



Barcelona one and only Catalonia



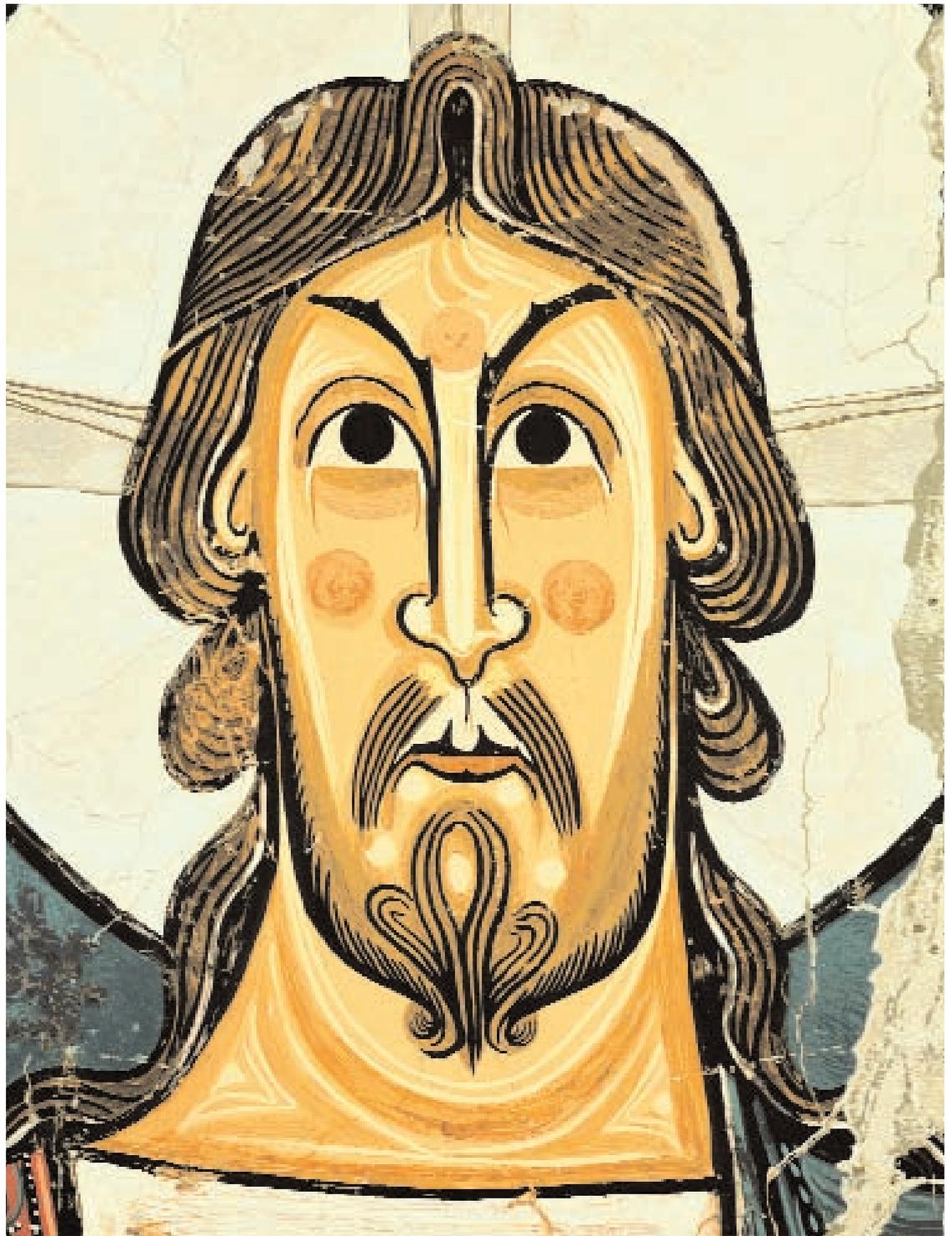
Barcelona one and only

Barcelona is one of the few cities whose personality reflects an increasingly clear, yet ever changing and multifarious image the more you get to know them. Even fewer are those which reveal such startling contrasts, as between worlds beating with a different pulse. Barcelona is a many-hued, vital city that changes with the light as the hours go by and fluctuates with the seasons. It is a social mosaic, all of whose pieces bear the imprint of the slow historical process that has made it unique.

Barcelona is a two thousand-year-old city, the capital of a country with a millennium of history –Catalonia– to which it gives cohesion. Its whole past is projected into its present; in its buildings and streets the story of its growth from ancient times is clearly written. It is the essentially maritime capital of a people of merchants and sailors. In short, it is a Mediterranean city.

Its unrivalled location and beauty are matched by the friendliness of its people. Its tradition of initiative, hard work and creativity is largely the product of the repeated influxes of foreign blood that are the lot of all cosmopolitan, hospitable, open-minded cities, and these factors doubtless also account for the vitality of its population and for its rich cultural and artistic heritage.

Barcelona now enjoys a position as a premiere tourist destination; a paradigmatic city chock full of the type of possibilities that can be offered by a people who have known how to blend a long and solid traditional lifestyle with the dynamism and capacity for carrying out a series of extraordinary modernisation projects. The city seized the opportunity of the 1992 Olympic Games to carry out widespread <renewal. Since then, Barcelona has continued to ascend and is on its way to becoming the main logistical centre in southern Europe, and one of the great cultural poles of the Mediterranean.



