Romanesque art, Catalonia’s most characteristic style

Catalonia is and always has been receptive to the various art styles that have succeeded one another in Europe. Two were perhaps more thoroughly assimilated than others: Romanesque art, which emerged while Catalonia’s historical personality was taking shape, and Modernisme (Art Nouveau style) born in the heyday of the Renaixença when Catalonia was recovering the sense of her own identity.

The birth and expansion of Romanesque art took place at a time when the sovereignty of the Counts of Barcelona had been recognized by the other Catalan counts. The unification of the country coincided with two other important events. One was the de facto severing of ties with the French kings who had succeeded the last Carolingians. The other was the exposition to Cordoba (1010) whereby the threat of an invasion was finally averted and the small realm of Muslim kings, into which the caliphate had been split up, came under the protection of the Catalan counts (1033). It was an age of prosperity and fertility: the great noble families were strengthening their position, the hierarchy of feudal society was being set up, gold coins were beginning to circulate and the population was growing fast.

All these events occurred in Old Catalonia, which lay to the north of the traditional route to Aragon through the Arona, Segara and Urgell “comarques” (natural regions). The frontier was slowly pushed further back until by 1148–49 the Christian conquest of New Catalonia was complete. The very gradual nature of the conquest explains why Romanesque buildings are very abundant in the Pyrenean mountains and foothills, more widely scattered in the central lowlands, and few and far between in southern Catalonia.

Catalonia has some 1,900 Romanesque churches, about 200 castles and fortified houses with Romanesque features, a few partially renovated castles and mansions, some unusual buildings like the Jewish mikvahs, as well as bridges, mills and other buildings which bring the total to well over 2,000.

To this architectural heritage must be added the mural paintings and illuminated manuscripts, sculptures, altar decorations, and other objects which have been preserved either in churches or in the big museums.

Not everything that has come down to us from the Romanesque period is of equal value and interest. Some of the small buildings are of importance primarily as tokens of a bygone age. It is a fact, nonetheless, that the Catalan Romanesque heritage is a whole ranks among the richest and most plentiful in Europe.

Romanesque art, the first European art

Romanesque art was the first great style to be shared by the whole of western Europe. It appeared during the Middle Ages, at the end of the first millennium, as the Carolingian Empire was breaking up and the various European nationalities were taking shape. Propagated by conquerors, religious orders and pilgrimages, it quickly swept from Damietta to the British Isles and from northern Germany to the border between Christendom and the Muslim-occupied part of the Iberian peninsula.

Romanesque art, though a blend of the building traditions of the Roman Empire and of experiments made during the Carolingian period and at the beginning of the Holy Roman Empire, was nonetheless an original and vigorous style that lasted until well into the 13th C. Its solid and sober lines characterize everything built at the time (churches and monasteries, castles, country houses and bridges) and it yielded magnificent results in the fields of painting, sculpture, gold and silverware, miniatures, furniture.

The “world of Romanesque art”, moreover, was closely bound up with the first attempts at popular poetry, the birth of western philosophy and the arts of illuminated manuscripts, the birth of western philosophy and the arts of illumination, sculpture, gold and silverware, miniatures, furniture.

Evolution and main features

Following attempts throughout the 10th C. to build churches from stone, mortar and lime and to cover the main body of the building with vaulted notebook pre-Romanesque style, teams of Lombard master builders spread rapidly throughout Europe. This brought about the appearance of the more ambitious but still savages and lieutenants of early Romanesque art, with their massive masonry (need to uphold the barrel vault), their semicircular apses and walls with arcatures and pilar-strips (so-called Lombard bands), their aisles separated by pillars joined together by the characteristic semicircular arches that were also used for doorways and windows.

From the end of the 11th century, schools of stonemasons brought sculpture into buildings and cloisters (using motifs inspired by oriental fabrics, illuminated Bibles, bestiaries and scenes from everyday life) and at the same time architecture became more complex (second Romanesque art). Small country churches continued to be built with a single nave, eastward-facing apse, doorway on the south side and wall belfry, but religious buildings of monumental proportions also began to appear with three or five aisles, transects, several apses, ambulatory, lantern and slender bell-tower, arcivolts around the doorway, tympanums and columns with lavishly decorated capitals.

The suggested routes

In view of the number of monuments and the size of this publication, we have been forced to make difficult choices. We suggest six main routes that will enable visitors to discover a small selection of samples of Catalan Romanesque art. These routes follow the main lines of communication leading from north to south. Alternative routes are proposed so that those with time and inclination may undertake side-trips, skip part of the main route, or combine one route with another.

Three of the routes begin at the French frontier with the Roussillon (a region that has historical links with Catalonia). From here visitors can also discover the rich Romanesque heritage of this region. Two other routes afford the opportunity to include the Romanesque art of Andorra, Gascony or the areas lying along the Aragonese border to the west that were once linked to Catalonia. Route 3 through Penedès and New Catalonia is of interest in discovering the art styles of the Catalanist order and the Knights Templar and the area that came under the influence of the School of Lleida.

It is worth pointing out that only a few monuments have fixed visiting hours. Country churches are often closed for security reasons when no service is taking place and the key is kept at the town hall or some house in the village. Information on accommodation and restaurants, as well as help in making your journey more pleasant and satisfying, may be obtained from any Tourist Information Office.

It is our hope that these suggestions may be of assistance to you in discovering the great treasures of Catalan Romanesque art.

Discovering Romanesque art in Catalonia

Romanesque art of Andorra, Gascony and the areas lying along the Aragonese border to the west that were once linked to Catalonia. Route 3 through Penedès and New Catalonia is of interest in discovering the art styles of the Catalanist order and the Knights Templar and the area that came under the influence of the School of Lleida.

Hand of God, Sant Climent de Taüll (1123). MNAC

Apsidal into church (from the Urgell Diocese, MNAC)
We take the N145 from the frontier with Andorra down the Valira valley and soon come to Sant Pere de Torelló, which stands on the opposite bank. Slightly further on is the ancient and dynamic capital of the comarca of Urgell, La Seu d’Urgell, lying in the midst of a wide, green plain surrounded by mountains, where the Segre and Valira rivers meet. Besides visiting the cathedral of Santa Maria and the church of Sant Pere i Sant Miquel, with its magnificently restored church, visitors should stroll beneath the arcades of the Catedral de Santa Maria and the church of Sant Pere i Sant Miquel, with its magnificent doorway of Santa Maria, and those with a sweet tooth can enjoy the famous “torrons” (nougat).

Beyond the great, fortified mansions of L’Aranyó and Castellbò, a fine example of Romanesque art situated in the borough of La Baronia de Rialb which possesses 24 tiny churches from the same period. On the outskirts of Ponts, the C-1412 to Tremp turns off across the river towards Tàrrega, the lively capital of the comarca of Alto Urgell, lying in the midst of a wide, green plain surrounded by mountains, where the Segre and Valira rivers meet. From here there is an excellent view over the busy town of Tàrrega, perched on a hill in a clearly visible and easily accessible spot. Our route continues towards Artesa de Segre, where we take the C-14 across flat arable land to Agramunt.

In Agramunt one can admire the splendid Romanesque dooryard of Santa Maria, and those with a sweet tooth can enjoy the famous “torrons” (nougat) and “xocolata a la pedra” (chocolate). After passing the handsome village cross and the restored church of Sant Pere stands on a hill in a clearly visible and easily accessible spot. Our route continues towards Tàrrega, where we take the C-14 across flat arable land to Agramunt.

We take the N145 and after 2 km come to the church of Sant Climent (note the sloping base walls of the bell tower) and “a la pedra” (chocolate). After passing the handsome village cross and the restored church of Sant Pere stands on a hill in a clearly visible and easily accessible spot. Our route continues towards Tàrrega, where we take the C-14 across flat arable land to Agramunt.

Returning to La Seu, we continue down the Segre valley along the C-14. We soon reach a tunneling to the right towards Castellbó, where the old collegiate church of Santa Maria stands. The gentle scenery, with bright, luxuriant greenery on the river banks, suddenly changes as the road enters the narrow gorge of Tresponts. River and road wind painstakingly along between towering rock faces while down below one can still see the remains of the old mule track hewn out of the rocks and of the bridges that gave the gorge its name (“three bridges”).

