Behind a well-made bag of chips lies, in reality, precise logistics, a chain of technical decisions, and a culture of attention to detail that is rarely visible—but always noticeable in the final result.

Awards, Export Growth and International Recognition

Sarriegui’s prestige has not been built solely in the domestic market. The brand ranks among the most recognized in its sector and has received awards in several editions of the **Great Taste Awards** in the United Kingdom, widely regarded as one of the leading international benchmarks in artisanal food. Many of its products have earned one or two stars in a competition particularly valued for giving visibility to small producers with a strong commitment to quality.



However, when Pablo Guardia reflects on the company's evolution, he highlights another sign of validation: the spontaneous interest from foreign importers at a very early stage. **"In practical terms, what encouraged us to grow was being contacted by importers from countries that initially seemed unthinkable to us,"** he explains. He mentions examples such as Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia—markets that emerged when the company was working with only two products: extra virgin olive oil potato chips, salted and unsalted.

What is significant is that this contact did not come after an aggressive commercial push or ambitious international campaigns. It happened because someone tasted the product in a specialty store in the Basque Country, Barcelona, or Madrid. In other words, the product spoke first.

From an Essential Flavor to a Range Designed for the Gourmet Market

The heart of Sarriegui still lies in its founding products: potato chips fried in extra virgin olive oil, with and without added salt. In the company's own words, they are the backbone and the origin of the project. However, the evolution of the gourmet market and international expansion required thinking beyond classicism.



The company has gradually expanded its catalogue to reach 13 flavors, always with the intention of keeping ingredients as natural as possible, within the limits of each recipe. The range also maintains two attributes particularly valued by today's consumers: **gluten-free and preservative-free**.

Among the products highlighted by Pablo Guardia are the potato chips with **Espelette pepper (PDO)**, a variety that connects strongly with territory and product culture, as well as more distinctive profiles such as **lemon and pepper**, **Iberian ham**, **pesto**, and the latest addition: **ginger**.

The logic behind this expansion is not about accumulating flavors without direction. It reflects an international understanding of taste. The brand has sought to build a differentiated offering, certainly, but also one broad enough to resonate with diverse gastronomic cultures. There is sophistication, but there is also strategy.

From Local Brand to International Presence

Sarriegui's consolidation has been gradual and deeply rooted in its territory. The company's first major market was the Basque Country—both Spanish and French—which remains today its main area of consumption. From there, the brand gradually entered strategic gourmet retail outlets, first in Spain and later abroad.

This transformation has required significant changes. The brand image has been modernized through successive refinements, the packaging has been adapted to facilitate entry into foreign markets, and the facilities have been expanded to support growth. Expansion has also involved the introduction of a new production, packaging, and labeling line.



“The greatest evolution came when we prepared to expand the range from the initial three references to the current 13 flavors,” notes Guardia. In the past five years, driven by the company’s second generation, this evolution has accelerated even further. Today, its products are being introduced in numerous European countries, as well as in the Middle East, East Asia, Oceania, Southeast Asia, and the Americas.

The figure now exceeds **30 markets**, a scale that confirms the international journey of a brand that continues to uphold an idea that may seem contradictory, yet increasingly powerful: being local and global at the same time.

The Future of Premium Snacks

The premium snack market is experiencing a period of full internationalization. Producers are exploring new channels, while consumers are demanding greater quality, stronger storytelling, and clearer differentiation. Sarriegui views this landscape as an opportunity to further strengthen its positioning.

“We stand by the principle of being a local artisanal producer with global projection in the gourmet market,” emphasizes Pablo Guardia. The phrase captures the brand’s ambition well. It is not about competing on volume, but on value. Not about appearing artisanal, but about sustaining that condition even as the scale grows.

Within this roadmap, innovation continues to play an important role. Each year, the company develops a new flavor based on suggestions from distributors across different countries and cultures. The latest addition has been ginger, but the next move is already in preparation.

Looking ahead to 2027, Guardia offers a hint that aligns with evolving consumer sensitivities and the brand’s natural progression: **“We also expect to introduce another innovation linked to natural products, which we are already working on—and it won’t be very salty.”**



The phrase—measured and deliberately incomplete—serves as the perfect closing note to a business story that continues to be built on discretion, product, and territory. Sarriegui was born in a 15-square-meter frying shop. Today, it sells in more than 30 countries. Yet its true scale lies elsewhere: in its ability to turn a potato chip into a language of its own.