Christ in Majesty, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC)

The old city

Barcelona was founded by the Romans who, during the reign of Emperor Augustus (27 BC - 14 AD), established a new colony, **Barcino**, on the coastal plain between the Llobregat and Besòs rivers, at the meeting point of the country's major thoroughfares. The original walled city, on a small hill called **Mons Taber**, had the usual rectangular layout of the period. The two main streets (*decumanus* and *cardo maximus*) met at the forum, now the Plaça de Sant Jaume, which even today is the political hub of the city. On the top of the hill stood the temple to Augustus, of which four impressive columns still stand inside the headquarters of the Centre Excursionista de Catalunya.

Parts of the Roman walls can still be admired. They come from the fortifications built in the late 3rd and early 4th centuries, after the first invasion by Franks and Alemanni, when Barcelona had in effect replaced *Tarraco* as the capital of Hispania Citerior. Its importance declined in the Visigothic period, despite a brief period as capital under Ataulf (415). Captured by the Moslems in the 8th C., it was conquered by the Franks in 801, thus becoming an outpost of Charlemagne's empire south of the Pyrenees and the capital of the earldom of Barcelona, which became hereditary in the times of Guifré *el Pilós* and independent of the Carolingian kings from 988 under Borrell II. Barcelona became the most powerful of the Catalan earldoms and the dominant partner in the confederation of Catalonia-Aragon until the end of the 15th C. The growth of maritime trade also turned it into a leading Mediterranean sea power.

The whole medieval city was the scene of this age of splendour. Until the mid-19th C. it was surrounded by walls. The central part, known nowadays as the **Barri Gòtic** (Gothic Quarter), though in fact Gothic architecture is also to be found elsewhere, contains most of the

Palau Reial Major
Carrer de la Pietat
Casa de la Ciutat
Palau de la Generalitat



buildings where, today as in bygone ages, the major events of the city's political life take place.

Two sides of the Plaça del Rei are occupied by the **Palau Reial Major**, the former residence of the Catalan royal family, which mostly dates back to the 14th C. The façade is flanked by a great 16th C. tower known as the Mirador del Rei Martí. At the top of the flight of circular steps is a doorway with voussoirs leading into the austere beautiful Saló de Tinell, which has great stone arches supporting the roof, and into the small chapel of Santa Àgata, also in Gothic style, which contains a magnificent altarpiece by Jaume Huguet entitled *El Conestable*. On the other side of the courtyard is a great Renaissance mansion, the **Palau del Lloctinent**, the former seat of the important Archives of the Crown of Aragon, and the **Casa Clariana Padellàs**, which houses the Museu d'Història de la Ciutat.

The **Cathedral** comprises several highly interesting constructions from different periods. The spacious church has slender Gothic lines and three aisles and was built in the 13-15th C. (except for the lantern and façade which are neo-Gothic). Inside are numerous features of artistic value: the crypt of Santa Eulàlia, choir stalls, paintings, sculptures, and gold and silver ware. The small Romanesque chapel of **Santa Llúcia** opens off the cloister. Nearby are the **Museu Marès**, and the Gothic **Cases dels Canonges**, now the residence of the President of the Generalitat (Catalan autonomous government), and the **Casa de l'Ardiaca**, which was built into the Roman walls and now houses the Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat. A sharp contrast is provided by the modern **Col·legi d'Arquitectes**, on the Avinguda de la Catedral, with interesting sgraffiti by Picasso.