Beyond the ravine is Organyà, nestling at the foot of the Santa Fe hill. The church of Santa Maria is worth a visit and a small circular building contains a facsimile of the famous Organó Salmons considered to be the most ancient document written in Catalan (late 12th C). The original is kept in the Biblioteca de Catalunya. Further on, near the start of roses on the hilltop at Coll de Nacli, we turn onto the spectacular mountain road to Tremp, the soon come to the church of Sant Climent (note the sloping base walls of the bell tower) and “a la pedra” (chocolate). Further on the C-264 a track leads down to the church of Sant Romà in the unusual and picturesque setting of Valldarques. The C-14 continues down the Segre valley to the wide Oliana reservoir. As we emerge from a tunnel the church of Santa Maria stands. The gentle scenery, with bright, luxuriant greenery on the river banks, suddenly changes as the road enters the narrow gorge of Tresponts. River and road wind painstakingly along between towering rock faces while down below one can still see the remains of the old mule track hewn out of the rocks and of the bridges that gave the gorge its name (“three bridges”).

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Main historic buildings

Agramunt. Parish church of Santa Maria (11-13th C.): 3 aisles with 3 apses, very fine door, magnificient example of School of Liéda style with richly decorated architrave (rows of saints and virgins), carved capitals and high relief on the lintel (Virgin, Annunciation and Epiphany), commissioned in 1283 by local weavers.

Bescaran. Isolated bell tower of the old parish church of Sant Martí (11-12th C.): handsome 6-storey bell tower with Lombard decoration and two light windows. (Borough: Les Valls de la Valira.)

Castellboí. Former collegiate church of Santa Maria (13th C.): Romanesque-Gothic transition style, door with pointed arch and archivolt, plain leaves on the capitals and Romanesque archwork. (Borough: Montferrer i Castellbò.)

Castell-llobres. Former parish church, now shrine, of La Mare de Déu (Virgin, Annunciation and Epiphany), consecrated 1180, modified: 3 aisles, square bell tower with Lombard decoration and round windows. (Borough: La Baronia de Vilademàger.)

Cervera. Interesting 11th C. church of Sant Pere Gros on the outskirts, an unusual circular building with a dome and small external apse, once a Benedictine priory. In the town, arch-priest's church of Santa Maria, Gothic but with earlier features including the south door of the ancient church of Sant Martí (tympanum showing the saint giving part of his cape to a poor man.

Coll de Nargó. Former parish church of Sant Climent de Nargó (11th C.), with nave and apse from the Lombard period, adjacent to an exceptionally fine pre-Romanesque bell tower with sloping walls at the base and windows with horseshoe arches and storey is later. Within the municipal boundaries, church of Sant Romà de Valldarques (12th C.), nave and apse, fine 2-storey bell tower with Lombard decoration and round windows.

Estamariu. Former parish church of Sant Vicenç (11th C.), currently being restored. Two of the 3 aisles and the central apse with Lombard decoration still stand.

Guaster. Former Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria (12-13th C.). Of the 3-aisle church (bombed in 1936 after the Civil War) only reinforced ruins remain: part of the walls, part of the cloister and one apse. (Borough: La Baronia de Riboll.)

Ollana. Chapel of Sant Andreu, originally belonging to Ollana castle, subsequently parish church (11th C.), enlarged (12th C.): nave and apse with characteristic Lombard features.

Organyà. Former priory and collegiate church of Santa Maria (12th C.). Modified: 3 aisles, square bell tower with Lombard decoration and round windows. (Borough: La Baronia de Riboll.)

Palau de Rialb. Parish church of Santa Maria (11-12th C.): 3 aisles, apse with characteristic Lombard decoration. (Borough: La Baronia de Riboll.)

Palagalls. Parish church of Sant Esteve (consecrated 1180, modified): nave, remarkable door, recently restored, with archivolt and decorated capitals (plant and animal motifs) and earlier tympanum decorated with Christ in Majesty and two angels. (Borough: Els Plans de Sió.)

Ponts. Handsome church of the former Augustinian canony of Sant Pere (12th C.) nave with 3 cross-shaped apses decorated on the outside in Lombard style, octagonal lantern. Recently restored.

Sant Berní de Tàrrega. Former Benedictine abbey, subsequently Anselm parish church (church consecrated 1040). The three aisles are gone but the following have survived: large chevet (largely restored in 1971-74) with main apse divided into 3 small apses (the middle one is trefoil plan inside), transept with an apse at either end. Antependium at the AMAC and some capitals in the USA. (Borough: La Baronia de Vilademàger.)

Santa Coloma de Queralt. Church of former Mercedarian convent of Santa Maria de Bell-lloc (13th C.) outside the town: Romanesque Gothic transition style, fine doorway to the School of Liéda with archivolt, columns and decorated capitals, tympanum with Marian scenes. Important Gothic tomb inside.

La Seu d’Urgell. City that grew up around the medieval diocese of Urgell. In the heart of the old quarter, magnificent cathedral of Santa Maria (12th C.), which replaced the two earlier cathedrals and constitutes the most outstanding example of Italian-style Romanesque architecture in Catalonia (the master builder in 1177, Ramon Lombard, was of Italian origine), basilican plan with 3 aisles, very long transept with 5 apses (4 interior apses, the middle one outward and an elegant upper gallery). 3 doors on the west side, each 13th C. and more ornate. On the north and south sides, 2 octagonal towers flanking the facade which is adorned with arched and bands of Lombard decoration and two large windows. (Borough: Santa Margarida de Montbui.)

Tàrrega. Façade of the 13th C. Palace of Els Margarros de la Floresta, fine examples of Romanesque civil architecture in the style of the Païne in Lleida.

La Tossa de Montbui. Interesting early medieval church of Santa Maria, built as a parish church alongside Monestir Castle (10th C.). Part of it still stands: 3 pre-Romanesque aisles (11th C.) with 5 bays of both capitals, plain capitals and horsehoe arches, fringing the aisles, 11th C. chancel and 3 Romanesque apses with characteristics Lombard features added by Bishop Oliva. Recently restored. (Borough: Santa Margarida de Montbui.)

Vilafranca del Penedès. Former parish church of Sant Pere de Miàger. In the precinct of the castle (12th C.). Raised nave, fine doorway with double archivolt. (Borough: La Llacuna.)
Route 2:

From the Val d’Aran to Lleida via Pallars and Ribagorça

No visitor should miss the key Romanesque monuments of the Val d’Aran. On the way from the shrine of Cap d’Aran in Tredòs at the foot of the Pla de Betsar and Lleida, one can stop at the parish church of Vall de Salardó and the nearby hamlet of Uriba, which overlooks the green valley as far as the distant glaciers of Mount Aruèl. Proceeding down the Garrotxa, we come to Santa Maria d’Arties rising against the spectacular background of the Montaro d’Aran. Further on lies Estomme, with its unusual doorway, the church of Vallia, which contains remarkable works of art and, still further downstream, the church of Bossost, close to the N-131. One of the proposed routes leaves the Val d’Aran via the Vayella tunnel and follows the course of the Noguera Ribagorçana towards the Upper Ribagorça. Just before El Pont del Serrat—an important town with an interesting modern church—is a road to the left which runs for 25 km or so through the Vall de Boí. In this valley, close to the National Park of Aigüestortes and lake Sant Maurici, are possibly the most important set of Pyrenean Romanesque buildings in the whole of Catalonia, declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO (1980): the churches of Cull, Barabera, Durro, Boí, Ertll la Vall, Carlet and the two churches at Taüll, with their slender bell towers and graceful architecture, all blending harmoniously into the magnificent high mountain scenery.

At El Pont del Serrat we leave the N-230 and the river Ribagorçana to follow the N-260 towards La Pobla de Segur via the Peresas pass. The road, with its constant bends, becomes difficult and even slightly hazardous as it winds amid wild scenery with plunging ravines, along ridges with panoramic views and through quaint villages. At Senterada, just before La Pobla de Segur one can turn left into the beautiful valley of Val Fosca, where the gentle, lush green of the river banks is a welcome relief from the rough mountain slopes. Here we visit the headwaters of the Flamisell, the lakes of Estany Gento, and the little churches of Cabdella, Espall and Sant Martí de la Tosa.

The other possible route from Aran to La Pobla de Segur is the C-26, which goes over the Bonagua pass (only open between April/May and October/November on account of snow). The road winds down in a spectacular series of bends to Estem d’Àreu as part of the Noguera Pallaresa valley known as the Vall d’Àreu. From here we take a short road up the river to two outstanding buildings: Sant Joan d’Isil, standing right on the river bank and, slightly further north, the parish church of Sant Llorenç in the little village of Alos d’Isil. From Estem, following the Escalarre road and doing a slight detour, we come to the shrine of Santa Maria d’Àneu before returning to the Noguera Pallaresa and the C-26. Then, beyond the La Tomassa or La Guingueta reservoir, we reach the monastery of Sant Pere del Bural, an interesting building which stands on high ground on the left-hand side of the river opposite Escaló and can be reached across a small bridge.

