A FUEL WITH FLAVOR
IN A TWO-FOR-ONE GREEN MOVE, SPAIN IS RECYCLING USED OLIVE OIL INTO BIODIESEL

ow after endless row of olive trees stretch for kilometers over the rolling hills of Andalusia in southern Spain, their branches supporting about 40% of the world’s olive supply—between 800,000 and 1 million tons a year.

But while other European countries have for more than a decade turned the oil from similar oil-producing plants into the environmentally friendly fuel called biodiesel, Spain has been slow to reap similar environmental rewards—until now. With European Union deadlines for alternative fuels looming—2% of fossil fuels replaced with alternatives by 2005; 5.75% replaced by 2010—a crop of Spanish biodiesel plants is now in the works. Spain’s late start may give it a crucial advantage. Rather than relying on virgin oil like its neighbors Germany and France, Spain is converting used cooking oil into biodiesel. So it’s not only producing clean, sustainable energy, it’s recycling.

Austria is the pioneer in the field of recycled biodiesel—it was the first to test biodiesel produced with recycled frying oil, in 1983. About 135 McDonald’s restaurants in Austria collect 1,400 tons of recycled frying oil a year, which is then turned into biodiesel used to fuel buses in the city of Graz. Now Spain is catching up. In February, the first petrol station to pump biodiesel to Spaniards opened in the Catalan town of Tàrrega. The fuel’s producer, Stocks del Vallès, recently opened the fourth plant in the world and the third in Europe to produce biodiesel exclusively from used vegetable oil. Two other plants in Spain expect to start producing biodiesel by the end of this month, and another is under construction.

TIME, JUNE 16, 2003
Mothercare moves to show it also cares for fathers
By Sarah Womack, Social Affairs Correspondent
(Filed: 23/01/2004)

The Mothercare store chain is attempting to reinvent itself amid fears that the company's name deters men from using its shops. It is now facing fierce competition from rival stores, such as Baby Gap and Marks & Spencer. But the company's latest catalogue features a beaming father and child on its cover for the first time, and new in-store departments will focus on products more likely to be bought by fathers such as pushchairs or car seats.

Baby-changing rooms will also be more father-friendly rather than give the impression they are simply ladies' lavatories with extra space to change a child.

Mothercare said its research had shown that men preferred to take an active part in child-rearing rather than be seen as the person in charge of discipline. New fathers also wanted to spend more time with their children, with nearly seven in 10 claiming they would give up work to be with their children if they could afford it. This figure rises to nearly three in four of fathers under 30. It marks a radical departure from men assuming they would be the breadwinner and that women would give up work if they had the financial backing to support such a move.

One in three fathers felt left out as a result of spending less time with his children, again rising to six in 10 of those aged under 30, according to the research by YouGov, which interviewed more than 1,000 fathers.

Mothercare is determined to make changes after one in four men said that he felt that shopping for children's products was "an intimidating experience" and four in 10 found the products "confusing".

Despite the planned changes, the store said it had no plans to change its title. Sarah Hobbs, its head of customer research, said: "Fathers no longer want to be seen as the distant disciplinarians of old, but are instead looking for a more involving and emotional relationship with their children."

"The launch of this latest Mothercare catalogue, with just a dad and baby on the cover, is part of a series of moves to help new dads get more involved in child care and make the shopping experience more father-friendly."

The Daily Telegraph, Online
Friday, 23 January 2004