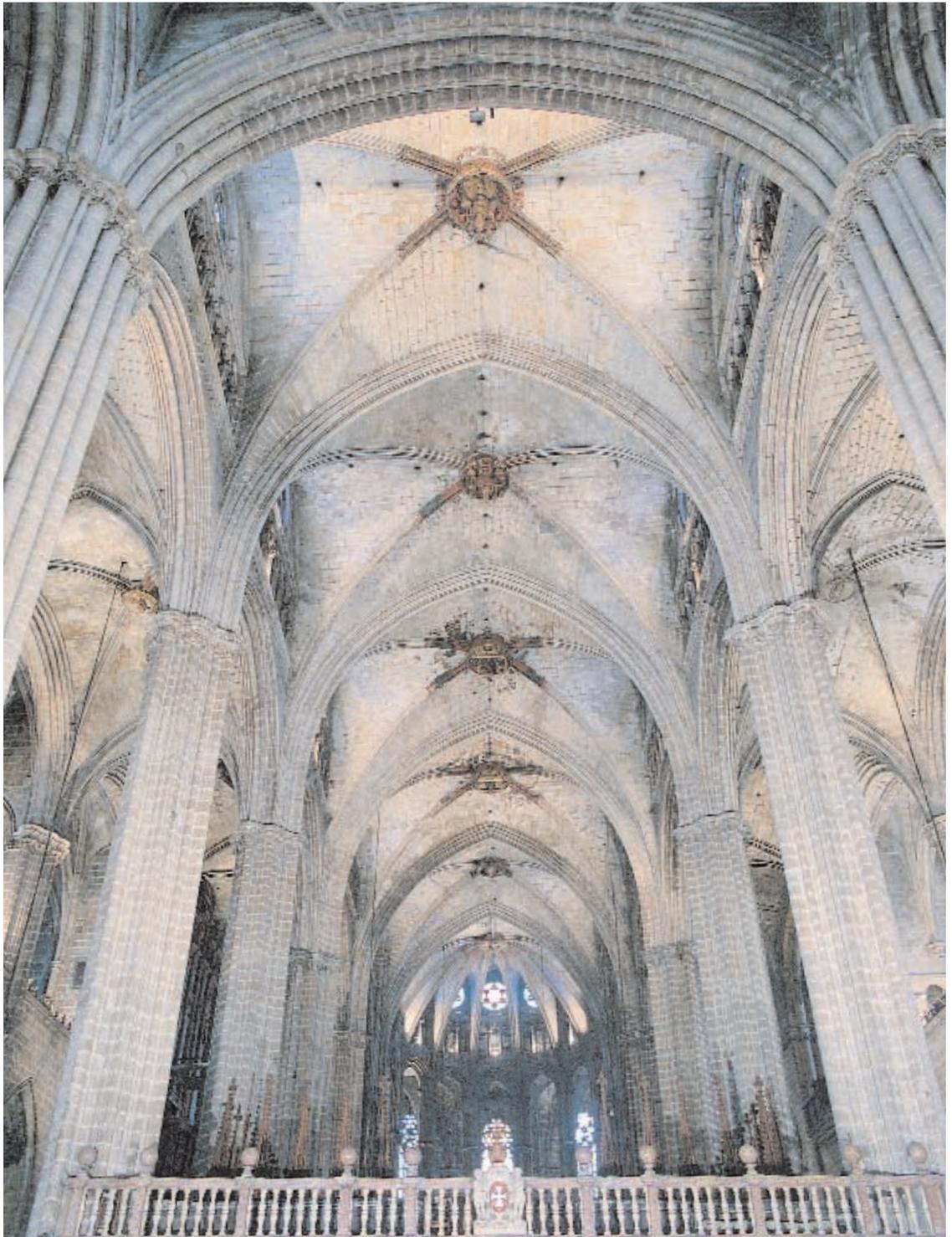
Facing each other across the Plaça de Sant Jaume, the scene of all the great events of city life, are the homes of the Catalan government –the Generalitat– and of the City Council. The Generalitat, which was re-established in the 20th C., evolved from the permanent



delegation of members of the Catalan parliament, or Corts Catalanes, founded in the 13th C. The **Palau de la Generalitat** has several handsome Gothic features, mostly from the 15th Century: the entrance and courtyard, the chapel of Sant Jordi (the finest example of Catalan flamboyant Gothic) and the Pati dels Tarongers. The well-balanced façade is 16th C. Renaissance. The **Casa de la Ciutat** or Ajuntament is the headquarters of the present City Council, the successor of one of the most ancient institutions to represent the power of the citizens, the Consell de Cent (Council of one hundred), which ran the city till the 18th C. The lateral façade and the famous Saló de Cent on the main floor are 15th C. Gothic while the main facade is neoclassical (19th C.).

During the Middle Ages, when Mediterranean trade was at its height, merchants and nobles lived side by side with sailors in the old district of La Ribera where the 14th C. church of **Santa Maria del Mar**, considered the foremost achievement of Catalan Gothic architecture on account of the purity of its lines and the harmony of its proportions, can still be admired. Nearby, on the **Carrer de Montcada**, once the home of powerful Catalan noble families, various characteristic Gothic and Renaissance mansions still stand, with their entrance courtyards and stairways going up to the main porticoed first floor. The mansions that attract most visitors are those which house the **Museu Picasso** (the city's most popular museum), the Palau dels Marquesos de Lió (the **Museu Tèxtil i de la Indumentària**), the Palau dels Cervelló (**Galeria Maeght**) and the **Palau Dalmaes**.

Another group of buildings in the old district of El Raval, to the right of the Rambla, recall this age of prosperity: the former **Hospital de la Santa Creu**, set up in 1410 to bring together the services of various older hospitals. In addition to the great Gothic halls, now occupied by the Biblioteca de Catalunya (national library), one can admire the Baroque Casa de Convalescència, which has





a courtyard decorated with fine ceramics, and the neoclassical **Col·legi de Cirurgia**, now the Acadèmia de Medicina. The fair of Sant Ponç, which is still held in the neighbouring streets, is a relic of the age-old sale of medicinal herbs. The former **Casa de Caritat** (hospice), located in the same area, has been remodelled to house the **Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona** (CCCB) and Centre de Recursos Culturals. The nearby late Gothic Church of Els Àngels has been restored, and beside it, the **Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona** (MACBA) has been built. The magnificent church and cloister of **Sant Pau del Camp**, an outstanding example of Catalan Romanesque architecture (11-13th C.) was a Benedictine abbey from the 10th C.