From Llavorsí it is worthwhile visiting two neighbouring valleys. One, the Vall Fosca, is rich in iron autotops and numerous Romanesque and pre-Romanesque buildings are scattered throughout the borough of Ains, which stretches as far as Catalonia’s highest peak, the Pica d’Estats. In the neighbouri- ing Vall de Cardós, the majestic bell tower of Santa Maria d’Àneu stands on high ground on the left-hand side of the river opposite Escaló and can be reached across a small bridge.

Returning to the Noguera Pallaresa, we travel downstream, through Sort, the tourist centre and capital of Pallars Sobirà, until we find ourselves below the shrine of Lludoli, made from reddish stone and perched above the left bank of the river. A little further on, opposite the picturesque town of Giron de la Sal, whose old salt works can still be seen, is the splendid building that once housed the monastery of Santa Maria. We travel on through the impressively rugged Colleget gorge, between vertical limestone walls past the attractive L’Argentina rock, till we reach La Pobla de Segur, where we join the other route from Aran through Alta Ribagorça.

The high mountains are now far behind and before us is the vast sun-drenched Conca de Tramuntana. The Noguera Pallaresa runs into the Sant Antoni, or Talarn reservoir. From Temps, the capital of Pallars Jussà, we take the C-1412 to Ponts via Isona to visit the interesting churches of Antinyà de la Conca, nestling beneath a great rock, and Covet, with its very handsome doorway. South of Tramuntana, the road runs alongside the Ternada reservoir. At the head of the lake, we can take an asphalted road through Guardia de Noguera to the castle and collegiate church of Mur.

Beyond the long and spectacular ravine carved out by the river through the Montacot range, the Pla de Terrades, we enter the Vall d’Àger. Almost immedi- ately we come upon the church and castle of Montsant d’Àger, standing in a beautiful setting and reflected in the waters of the Camarasa reservoir. Here, one can go back up the C-1412 to take a short detour and cross the river towards the charming town of Àger, with its ancient collegiate church of Sant Pere. After admiring the magnificent view from the Àger pass we continue down to the ancient abbey of Bellpuig de les Avellanes and thence to Balaguer on the banks of the Segre.

On the outskirts of Balaguer, the capital of Noguera, is the Romanesque church of Santa Maria de les Franqueses. The town also boasts other interesting buildings and an exceptionally fine square with archways. From here one can also take the Doll road as far as Camarasa to see the church of Sant Miquel and the remains of the castle overlooking the town and the narrow valley.

The roads from Balaguer to Leida run in almost straight lines on either side of the quiet waters of the Segre. The mountains have faded into the distance and the landscape is flat, with combles and orchards. 28 km further on we reach Lleida, the capital of Segrià and of western Catalonia. Lleida offers several fine examples of Romanesque art: the Sau Viells, the churches of Sant Martí, Sant Llorenç and Santa Maria de Gardany.
Main historic buildings

Abella de la Conca. Former parish church of Sant Esteve, fine building, 3 aisles, 3 apses and 3-storied bell tower with two light windows, all with Lombard decoration.

Agés. Reinforced ruins of the former collegiate church of Sant Pere, crypt with 3 aisles (11th C.), 12th C. upper church with 3 aisles and 3 apses, central tower with arcades and inner rich- es, half columns and carved capitals. Mural paintings at the MNAC. Also remains of Agés castle and of the fortifications that surrounded monastery Fall. (Borough: Alt Àneu.)

Adam and Eve before and after the Fall. (Borough: Isona i Conca Dellà.)

Agol. Parish church of Sant Lídia, modified: interesting doorway with 3 decorated archivolts, chess- board friezé, columns and capitals with heads of humans and animals, also two very ancient low reliefs on either side, believed to represent Adam and Eve before and after the Fall. (Borough: Alt Àneu.)

Arboçó. Shrine of La Mare de Déu de Llobregat (mid 12th C.) in reddish-coloured stone: nave and apses with arcatures, small bell tower over the nave. (Borough: Gironà.)


Alós d’Isil. Parish church of Sant Llorenç, modified: interesting doorway with 3 decorated archivolts, chess-board friezé, columns and capitals with heads of humans and animals, also two very ancient low reliefs on either side, believed to represent Adam and Eve before and after the Fall. (Borough: Alt Àneu.)

Barcelona. Historical centre of the Vall de Boí. Modified Romanesque parish church of Sant Vicenç, with square bell tower and Lombard apse. A wooden status of Christ (12th C.) at the MNAC comes from here. In the same valley, church of Sant Martí de la Tura (west and small apse) and church of Sant Julià d’Espai, modified, with bell tower similar to those found in the Vall de Boí. (Borough: La Torre de Cadielles.)

Camarasa. Remains of the old castle and of the ancient parish church of Sant Miquel on a hillock overlooking the town: building in Romanesque-Gothic transition style (13th C.), only a few walls and the chevet with inter- esting capitals remain (others at the MNAC).

Cap d’Arinsal. Shrine of Era de Mare de Déu, now Trinity parish church, 12th C., altered basilican plan with 3 aisles, 3 apses with Lombard ornamentation, small crypt, door with archivolts and columns with carved capitals and Christmon over the key- stone. Many of the mural paintings are now at The Cloisters in New York. (Borough: Nàst Aran.)

Cóll. Parish church of Santa María: nave, wall with arcatures, doorway with archivolts (12th C.). The carved capitals with Lombard decoration; 2 remarkable doors, es- timation, small crypt, door with archivolts and columns with carved capitals and Christmon over the key- stone. Many of the mural paintings are now at The Cloisters in New York. (Borough: Nàst Aran.)

Cóll. Parish church of Santa Maria: nave, wall with arcatures, doorway with archivolts (12th C.) and chess- board friezé, low relief with Christmon, framework on door and bell tower. (Borough: Vall de Boí)

Dort. Parish church of Santa Maria (12th C.) in the shape of a Latin cross: 3 apses, inner gallery behind the rose window on the façade; very large and massive sculpture doorways revealing Toulous- ean influence with figures in relief (showing the fall of the angels, scenes from the Old and New Testament, arcabats, etc.), one of the most origi- nal in Catalan Romanesque art, tym- panum depicting Christ and Evangeli- sts. (Borough: Isona i Conca Dellà.)

Durr. Parish church of La Nativitat de la Mare de Déu (12th C.), restored: nave, side porch with arcades, doorway with archivolts on double co- lumns, built on the door, square Lombard-type bell tower, more mas- sive than others in the Vall de Boí. (Borough: Vall de Boí.)

Erla La Vall. Parish church of Santa Eulàlia (12th C.) totally restored, nave, semicircular apse and small apses forming a transept, porch with arcades resting on columns, magnifi- cently stoned Lombard-type bell tow- er with pairs of windows. The famous group of sculptures, Descent from the Cross, of which a copy has been made, now split between the MNAC and the MEV, comes from here. (Borough: Vall de Boí.)

Escornau. Parish church of Sant Pau, altered but retaining its very beautiful 12th C. door, 2 archivolts, 2 columns with carved bases and capitals (small heads and geometri- cal designs); tympanum with very rudimentary figure of Christ; friezé over arcade with Christmon, other designs and chess boards. Inside, Romanesque fonts. (Borough: Vellí, Moià.)

Garriga de la Sal. Former Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria: the spa- cious church (inclosed 1148, modi- fied still stands: 3 aisles separated by massive pillars, 3 apses with Lombard decoration, door with archi- volt and wrought capitals protected a 3-part galleries, 3-storied wall bel- ler over the middle of the façade, which has been largely restored.

Lleida. Capital of Western Catalonia, already an important city under Arab domination (conquered 1149). Foremost among Romanesque monu- ments is La Seu Vella (the old ca- thedral), standing on the La Suda promontory, magnificent example of Romanesque-Gothic transition style built by Pere Sacoma (1203-1279) with basilican plan; 3 aisles, wide transept with lantern over the cross- ing and 5 apses at east end. The two doors, Porta del Pfitsins and Porta de la Fontova, are fine examples of the work of the School of Lleida, which takes its name from here (here the archivolt and capitals in the Provençal tradition with Arabic-style motifs showing Biblical and pro- spheric scenes). The cloister is fully Gothic. Restoration is well underway. Restored 13th C. buildings in La Suda district (Carollia, Casa de l’Almena, Church of Sant Llorenç (17th C.), enlarged in Gothic times, with fine School of Lleida door. Church of Sant Martí, 13th C., with interesting sculptures and very elabor- ate doorway, from El Tomilló (Huete). Church of Santa Maria de Gastera); built in very eastern Cis- tercian style (13th C.), formerly part of an important and ancient community of the Knights Templar (later of the Knights Hospitaller). Present City Hall (La Paeria, 13th C.), interesting example of Romanesque civil archi- tecture.

