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Spanish-language Specialists Mertin Literary Agency Honored

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Spanish and Portuguese-language specialists, the Mertin Literary Agency, took home “International Literary Agent of the Year” prize at the LBF this month.

By Edward Nawotka, Editor-in-Chief



Nicole Witt leads The Mertin Agency in Frankfurt, Germany

Earlier this month at the London Book Fair, the [Mertin Literary Agency](#) took home the prize as “International Literary Agent of the Year.” “It’s a great acknowledgement of our work: making a contribution to expanding readers’ horizons all over the world by selling books in Spanish and Portuguese language with personal conviction, professionalism and moral integrity. And above all, it’s a great tribute to our outstanding authors,” says principle agent Nicole Witt.

Witt took over the 33-year-old Frankfurt-based agency in 2007 after the death of founder Ray-Güde Mertin, and the agency has been working with Spanish and Portuguese authors as far back as 1982. It represents writers from the majority of Spanish-speaking and Lusophone countries, including Luis Sepúlveda, Mia Couto, Héctor Abad, Patrícia Melo, Paulo Lins, Lucía Puenzo, David Toscana, Manuel Rivas, Jorge Carrión, Gonçalo M. Tavares, Adriana Lisboa and others.

Among its most famous clients was Nobel Prize-winner Jose Saramago. Ray-Güde Mertin served for many years as Saramago's German translator, and the firm eventually sold his works to top publishing houses in over 60 countries.

Alas, earlier this year, representation for Saramago's estate was transferred to the Wiley Agency, something that prompted her to write that being "specialized in literature in Portuguese and Spanish language [is] not an easy task in a world predominated by the Anglo-Saxon culture and international markets that have been increasingly concentrating on the publication of national authors and translations from the English language. In the area of fiction, these days the percentage of translations from the English is up to 70%. It is a great fulfillment for us to be able to make a contribution to expanding readers' horizons all over the world by offering works by authors in Spanish and Portuguese language, always in collaboration with the best publishing houses, whether they be part of bigger publishing groups or independent."

About the Author

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Edward Nawotka is the Editor-in-Chief of *Publishing Perspectives*. A former foreign correspondent, he has covered the book business exclusively since 2000, serving as daily news editor for *Publishers Weekly* and columnist for Bloomberg News.