The Gothic church of **Santa Maria del Pi**, with its characteristic rose window and bell tower, can be found in another small but fascinating area of Old Barcelona. Close by, on the quaint Carrer de Petritxol, is one of the city's oldest art galleries, the Sala Parés, which has been renovated, while the Carrer de la Palla, lined with intriguing antique and old book shops, leads to the Cathedral. The Sant Pere district clusters around the church of a former monastery of Benedictine nuns, **Sant Pere de les Puelles**. Here we can admire the **Palau de la Música Catalana** (1908), one of Barcelona's most deservedly famous Modernist buildings. This architectural masterpiece by Domènech i Montaner is lavishly adorned with sculptures and ceramics and has been declared a "World Heritage" site by Unesco.

Museu Picasso

Palau de la Música Catalana



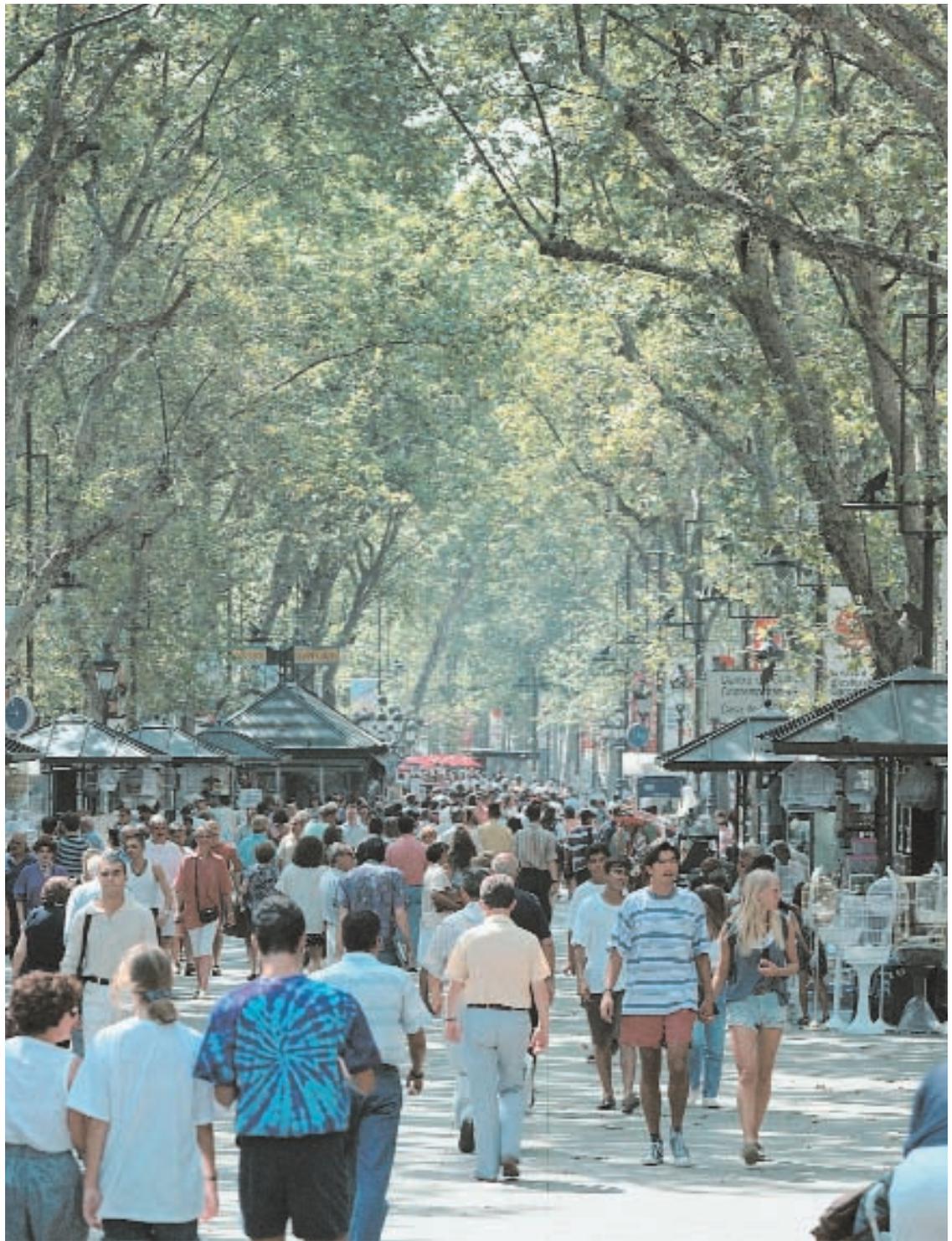
The Rambla

The unique and colourful Rambla, popularly called “Les Rambles”, is undoubtedly the most lively part of Barcelona, a good place to get to know the city at close quarters. This varied and spectacular promenade, stretching from Plaça de Catalunya to the harbour, was originally a stream running along the western side of the 13th C. walls. Population growth caused the walls to become too confining, and so they were rebuilt along the present inner Rondes, leaving the Rambla inside the city limits. Between the 15th and 17th C., several monastic and academic buildings were built along it and it began to look like a promenade, a vocation that was confirmed in the 18th C. when the rows of trees were planted.

The part closest to Plaça de Catalunya is called **Rambla de Canaletes**, after the still popular fountain of the same name which has stood there from ancient times. Football supporters hold lively discussions around it and tradition has it that any visitor who drinks the waters will one day come back to Barcelona. Another characteristic feature are the stalls full of books and periodicals on either side of the central walkway which always attract crowds.