Mur. Former Augustinian canony of Santa Maria (12th C.) church with basilican plan, 3 aisles, 3 Lombard- type apses. Many of the mural paint- ings are in Boston or the MNAC. Cloister with rudimentary capitals. On a nearby crape ruins of Mur castle (11th C.) masterpiece of Catalan
Romanesque civil architecture. Both the monastery (cloister and east sec- tor buildings) and the castle have re- cently been restored. (Borough: Castell de Mur.)

Ribera de Cardós. Parish church of Santa María (12th C., modified): ornate doorway and rose window, slender 3-storey bell tower with Lombard decoration and pairs of windows similar to those found in the Vall de Boí. (Borough: La Vall de Cardós.)

Salarés. Parish church of Sant Andreu (12-13th C.), Romanesque-Gothic transition style; basilica plan: 3 aisles, 3 apses, 3 doors, with 5 arch- ways in School of Lleida style; inside, magnificent 13th C. Romanesque wooden sculpture, the Christ of Salarés, with beard, tuftic and feet placed with nails, reminiscent of the one at Mijaran. In 1994-1999, remarkable late Gothic mural paintings were un- covered. (Borough: Naut Aran.)

Sant Joan d’Isà. Former monastery: church with 3 aisles and 3 apses. Lombard decoration on walls above heads of humans and animals, door with decorated archivolt and styl- ized capitals; in the upper flecha, low reliefs (damaged) of Adam and Eve before and after the Fall, similar to those at Aíns d’Isà. (Borough: Alt Aran.)

Sant Pere del Burgal. Former Benedictine monastery; large rein- forced naves of the 12th C. church: 3 apses on the east side (restored and maintained) and on west. Remarkable mural paintings attrib- uted to the 11th and 12th centuries in the MNAC, come from here (repro- ductions). They depict saints and prophets and, for the first time, the prophetics). They depict saints and

Santa María d’Àneu. Former Bene- dictine monastery: 11th C. church (mod. ref.), apses with Lombard deco- ration. Magnificent polychrome mural paintings, now at the MNAC, come from here. Probably later than those at Sant Pere del Burgal, they depict angels or sarcaphs with six wings studded with eyes —symbolizing vigilance— surrounded by the letters of the Sanctors and holding tongs with burning coals in their hands the purification of Isaac and burn- ing wheels. (Borough: La Guingueta i Joc.)

Taüll. In this village are two of the most beautiful of the famous Vall de Boí Romanesque churches: Sant Climent and Santa Maria, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO (2000) together with the other Romanesque churches of the Vall de Boí, built by the powerful Ertill dynasty and consecrated on successive days in 1123. Sant Climent, on the outskirts, is a magnificent church with 3 aisles separated by columns, 3 apses with arcatures and bands of Lombard decoration, a slender 6-storey square bell tower separate from the building, also with Lombard decoration, and two light windows. The mural paint- ings (1123) in the chevet (reproductions —the originals are at the MNAC— are among the finest exam- ples of the genre on account of their power of expression, purity of line and rich polychromy (Christ in Majesty, saints and apostles, scenes from the Old and New Testaments and the Apocalypse). Santa Maria has the same structure and a fine bell tower attached to the church. The chief feature of the mural paintings (also at the MNAC) is the Virgin and Child. Also at Taüll, remains of the Romanesque church of Sant Martí and chapel of Sant Quirze. (Borough: Vall de Boí)

Vielha. Small 12th C. parish church of Santa Eulàlia, 3 aisles and 3 apses. (Borough: Naut Aran.)

Vilaça. Parish church of Sant Miquel, Gothic but with elements of the original Romanesque-Gothic transition building (12-13th C.). Beauti- ful 12th C. baptismal font with low relief and famous Christ of Mijaran, a magnificent life-size wooden bust which has been part of a Descent from the Cross like that at Ertill in Vall. The old convent and church of Santa Maria de Mijaran, from which the bust comes, was once the political centre of the Vall d’Aran. The Valley of the Valley swore there to respect the privileges. The basilica, now part of a modern building, are to the north of the village. (Borough: Vielha e Mijaran.)

Viella. Christ of Mijaran

Terrassa. Cathedral, cloister doorway

Route 3: From Penedès to New Catalonia via the monasteries of the Cistercian and military orders

From Barcelona we take the N-340 to the Orbí pass and on to the winegrowing area of Alt Penedès. A side road to Laven brings us to Sant Sadellia della Gorga. The regional capital is Vilanova del Penedès, a town with fine His- toric buildings and a wine museum (Museu del Vi). From here we can make in- teresting side trips to the church of Sant Caput at Moia, to the castle and church of Sant Martí Barroca, which has one of the most beautiful apses in Catalonia, to the ancient buildings and archeological remains at Olot, where one can en- joy the magnificent view, and finally to the chapel of El Sant Sepúlcre.

Following the N-340 southwards, we come to a side road from L’Arboç to the ancient priory of Banyeres del Penedès. Further on, a left turning from Bellvei goes to the town of Castelló, whose house cluster around the hilltop castle and church of La Santa Creu, overlooking the coastline and the nearby seaside re- sort and harbour. From El Vendrell, the capital of Baix Penedès, the route runs along the Costa Daurada to Tarragona, formerly Tarraco, the capital of Hispania Citerior, which has preserved magnificent frontier monuments from its Roman past as well as examples of Romanesque art, foremost among them the cathedral. An excursion can be made to the ancient monastery of Escalabou (some 25 km to the west) which affords fine views over the region of Tarragona.

A side road through Nules and Balaguer leads to Tarsagena to the great medieval Cistercian monastery of Sant Cugat, which has several fine Romanesque features. We continue along the Gala river towards El Pont d’Armentera, where we take a minor road to El Plei de Santa Maria with its remarkable church. Beyond the Cabrera pass to the north, we cross into Conca de Barberà, Montsià, the picturesque capital, still enriched by its imposing walls and offers several noteworthy monuments. Our route takes us through nearby L’Espuña; on the way to the Cistercian monastery of Poblet, which is one of the most important historic buildings in Catalonia and a leading religious and cultural centre. The last stop on the Cistercian part of the route is the monastery of Vallbona de les Monges, an interesting and particularly attractive example of Romanesque-Gothic transition style (located some 25 km north along the C-76).

Continuing on our way from Poblet, we leave the vineyards and oilypress country behind and climb up into the Prades mountains. The walled village of Prades, with its red-hued stone, is very picturesque. Further on, a left turning from Cornudella takes us to Siurana, a village of great character with a very beautiful church, perched on the edge of these cliffs with spectacular views over the reser- voir and river of the same name. Our route now crosses into Priorat, where the wine and olive oil of the Priorat go over state roads. Beyond Rascafría, where the final remains of the former Cistercian monastery of Escueller, at the foot of the Montserrat.

The beauty of the countryside is ample compensation for the long drive via Falset and Ferreries Baja required to reach three more key Romanesque monu- ments: the castle of the Knights Templar at Miravel, overlooking the river Ebre; Gardensa, the capital of Terra Alta, with its splendid church doorway, and the ancient castle of the Knights Hospitaller and adjoining church of Els Àngels at Ulldecona, at the southern tip of Catalonia in Montsia.
Main historic buildings

Banyeres del Penedès. Shrine and former Benedictine priory of Santa Maria, 12th C., apses.

Calafell. Church of Santa Creu (11th C.) in precinct of old castle nave and ase with Lombard decoration (a crypt and another aisle were added later); remains of 11th C. mural paintings under more recent works.

Escaladei. Former Cistercian monastery of Santa Maria: remains of old church (12th C.) but mainly of Romanesque and Baroque buildings. The buildings have been reinforced and a monastery cell and accommodation rebuilt. (Borough: La Morna de Montserrat.)

Escornalbou. Former Augustinian canony (French Romanesque convent from 1150). Church of Sant Miquel, restored (1910) by E. Toda; church (1240) with beautiful doorway and large rose window, octagonal lantern, fine stonework, and fine sculpted tympanum. (Borough: Avinyonet del Penedès.)

Gandesa. Parish church of L’Assumpció (renovated 17th-18th C.), very austere Romanesque façade, 13th C., one of the finest in the area; restored: nave, wide transept, octagonal lantern, fine stonework, and decorated lintel and tympanum. (Borough: La Morna de Montserrat.)

Miret. Imposing fortress above the Ebro, centre of a powerful community of the military order of the Knights Templar, good example of the military architecture of the period; precipice with massive walls and towers; inside it, church of Sant Martí with large vaulted rooms underneath. The group of buildings has been reinforced and restored over the past few years.

Moja. Parish church of Sant Cugat (now Sant Jaume); nave, transept, Lombard decoration in apse, bell tower over nave. (Borough: Olèrdola.)

Montblanc. Church of Sant Miquel, Romanesque-Gothic transition style, very austere Romanesque facade; door with archivolt and capitals.

Olèrdola. Church of Sant Miquel, in early medieval fortress built over Iberian and Roman buildings (a crypt and another aisle were added later); adjoining north-east side, chancel of Mozarabic type (9th C.) with horseshoe arch, Annunciation gable and later lantern. The church and on Pla de los Albats. Within municipal boundaries, at the Mas de Sant Saturi, important Romanesque building: mural paintings, private property.

El Pia de Santa Maria. Church of Santa Maria (now Sant Ramon) de Pia de Santa Maria (formerly Pia de Catalunya). 13th C., one of the finest in the area, restored: nave, wide transept, octagonal lantern, fine stonework, and decorated lintel and tympanum. (Borough: La Morna de Montserrat.)

Sant Martí Sarroca. Church of Santa Maria, restored 1906 by Puig i Cadafalch; nave and door with archivolt, later lantern and bell tower. Apse considered the most richly adorned in Catalonia: arcades inside and out, with archivolt and decorated abaci on columns with capitals (plant and zoomorphic designs). Gothic and Baroque retablos. Much restored castle.

Sant Sebastià dels Gorgs. Former Benedictine monastery; the church, though altered, retains its ancient door and fine sculptured tympanum (Christ in Majesty surrounded by angels). Its tower and part of the cloister (Borough: Arinyamol del Penedès.)

Sant Cugat. Important and ancient Cistercian monastery, recently restored. Romanesque-Gothic transition style with some fine Romanesque features: various doorways and windows, octagonal pavilion in the big Gothic cloister, old chapel of La Trinitat. (Borough: Arguminer.)

Sant Ramon del Pla. Parish church of L’Assumpció (12th C.) nave and unadorned apses, bell tower and doorway with 6 richly decorated archivolts (Arches of Christ in centre of tympanum). (Borough: Cornudella.)

Tarragona. Important city in Roman times and current seat of the metropolitan archdiocese of Catalonia, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO (2000). Cathedral in Romanesque-Gothic transition style but with elements of earlier Roman constructions and fine examples of 12-13th C. Romanesque art (apse, side door on nave, large octagonal cloister doorway in white marble with Christ in Majesty on top and magnificent carved capital in the middle, arches and capitals in the large cloister). Within the cathedral precinct, church of Santa Tecla la Vella and nearby chapel of Sant Pau. In the centre of the Roman amphitheatre by the sea, remains of a Visigothic basilica and of the Romanesque church of Santa Maria del Arrife.

Ulldecona. The ancient castle with imposing towers that rise above the town was the centre of an important community of the Knights Hospitalers. In the precinct, Cistercian style church of Santa Maria de Ulldecona, seat of a priory of Knights Hospitalers. The buildings have been reinforced, excavated and restored.

Valldola de les Monges. Monastery of Cistercian nuns (religious life until 1868). Large group of buildings in Romanesque-Gothic transition style (12-13th C. and later). From the Romanesque period: apse, door on north transept (Marian subjects in fine relief) and south and east wings of the magnificent cloister. Currently being restored, especially the cloister.
Route 4:

From Cerdanya to the Barcelona area via the Llobregat and Cardener valleys

Pulgar, the capital of Cerdanya, stands on a hilltop overlooking beautiful countryside. From here the first recommended visit is to the little village of Guils, with its church of Sant Esteve. Then we take the N-260 which runs alongside the river until it reaches the village of Cardener, where we cross into Solsonès. The route continues along the cliffs of Lord and Busa and round the waters of the Llorenç, a road on the left that runs through open spaces along the river Comte, where an ancient Benedictine monastery is located. Just before Sant Mura, on the mountain, is the Romanesque church of Santa Cecília, which belonged to another ancient monastery.

From the village of Cardener we go to the Ancient Cemetery of Sant Llorenç de n'Hug, near the church of Sant Julià de Cervelló. Here we take the N-340 to the right and, 12 km further on, come to two interesting monuments: Santa Maria de Taüll, lying below the ski slopes of Port del Coma, and, to its left, the ancient Bellver de Cerdanya. From here, the suggested route from Berga westwards runs through pleasant countryside with lofty mountains and thick pinewoods, especially after the La Mina tunnel, where we cross into Solsonès. The route continues and the cliffs and rocks of the Busa and Bastets ranges until it reaches the reputed summer holiday resort of Sant Llorenç de Mura, lying below the six slopes of Port del Coma, at the ancient Benedictine monastery of Bellver de Cerdanya.

The suggested route from Berga winds up through the Llobregat gorges towards Berga, the capital of Cerdanya. Before reaching the town we take the C-26 towards north, the Llobregat river and the town of Sant Vicenç de Rus to the picturesque town of Berga, near the town of Berga, which lies at the foot of the mountains below the shrine of Queralt. To the right of the road stands a Romanesque church, standing on a rocky pinnacle; the other along a mountain track.

From Berga the C-16 continues southwards through the Romanesque village of Torredembarra, just before Sant Vicenç de Castellet we rejoin the C-55 and drive through the Chateau of Monistrol, the capital of Cerdanya, and, to the right of the church of Sant Julià de Cervelló, the capital of Cerdanya, and, to the left, the castle of Sant Miquel. It is worth detouring along a road that climbs amid spectacular views past the old church of Sant Vicenç de Rus to the picturesque town of Castellar de n'Hug, where we cross into Solsonès. The route continues and the cliffs and rocks of the Busa and Bastets ranges until it reaches the reputed summer holiday resort of Sant Llorenç de Mura, lying below the ski slopes of Port del Coma, at the ancient Benedictine monastery of Bellver de Cerdanya. From here, the suggested route from Berga westwards runs through pleasant countryside with lofty mountains and thick pinewoods, especially after the La Mina tunnel, where we cross into Solsonès. The route continues and the cliffs and rocks of the Busa and Bastets ranges until it reaches the reputed summer holiday resort of Sant Llorenç de Mura, lying below the ski slopes of Port del Coma, at the ancient Benedictine monastery of Bellver de Cerdanya.

From here we reach the picturesque village of Tàrrega, where we take the N-340 to the right and, 12 km further on, come to two interesting monuments: Santa Maria de Cervelló, on the left-hand side of the road, and Sant Ponç de Cardener, a little road to Condesa de Llobregat on the outskirts of the town.

Main historic buildings

Aabra. Parish church of Sant Pere (12th C.), nave and cross-shaped Lombard-type apses, fine carved door and bell tower. Nearby pre-Romanesque chapel of Sant Hilari, nave and rectangualr apse (the sculpted impost are probably earlier).

Cardona. Former canony of Sant Vicenç, large basilica in the shape of a Latin cross consecrated 1040 (one of the great Catalan Romanesque monuments): 3 aisles (nave 19.6 m high, 6 windows), covered by cruciform columns; 3 Lombard-type apses; semi-circular, octagonal lantern; austeres facade with rose window and gallerie with archways (the mural paintings are now on loan in the MNAC). Crypt below the chancel: 3 aisles with groin vaulting resting on columns with pyramid-frustum capitals. Cardona castle, seat of an important dynasty, located in a key strategic position (much altered). The famous Torre de la Minyona (11th C.), cylindrical tower with stepping base still stands along side the large palace and later monastery buildings.


Cervelló. Church of Santa Maria de Cervelló or del Socors (11th C.), formerly parish church of Sant Vicenç; nave and Lombard-tpe apse, taken above crossing, base of ancient bell tower. Anthropomorphic graves.

Coaner. Church of Sant Julià, consecrated 1204: 3 aisles, 3 apses and walls all decorated in Lombard style, square bell tower. Alongside, handsome cylindrical tower of old castle. (Borough: Sant Mateu de Bages.)