The next part is the **Rambla dels Estudis**. It was here that the Estudi General, Barcelona’s first university, stood until 1714. On either side of the avenue are the 17-18th C. Baroque **Betlem church**, which was part of a Jesuit convent, and **Palau Moja**, an important 18th C. building. Inside, there is a large reception room containing fine mural paintings by Francesc Pla, “*El Vigatà*”. Jacint Verdaguer, the foremost poet of the 19th C. Catalan Renaixença, lived here when he served as chaplain to the Marquises of Comillas.

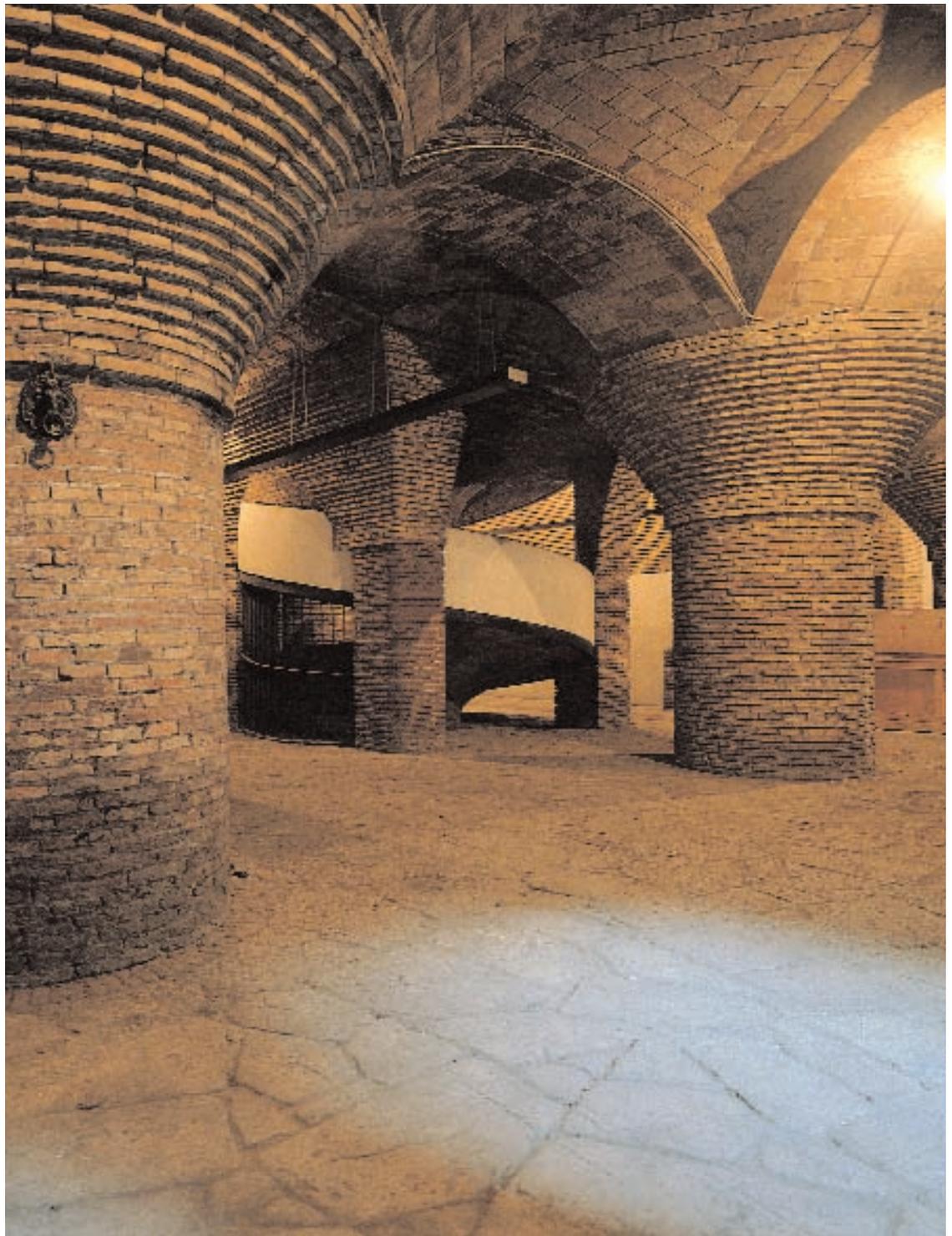
Both the people strolling along the boulevard and the surroundings lend colour to the Rambla. On reaching **Rambla de les Flors**, however, we are met by the even more brilliant but ever changing hues of the flower stalls, a scene that will



vividly live on in the memory of all those who have visited the Rambla. Along the Carrer de la Portaferrissa, to the left, is a wide range of fashionable clothing shops while on the right hand side of the Rambla stands the imposing **Palau de la Virreina**, an 18th C. Rococo building, which houses the Cultural Services of the City Council. Important exhibitions are also held there throughout the year. A little further down is Barcelona's most picturesque market, which offers a wide selection of products: the popular **Mercat de Sant Josep** (or **La Boqueria**).