Guils de Cerdanya. Parish church of Sant Esteve de Guils (11-12th C.), Florence Cathedral. Sant Miquel, a historic palace surrounded by scenic countryside. At the foot of the mountain, is the Romanesque church of Santa Cecília, which belonged to another ancient monastery. Continuing down the Llobregat valley along the C-55 we reach Abona, with its parish church of Sant Pau and church of Sant Hilari. We then join the N-340 via Montblanc and Sant Andreu de la Barca as far as the Queralt Gorge intersection where we take the N-340 to the right and, 12 km further on, come to two interesting monuments: Santa Maria de Cervelló, on the left-hand side of the road, and Sant Ponç de Cardener, along a little road to Condesa de Llobregat on the outskirts of the town.
nave, decorated apse, fine doorway with 3 archivolt and columns with carved capitals. An antependium with scenes from the life of Saint Stephen, now at the MNAC, came from here.

Maurella. Collegiate church of Santa Maria (known as La Seu), Gothic with some elements from earlier Romanesque church (door with fine capitals and tympanum depicting Marian scenes, arches near the Renaissance cloister).

El Marquet, 11th C. church of Santa Maria de Matdors or del Marquet (the church is earlier Mozarabic or early Christian), rectangular apse, two side chapels joined to main apse by horseshoe arches. (Borough: Mura.)

Montserrat. Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria, spiritual heart of Catalonia with a long and distinguished cultural tradition. Of the Romanesque basilica nothing remains except the former main door (now in the atrium) and famous late 12th C. gilded polychrome wooden statue of the Virgin, La Mare de Déu de Montserrat (note the characteristics: black colour of the face and hands of Mary and Jesus). On the same mountain, where monks and hermits have lived for countless centuries, beautiful 11th C. church of the former Benedictine monastery of Santa Cecília: 3 aisles and 3 apses with Lombard ornamentation. (Boroughs: Montserrat and Montgat.)

Mura. Parish church of Sant Martí (11-12th C., modified): apse with arched semi-circular apse and half columns, fine doorway with archivolt, richly decorated with sculptures (tympanum depicting the Epiphany).

Oló. Parish church of Sant Vicenç (Romanesque nave and small transept; pre-Romanesque triumphal apse and horseshoe arches inside resting on columns with very primitive capitals. Anthropomorphic gra- ves in front of the doorway. (Borough: Avinyó.)

Olius. Parish church of Sant Esteve (11th C.), remarkable example of Lombard Romanesque style: nave, semi-circular apse with characteristic decoration, beautiful crypt (same size as church) with 3 small aisles and 6 columns the altar, inwork and bell tower are 16th C.) Interesting Art Nouveau cemetery nearby.

Pedret. Church of Sant Quíxos (9th C., enlarged 10th C.), one of the best examples of Catalan pre-Romanesque art: rectangular nave with triumphal apse, later side aisles joined to nave by horseshoe arches; at the top of each, side apses, also with horseshoe arches, on either side of the central apse (later 12th C.). In the course of a complete restoration, some of the original mural paintings have been reproduced. Some originals are in the MOB (the 10th C. Primitives in- cluding the famous Orant figure and the 12th C. fully Romanesque works with scenes from the Apocalypse. Others (the works from the apse al-
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Sabadell road (N-150) towards Cerdanyola we reach the nearby church of the Barcelona plain, we can admire the imposing buildings of the ancient del Munt Sant Llorenç then the track up to Can Pobla, from where a 3/4 hour climb brings them to the of Egara. Those who enjoy a mountain hike can take the road to Navarcles and Romanesque churches built when Terrassa was the seat of the ancient diocese amid fields and green meadows.

Bridge, also restored. The almost straight road to Ripoll continues down the Ter of the old parish church. At the exit from the town centre is the medieval magnificent group of sculptures, the “Santíssim Misteri”, and the restored remains of the old parish church. All the way from the town centre is the medieval bridge, also restored. The almost straight road to Ripoll continues down the Ter amid fields and green meadows.

Ripoll, the capital of Ripoll, stands where the town joins the Fosseta. It is known as the “cradle of Catalonia” on account of its role during the resettlement of Catalonia after the Muslim occupation and the cultural influence it exerted. The old monastery of Santa Maria, with its splendid doorway, is of prime importance. Ripoll stands at the intersection of roads leading to Cardener, Berga and Garrosa. Our route continues along the C-17, amid oak and pine woods and river-side hamlets. Beyond Montesquiou and Sant Quirze de Besora, we turn left towards Terol towards across the wide bridge that spans the river and then to the fine parish church at near Sant Vicenç de Terol (restored).

The C-17 finally leaves the Ter and runs through the neat and fertile fields of the Plana of Vic, a plain dotted with handsome farmhouses and ringed by mountains. In the centre lies the important city of Vic, the capital of Osona. In addition to the Romanesque cathedral bell tower and the contents of the Museum Episcopal, Vic offers many other attractions including a large and lively Main Square with archways (Plaça Major), where a busy market is held on Saturdays, and tasty local specialities.

Many excursions can be made from Vic to the various monuments that make up the rich Romanesque heritage of the Plana. To the north-west are Tavèrnoles with its parish church of Santa Maria del Camí and La Doma at Barberà del Vallès. From here, the monastery was the capital of the kingdom Barcelona. In the days when Barcelona was the capital of the kingdom of Catalonia-Aragon, its political and economic vitality was such that most of the Romanesque city was altered or renovated. Some interesting Romanesque features remain: in the Cathedral, the 13th C. chapel of Santa Lúcia; in the Portal Nou in the Romanesque arches (restored); the Portal Nova in the Romanesque mural paintings; Sant Pere de les Puelles, former monastery of Benedictine nuns (12th C., considerably altered); and, above all, the 12th C. former Benedictine monastery of Sant Pau del Camp (in the shape of a Greek cross with 3 apses remarkable doorways and cloister with multifoil arches and fine capitals). Also the 12th C. chapel of Sant Lluís (or the former Lepers’ Hospital) and of El Marco, and courtyard gallery at the Palau Episcopal (13th C.). Various museums, foremost among them the MNAC, with exceptionally rich collections.

Barberà del Valles. Parish church of Santa Maria (end 11th C.), nave, large transept with 3 apses (Lombard decoration on apses and wall); bell tower with pyramid-shaped roof. Interesting murals paintings (discovered 1919): Christ in Majesty, scenes from Old and New Testaments, Exaltation of the Cross, etc.

Main historic buildings

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Beget Church of Sant Cristòfol (12th C.): nave, apse with fine windows, decorated door and square 3-storey bell tower; inside the famous 12th C. wooden statue, the Majestat de Beget (Christ in Majesty on the Cross wearing turic and crown, baptismal font, several Gothic and Baroque statues and reliefs. (Borough Campodon.)

Campodrun. Former monastery of Sant Pere; church (consecrated 1169) in the shape of a Latin cross, 5 square apses, dome above crossing with octagonal lantern surmounted by 2-storey bell tower, door with columns.

Route 5:

From the Pyrenees to Barcelona via Ripolles, Osona and Valles

Just as we cross the Coll d’Ares pass via the C-38 to enter Ripolles, the slender bell tower of Mallos church comes into view surrounded by meadows. A little way on, to the left, which affords magnificent views over the upper Gamba mountains, brings us to Recobrun. We drive down to the picturesque village of Beget, nestling in a deep valley. Inside the lovely church is an impressive group of Christ in Majesty on the Cross. After rejoining the C-38 we are soon in Campodon, a popular tourist resort set in peaceful, green Pyrenean countryside, with some outstanding monuments like the church of Sant Pere and the large medieval bridge. A side road leads from here to Setcases, where visitors should admire the attractive parish church of Llanares.

Following the C-38 along the Ter, we come to Sant Pau de Segúries and the fine town of Sant Joan de les Abadesses. Here in the monastery are the magnificent group of sculptures, the “Santíssim Misteri”, and the restored remains of the old parish church. At the exit from the town centre is the medieval bridge, also restored. The almost straight road to Ripoll continues down the Ter amid fields and green meadows.

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Campodrun. Former monastery of Sant Pere; church (consecrated 1169) in the shape of a Latin cross, 5 square apses, dome above crossing with octagonal lantern surmounted by 2-storey bell tower, door with columns.
Canovelles. Parish church of Sant Feliu (11th C.): nave, Lombard-type apse, remarkable door (13th C.) with archivolt and geometrical and animal designs.

Espiñelves. Parish church of Sant Vicenç d’Espiñelves: 2 aisles, 2 apses (11th and 12th C.) with Lombard style decor, 3-storey bell tower with arcature resting on brackets with small heads, 12th C. 6 door.

L’Estany. Former Augustinian canony of Santa Maria church consecrated 1168 (consecrated 1842) with nave, 3 apses, formerly a large and beautiful cloister with arcatures resting on brackets with small heads, 12th C. 6 door.

La Garriga. Church of Santa Maria del Camí (one aisle, once part of a hospice, rebuilt in 12th C. over an earlier building. Also contains elements from the primitive Romanesque church of Sant Esteve de la Doma, on the outskirts.

Llanars. Parish church of Sant Esteve, consecrated 1168: nave and apse, handsome doorway with 3 archivolt columns and capitals (School of Ripoll). Former Benedictine monastery, now in the MNAC, have been reproduced. (Borough: Prats de Lluca.)

Llagostera. Parish church of Sant Joan de les Abadesses, consecrated 1064, key work of Lombard Romanesque art, in the shape of a Greek cross; octagonal lantern, 3 aisles, 3 apses. Remains of monastic buildings and small museum.

La Segarra. Church of Santa Maria de Lluçà. Former Benedictine monastery, 12th C.: nave and apse, fine square bell tower, door with finial ironwork, square bell tower. (Borough: Campodan.)

Sant Andreu de Llinars. Former Benedictine monastery (12th C.): nave and apse with square bell tower over the vault, very well restored. (Borough: Puits de Lluçà.)

Sant Cugat del Vallès. Former Benedictine monastery, fully restored: remains of Visigothic construction in cloister, large church with 3 aisles and 3 apses, begun in 12th C. but mostly incorporated into the subsequent Gothic building (the Lombard bell tower is Romanesque). Magnificent Romanesque cloister lends of the 12th century, fully restored with fine capitals (plant and figurative motifs) by Arnau Cadell (identified by an inscription, shows him at work).

Sant Joan de les Abadesses. Former monastery of Benedictine nuns, later Augustinian canony; 12th C. church, nave with 3 richly decorated apses, modified: remains of Romanesque cloister or gallery alongside the Gothic one; famous group of 7 polychrome wooden sculptures (Eli, Saint Simeon, Saint Simeon, Saint Simeon, Saint Simeon, Saint Simeon, Saint Simeon, Saint Simeon) from the Cross, 1251), one of the best of the period. Former parish church of Sant Joan: reinforced ruins (chevet with three apses and finely decorated doorway).

Sant Llorenç del Munt. Former Benedictine monastery, previously a hermitage, at the summit of La Mola (ab. 1104 m.): church (consecrated 1064); key work of Lombard Romanesque art, in the shape of a Greek cross; octagonal lantern, 3 aisles, 3 apses. Remains of monastic buildings. (Borough: Matadepera.)

Sant Miquel del Fai. Former Benedictine monastery in a picturesque setting with cliffs and waterfalls. Church built into a cave: the tradition of troglodyte churches (Romanesque chapels). Towards the south in the small chapel of Sant Martí del Fai, recently restored, mural paintings now in the MNAC, have been reproduced. (Borough: Bigues i Riells.)

Sant Pere de Casserres. Former Benedictine monastery, above the tan reservoir where extensive restoration and renovation work has been carried out. Very large and elegant church: 3 aisles, 3 apses, Lombard ornamentation but no sculptures, solid square bell tower. Cloister and other buildings restored with former furniture reflecting monastic life. (Borough: Les Masies de Roda.)

Sant Sadurní d’Ostomart. Parish church (11th C.); nave and Lombard-type apse, later Gothic one, the Lombard bell tower, the 12th C. mural paintings are now at the MEV.

Sant Sebastià de Montmajor. Parish church (12th C.): nave forming a Greek cross with the transept, 3 apses, bell tower over the crossing. (Borough: Caldes de Montbui.)

Sant Vicenç de Torà. Romanesque parish church (11-12th C.): nave, transept and large apse, fine 3-storey Lombard-type bell tower, fully restored.

Santa Eugènia de Borga. Remarkable parish church (11-12th C.): nave, transept and large apse, altar surmounted by 3-storey bell tower, door with archivolt, capitals and capitals by the School of Ripoll.

Savassona. Church of Sant Pere (11th C.): nave and apse, Lombard-type decoration at the foot of Savassona Castle. Near small church of Sant Feliu de Savassona, with pre-Romanesque chevet (horsehoe arch and rectangular apse), 10th C. anthropomorphic gravestones outside and remains of Iberian village. (Borough: Tavèrnoles.)

Tarassac. Parish church of Sant Esteve (10-11th C.), modified: nave, Lombard decoration and bell tower in the same style.

Terres. Site of the ancient fish-ovip of Mataró (mid 5th C.), with 3 highly interesting Visigothic-Romanesque sculptures built close together and dating back to the 6-7th C. In a small area: Santa Maria in the shape of a Latin cross, with octagonal lantern and dome surrounded by 3 storey bell tower, all 12th C. but with Visigothic chevet, square than the outside but with horseshoe arch inside; Sant Miquel (square plan and hep-tagonal apse with eight columns featuring Roman and Visigothic capitals supporting the dome, crypt with the apsidal chapel and Sant Pere (Visigothic 3-lobed apse with tracel plan form, Romanesque church with transept). The 12th C. alterations are in Lombard style. Exceptional mural paintings, some 9th C. (Sant Miquel and Santa Maria) or 10th C. (Sant Pere). In a small apse in Santa Maria, scenes of the martyrdom of Saint Thomas à Becket, painted soon after his death in 1170. Interesting Gothic capitals by Huguet.

Vilafranca de Cervera. Former cathedral city with many historic buildings: the Cathed-ral, renovated from 1781 onwards, retains its magnificent Lombard-style, 7-storey bell tower and its crypt with columns with ancient capitals in so-called Caliphate style (Islamic tradition) and 3 aisles. Other buildings and churches with Romanesque features. Well endowed Museu Eiscopul- pal, recently rebuilt.

Vilafranca del Penedès. Parish church of Sant Joan (11-12th C.) adjoining old farm- houses, circular in shape, Lombard-type apse, fine ironwork on door (Borough: Santa Maria d’Oló).
Route 6:
From Empordà and Garrotxa to Selva, via Girona

Eight kilometres south of La Jonquera is the minor road to Capmany which marks the beginning of a picturesque and varied route offering many fine monu-
ments and scenery ranging from the highly spectacular stretches of coast to the
ever-changing countryside of the mountainous areas inland.

A small side road from Gavà runs along the frequently vined coast-
town to Villalonga. From here a mountain track, which requires careful driving, takes us to Sant Quirze de Colera, in the centre of a valley that is one of the
most isolated and pastoral spots in the Aranes mountains. Sant Pere de Rodes, that can be reached via a road from Vilafranca, is a complete contrast, standing
alone on the crest of the mountain range of the same name. From here one can enjoy breathtaking views over the northern Costa Brava, the plains of Cap de Creus, now a Natural Park, and the white houses of El Port
de la Selva resting in the most sheltered corner of the bay.

Heading towards Palas-saverdera, we arrive at Roses to visit the old
Romanesque church in the Cubidet, an additional attraction is the view over
the broad sweep of Roses Bay, one of the most open and sunlit seascapes
on the Empordà coast. Turning inland, we take a minor road from Castelló
d'Empuries towards Sant Peri Penticador, alongside the Empordà Marshes
Natural Park. From here we proceed to Sant Miquel and Sant Tomàs de Fluvià, which rise above the flat Empordà countryside with its many shades of green
and numerous rows of vines (recently recal the road for protection from the re-
freshing but powerful north wind, the
Tramuntana).

The pleasures of a visit to Penalada and Vilabertran amply justify a slight de-
tour on the way to Figueres, the capital of Empordà, with its original Teatre
Municipal. Here we can enjoy the natural beauty of the magnificent beech woods of the Fageda,
and the site of the romantic Church of Santa Maria, now a Museum, with its remarkable Romanesque bell tower (32 m high, 12th C.), an addition to
the town of Banyoles, affords an excuse to
visit the old
Romanesque cathedral of S'Agaró, contrasting with the cosmopolitan bustle of the big Platja d'Aro tourist
resort.

The road to Cruilles, Sant Julià de Buda and Canapasset takes us through La Bisbal d'Empordà, where good-quality hand-made pottery can be purchased.

Between Palamós and Sant Feliu de Guíxols we then travel along one of the
prettiest stretches of the Costa Brava, the quiet and elegant residential zone of
S'Agaro contrasting with the cosmopolitan bustle of the big Platja d'Aro tourist
resort.

We continue along good roads, amid crops, pine groves and above all the
views from the coastal cliffs of Sant Julià de Llanars, the road to Sant Pere
Cerdà offers a Romanesque civil architecture. Medieval
crossing the village of Santa Maria, originally came, is also Romanesque.