The pavement at the Pla de la Boqueria, at the beginning of the **Rambla del Centre** (or **dels Caputxins**), is decorated with a design by Joan Miró. Rows of terraces belonging to bars, hotels and restaurants stand along this part of the Rambla, which is overlooked by the façade of Barcelona's opera house, the **Gran Teatre del Liceu**. For a century and a half, since its inauguration in 1847, the Liceu has been the pride of the citizens of Barcelona, and legendary figures of Italian and Wagnerian opera have sung there. In 1994 a devastating fire destroyed the sumptuous auditorium and the stage. Work was immediately underway to rebuild the Liceu, a process in which great care has been given to the restoration of the opera's original details, while notably improving the infrastructure. The sidestreets off this part of the Rambla lead to the "Barri Xino" (Raval), the setting for various European novels, where Bohemian life-styles have been overtaken by a more sinister way of life. In Carrer Nou de la Rambla, to the right, is the **Palau Güell** (1888), a remarkable mansion designed by Gaudí.

The **Plaça Reial**, off the other side of the Rambla, was built in the middle of the 19th C. on terrain belonging to a Capuchin convent. It consists of a series of identical buildings with porticoes and motifs depicting sailors and explorers of the New World. The atmosphere is always lively. Popular bars are



located under the archways and on Sundays there is a market at which stamps and coins are exchanged. From one side one can reach the Carrer de Ferran which leads to the Plaça de Sant Jaume, while the other opens onto the Carrer d'Escudellers where the atmosphere is that of the "Xino" district.

Between these two streets runs the Carrer d'Avinyó, site of the brothel that was said to have inspired Picasso's famous *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907), painted at the beginning of his Cubist period.

The first mills producing printed cotton (indianes) fabrics were set up in the 18th century on the right-hand side of the Rambla, in the **Raval** district. They signalled the birth of Catalonia's textile industry. Factories and workers' housing occupied the remaining free spaces inside the city walls, where market gardens, convents and monasteries had once stood. In the 19th century the area became a major industrial suburb. Along the lower part of the Rambla, the proximity of the port led to the opening of shady dance halls and cabarets. This area of the Raval was nicknamed the **Barri Xino** (Chinese Quarter).

The last stretch of the Rambla before the port is the **Rambla de Santa Mònica**. It begins at the **Pla del Teatre**, where the old Teatre Principal and the monument (1907) to the playwright Frederic Soler, "Pitarra", stand. The old convent of **Santa Mònica** is an art centre in which visiting and seasonal exhibitions are held. Opposite is the **Palau Marc**, a handsome late 18th C. neoclassical building which has also been renovated to house the Departament de Cultura de la Generalitat. Nearby is the popular **Museu de Cera**, full of eerie wax figures, and the old 17th C. **Foneria de Canons** (canon foundry), which was altered in the 19th C. The monument to Christopher Columbus marks the end of the promenade.



The seafront

The seafront, which stretches from the foot of Montjuïc to the district of La Barceloneta, is followed by the stretches of beaches running from El Poblenou to the mouth of the Besòs river. This stretch is one of the reasons for Barcelona's existence, the mark of its status as a maritime capital, and proof of its undeniably Mediterranean personality.

The former shipyards or **Drassanes**, which bear witness to the might of the Catalan navy and merchant fleet in the Middle Ages, are the most noteworthy monument in the harbour area. Built in the 14th C., they are the largest and best preserved buildings of their kind in the world. The vast Gothic halls now house the important Museu Marítim, next to which are a stretch of wall and a gateway which are all that remains of the medieval **fortifications**. Opposite is the **monument to Columbus** who was received by the Catholic Kings in Barcelona in 1493 on his return from his first voyage to the New World. The figure of the admiral stands on an iron column 50 m high; the monument was designed by Gaietà Buïgas (1886) and has become one of the city's best known sights. Below it, the popular *golondrinas* ferry carries sightseers to and fro across the waters of the harbour to the jetty.

The whole port area has undergone extensive renovation since the redevelopment of the **Moll de la Fusta**, the seafront promenade adorned at the western end by two sculptures by the architect Robert Krier dedicated to the poet Joan Salvat-Papasseit and to Ròmul Bosch i Alsina, and at the eastern end by Roy Lichtenstein's monument *Barcelona Head*. Right alongside the *golondrinas* is the entrance to the Rambla de Mar, a mobile wooden footbridge across the water to the Moll d'Espanya where a new **Aquarium** and a shopping centre have been built, offering numerous leisure facilities such as restaurants, cinemas and boutiques.

Above the Passeig de Colom, beyond the beautiful and secluded Plaça del Duc de Medinaceli, we



reach a recently enlarged square facing an 18th C. Baroque church with a curved façade, the basilica of **La Mercè**, dedicated to Our Lady of Mercy, the patroness of the city.

On the other side of Via Laietana, the busy street which cuts through the Old City to the port, is the Plaça d'Antoni López where the **Lotja** is located. Once the trade exchange of the city's merchants, it later fulfilled a similar function as the home of Barcelona's stock exchange. Inside are the wide arches typical of Catalan Gothic architecture (14th C.), a reminder of the golden age of Mediterranean trade. The façade and adjoining buildings, however, were rebuilt in neoclassical style at the end of the 18th C. Facing it are the **Porxos d'en Xifré**, a group of neoclassical porticoed buildings with medallions and trophies referring to the sea, built in 1836 by Josep Xifré, an *indiano* (a term used to describe residents in Spain's colonies in America who returned to the homeland). Next we come to the Plaça (or Pla) del Palau which in the 17-19th C. was the political hub of the city. The Palau Reial has now disappeared and the only surviving building from the period is the fine old Rococo customs house, the **Duana Nova** (1792), which since 1902 has been the seat of the Govern Civil. Further along is the large **Estació de França** built in 1929 on the site of the original Barcelona to Mataró railway station (1848).

La Barceloneta is an unusual seafaring district located atop a triangular tongue of land formed by sand which accumulated on the eastern side when the port of Barcelona was built in the 17th C. For this reason it has been said that La Barceloneta, like Venus, rose from the waters. It is an interesting specimen of Baroque city planning, designed by the military engineer Juan Martin Cermeño in the mid 18th C., with uniform, regularly shaped, elongated blocks, and contains a few noteworthy examples of architecture from the same period, such as the beautiful church of **Sant Miquel del Port**



Aquarium
Palau de Mar and Port Vell

with its Italian-style Baroque façade. The home over the years of fishermen and sailors, La Barceloneta was the city's only outlet to the sea until the recent redevelopment of the entire seafront. The former Magatzem General del Port (port warehouse), renamed **Palau del Mar**, houses a brand new theme museum, the **Museu d'Història de Catalunya**, which illustrates the history of Catalonia from prehistoric times to the present day. Several restaurants specialising in seafood can be found in the building's surrounding area, which are traditional as well as in other districts.

Barcelona is one of the most important and busiest **ports** on the Mediterranean and wharfs and shipyards occupy much of the seafront. There is a fishing port, complete with a small fleet and a wholesale fish market, located alongside the Marina on the Moll del Relotge, in the vicinity of La Barceloneta. And here too is the marina known as the **Port Vell**, one of the city's two marinas, the other being the Port Olímpic. **Cable cars** affording a view over the entire port depart from the nearby metal tower of Sant Sebastià and carry passengers, via the twin tower of Sant Jaume, up to Miramar, on the slopes of Montjuïc, 80 m above sea level.

Parc de la Ciutadella, situated between the districts of La Ribera and La Barceloneta, takes its name from the fortified citadel built by Philip V to subjugate the city which had been hostile to his cause in the War of Succession (1714). Most of the buildings were demolished in 1869 and only the governor's palace, the chapel and the arsenal remain. The last, a fine Baroque building, is now the home of the **Parlament de Catalunya**. In the park, designed by Josep Fontserè, are various buildings erected for the Universal Exhibition of 1888, an event of great significance for the city, and motivated new constructions, such as the **Arc de Triomf**, which is located just above the park. Amid the large flowerbeds and tree-lined



Parc de la Ciutadella
Museu d'Història de Catalunya

paths, the monumental waterfall with sculptures by Nobas and Vallmitjana, and the lake, reigns a pleasant atmosphere of peace and seclusion. Some of the architecture, aside from its intrinsic interest, foreshadows the advent of Modernism: the **Castell dels Tres Dragons**, by Domènech i Montaner (1888), a brick building which today houses on of the sections of the Natural Science Museum; the iron and glass greenhouse or **Hivernacle**, by Josep Amargós, which has been restored and converted into a cultural centre and the brick and wood **Umbracle**, by Fontserè. Barcelona's large landscaped **Zoo** is also located at La Ciutadella. Foremost among the park's sculptures are the enchanting *Dama del Paraigua* (lady with umbrella) by Roig Solé, one of the city's best known sights, and the magnificent *Desconsol* by Llimona.

Other points of interest in the surrounding area, also urbanised by Fontserè, include the **Edifici or Dipòsit de les Aigües** (Water Tower), which houses the Pompeu Fabra University library. Interesting archaeological remains from the medieval and modern city, demolished at the end of the Spanish War of Succession (1714) to make way for the military citadel, were discovered in 2002 in the Born market building, which boasts a fine metal structure. The building will in the future house a cultural centre.



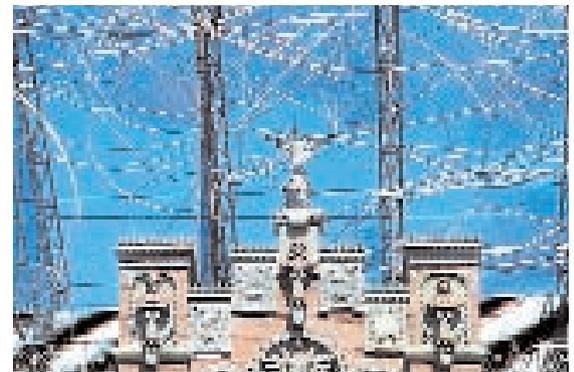
Castell dels Tres Dragons
Arc de Triomf
Hivernacle

The Eixample

During the 19th C., Barcelona underwent a period of economic and demographic growth and the old medieval walls which prevented the expansion of the city had to be demolished (1854). A large area close to the walls, where building had hitherto been prohibited, thus became available for development. From 1860 onwards the plan drawn up by the engineer Ildefons Cerdà –Pla de Reforma i Eixample (plan for renovation and enlargement)– was implemented. It was a highly advanced and rational grid design consisting of streets parallel to the seafront and others perpendicular to it, with the corners of the blocks cut off. Cerdà's specifications for green spaces were however not respected.