Canapasset, Church of Sant Esteve (12th C.), once part of a

Cruilles, Former Benedictine monastery of Sant Salvador (11-12th C.) Church renovated in Gothic times but the magnificent bell tower (32 m high, 12th C., sculpted baptismal font.

Breda, Parish church of Sant Feliu (12th C.), a magnificent chancel, site of the Romanesque

Besalù, Capital of an earldom with its own dynasty in the 11-12th C. which has preserved many notable buildings: Church of the former Be-

Peralada, Romanesque church in the Ciutadella. An additional attraction is the view over
the lush vegetation and the series of extinct volcanic craters around the capital, Sant Feliu de Guíxols.

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Sant Pere de Galligants and
Sant Feliu de Guíxols. “Porta Ferrada”

Girona. Sant Pere de Galligants

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A fine figure of Christ in Majesty on the Cross and an interesting painted baldacchino beam now at the MAG came from here. (Borough: Croïlles; Municipality of St-Saturnin-de-Comminges)

Girona. Important capital in Carolingian times, seat of an archbishop and of a large and powerful diocese; many historic buildings. Cathedral Baroque façade and Gothic nave. Romanesque features include: magnificent Tiem of Cartoixa (11th C. 5-storey Lombard-type bell tower. 12th C. cloister (one of the most beautiful in Catalonia, with sculpted capitals and friezes showing Biblical scenes and ornamental motifs), the main altar stone and so-called “Charlemagne’s chair” made from marble (11th C.). Remarkable exhibits in nearby museums: TCG (Temple of the Creation) and MAG. Former 12th C. monastery of St-Pere de Galligants: church (non-Archaeological Museum) with 3 aisles, 4 apse-choe, octagonal bell tower, magnificent cloister with capitals (Biblical scenes and figurative motifs). Small church of St-Nicolaus (nave, large lantern, small transept and 3 apses), once attached to St-Pere. The Arab Baths, built in Muslim and Jewish tradition; are from late Romanesque times (13th C.). Note the remarkable octagonal building and external lantern. La Fontana d’Or: good example of Romanesque civil art.

Lleida. Former Augustinian chapter of Santa Maria, remarkable 12th C. church with basilican plan, 3 aisles, 3 apses, doorway with richly decorated arches, tympanum and lintel. Corinthian capitals on columns, foundations, capitals (plant and animal designs), with 3 horseshoe arches and carved columns standing on high bases, transept with central aisle and 2 smaller aisles, ambulatory with alternating pillars, crypt; interesting capitals, some Corinthian (zoomorphic heads), some polygonal (geometric designs). Square 3-storey Lombard-type 12th C. bell tower (57 m high). Upper doory partially restored and rebuilt, and part of lower doory recently discovered with remains of mural paintings). Remains of monastic buildings and fortifications (large keep). Extensive restoration has been completed: church floor repaved, features of the former door reproduced on the galleries, wall paintings in ambulatory, access to crypt, skip-posted tour of buildings. On the near by car park, remarkable pre-Romanesque church of Santa Helena, enlarged in Romanesque times and recently restored, among remains of former village (Borough: El Port de la Selva).

Santa Pau. In the volcanic region of Olot. Interesting medieval quarter (square with arcades — Plaça del Final dels Baus — and castle). Nearby small Romanesque church- es of Sant Martí del Vall and the shrine of Els Arco.

Vilafranca. Former Augustinian chapter of Santa Maria, remarkable group of historic buildings including basilican plan church (11-12th C.) with 3 aisles, 3 apses opening onto transept, embedded pillars and columns inside, slender Lombard-type 3-storey square bell tower. 12th C. cloister with columns, pillars and capitals (plant motifs). 13-15th C. monastery buildings (chapter house, sacristy, vans-cellar) beside other later Gothic buildings. The buildings have been restored.

The Crucifix beam (MAG)
Romanesque Art in the museums

Barcelona

Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya (MNAC). In the Palau Nacional de Montjuïc (built in 1929, museum since 1934), totally redesigned as of 1986 under the direction of the architect Gae Aulenti, still to be completed. The Romanesque art section is considered one of the best in the world, especially on account of the various 11-12th C. mural paintings from the Catalan Romanesque (Taüll-Sant Climent and Santa Maria, Baixo Pedreguer, Santa Maria d’Aro, Sant Pere del Burgal, Estíbariz de Cardós, Estària, Andorra, La Seu d’Urgell, etc.) and from the Palau Agullar in Barcelona. Remarkable collections of antependium (from Tavèrnoles, Avila, Mosoll, Ix, Escaldes, Balaguer, Estella, Gia, etc.), sculptures in wood (Majestat Batlló, antependium from Taüll, Descent from the Cross from Erill la Vella, statues of the Virgin such as that from Dume, etc.), sculptures in stone (capitals from Camarasa), enamels and liturgical objects. Important Gothic section.

Girona

Tresor de la Catedral de Girona (TCG). Adjoining the cathedral itself. Exhibits include the Beatus of Girona (10th C. commentaries on the Apocalypse with exquisite illuminations), the famous Creation Tapestry (11-12th C. – the finest surviving piece of Catalan Romanesque textile art), and a 12th C. wooden statue of the Virgin, La Mare de Déu de la Catedral, etc.

Museu d’Art de Girona (MAG). Formerly Museu Episcopal, in the Palau del Bisbe. Important mural paintings (from Pedrinya, Balaguer d’Empordà, Sant Julià de Bosa, etc.), antependium, the famous Cruïlles Beam (in which an interweaving processions of monks and acolytes is painted), good collections of sculptures in wood (Christ in Majesty on the Cross from Sant Joan les Fonts and from Cruïlles, statues of the Virgin, etc.), sculptures in stone (relief and capit- tals) and gold and silverware (relief and capitals, gold and silverware, enamels and liturgical objects, etc.).

La Seu d’Urgell

Museu Diocesà d’Urgell (MDU). Located in the Bishop’s Palace, near the cathedral itself. Exhibits include the famous Beatus of La Seu d’Urgell (10th C. beautifully illuminated manuscript of Mozarabic origin containing commentaries on the Apocalypse), mural paintings such as those from Peralada or Olot, antependium including those from Dume, wooden statues like the lovely Virgin of Girona, stone relief and capitals, gold and silverware, etc. Also religious works of art from the Gothic period and later.

Solsona

Museu Diocesà i Comarcal (MDS). Located in the Bishop’s Palace, near the cathedral and finely renovated. Houses most of the mural paintings from Sant Quirze de Pedret (10th C. works, like the famous Grant figure, and 12th C. works – scenes from the Apocalypse, martyrdom of Sant Quirze and Julia, fantastic figures, etc.); also the mural paintings from Sant Fluè de Cassernes (with splendid angels playing musical instruments), various antependium (sidelong panels from Sagas) and retablos (Saint Jaume de Frontanyà), important sculptures in stone (capitals, carved columns, relics, some from the original Cathedral buildings) and sculptures in wood (statues of the Virgin, etc.). Interesting archeological section.

Vic

Museu Episcopal de Vic (MEV). In a building near the Cathedral. Rebuilding began in 1997 on plans by F. Comas and A. Milla. The second largest collection of Catalan Romanesque art including several 11th-12th C. mural paintings from Sant Sadurní d’Osoriento, El Bell, Sant Martí Sacornàs, La Seu d’Urgell, etc., an outstanding collection of antependium from Blaus, Estària, Espira de la Jarosa, Sant Sadurní d’Osoriento, monastery of El Coit, Sant Llorenç del Penedès, Sagas, etc.). Works of sculpture include the famous Descent from the Cross from Erill la Vella (part of which is in Barcelonal, interesting figures of Christ in Majesty on the Cross and Christ Seated, wooden statues of the Virgin, altar stones, stone relief and capitals, and remarkable cloths (Hispanic-Arab Witches Tapestry), gold and silverware, enamels, iconography from doors, reliquaries, etc.

Other museums. In Barcelona, other important works of Romanesque art are in the Museu Diocesà in the Pla de la Merced building near the Cathedral, and in the Museu Maricel (in the old Casa de la Canonja). Other important museums are Museu Diocesà de Lleida, Museu Diocesà de Tarragona (with interesting works around Cathedral cloister), Museu de la Catedral de Tortosa, Museu del Castell de Perpètua de Torelló and other in Sitges and others. Important works of Catalan Romanesque art are also to be found in certain foreign museums such as The Cloisters in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the British Museum in London, the Museum of Fine Arts in Maryland, etc. Some Romanesque works of art are in private collections.

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