The **Eixample** (meaning enlargement), especially the central part, was built at a time when Barcelona society was flourishing. Economic and industrial growth had given rise to an established bourgeoisie with a desire to build a great city. This same bourgeoisie also supported the goals of the political and cultural movement known as the *Renaixença* which, in the field of art, was to lead at the end of the century to Modernism. Together the buildings of the Eixample district, which are presently being renovated, constitute one of the most interesting examples in Europe of the architecture of this period. By strolling through the streets of the Eixample one can discover, not only on the façades of the impressive larger buildings, but in the doorways and entrance halls of apartment blocks, grocers' shops, bakeries, and pharmacies, countless examples of lavish Modernist ornamentation using newly introduced and finely worked materials such as glass, wood, wrought iron and ceramics.

Plaça de Catalunya, the link between Old Barcelona and the Eixample, was developed in 1927 by F. de P. Nebot with interesting sculptures by Josep Llimona, Eusebi Arnau, Pau Gargallo and Josep Clarà a copy of whose *La Deessa* stands in the square. There is also a



monument to *President Macià*, the first President of the Republican Generalitat by Josep M. Subirachs. The main street of the Eixample, the **Passeig de Gràcia**, leads off the Plaça de Catalunya. Its wide pavements are lined with large, well-established shops. The street lamps by Pere Falqués are another characteristic feature. Numerous buildings of eclectic, medievalist or fully Modernist design are located on Passeig de Gràcia. The most important is **Casa Milà**, known as “La Pedrera” (the quarry), one of Gaudí’s –and Barcelona’s– best known works, which stands at the corner of Carrer Provença. It has been restored and fit as an artistic space. On the famous “*Mançana de la Discòrdia*” between Carrer d’Aragó and Consell de Cent we find **Casa Batlló**, by Gaudí, **Casa Amatller**, by Puig i Cadafalch, and **Casa Lleó Morera**, by Domènech i Montaner. Around the intersection with Carrer Casp there are the neo-Gothic buildings by Eric Sagnier that presently house “**La Caixa**” de Barcelona, and the **Cases Rocamora** by the Bassegoda Brothers.

Another popular street of the Eixample is **Rambla de Catalunya**. One can have a drink in the shade of the lime trees on the terraces along the pleasant promenade. On either side are fine shops, shopping centres, art galleries (especially in the vicinity of Carrer del Consell de Cent), as well as bookshops and cinemas. There are various Modernist buildings, notably **Casa Serra**, by Puig i Cadafalch, which is now the Diputació de Barcelona. Not far off, on Carrer d’Aragó, is a fine building by Domènech i Montaner (1880), formerly the offices of the publishers **Montaner y Simón**, and now the home of the Fundació Tàpies which is devoted to contemporary art. Beyond it stands the neomedieval building by Elies Rogent belonging to the **University of Barcelona**.

The long, wide **Avinguda Diagonal** cuts obliquely across the city from Pedralbes to the sea. At the



“La Pedrera”

Casa Batlló



western, basically residential end are the modern University campus and the Palau de Pedralbes. Numerous business and commercial establishments are located along the central portion, where there are also important Modernist buildings, notably the famous **Casa de les Punxes** and **Casa Quadras**, now the Casa d'Àsia, both by Puig i Cadafalch, as well as quality works of later architecture such as the Rationalist house by Ricardo de Churruga (1937) at the intersection with Carrer d'Enric Granados or the **Torres Trade** by Josep A. Coderch (1968) at Gran Via de Carles III which are symbols of Barcelona's architectural renewal.

This short summary would not be complete without references to two singular Modernist buildings situated near the northernmost stretch of Diagonal at either end of Avinguda de Gaudí. The first is the best known of Gaudí's creations throughout the world, the expiatory church of **Sagrada Família**, conceived as a "cathedral of the twentieth century", in which his genius takes on a complex religious symbology. From 1883 until his death in 1926, Gaudí worked exclusively on the Sagrada Família. It was left unfinished but work has continued to the present day in the midst of fierce controversy. The second of these buildings is the **Hospital de Sant Pau** (1902-12) by Domènech i Montaner, which consists of several brick pavilions, decorated with polychrome ceramics, standing amid spacious gardens. Both buildings have been declared a "World Heritage" site by Unesco.



Sagrada Família

The surrounding districts

The personality of present-day Barcelona would be incomplete without the surrounding districts to which it owes its ever-changing appearance. The former towns of the Barcelona plain have been the most successful in maintaining their own particular flavour. They retained their independence for centuries until the growth of Barcelona led to the adoption of the Cerdà plan for the development of the intervening land, and the capital spilled over onto their territory.

Sarrià lies at the foot of the Collserola hills at the north end of the plain. Its old quarters, which have preserved their traditional personality, cluster around the church of Sant Vicenç, near the former home of the great poet J. V. Foix. A spacious residential zone surrounds the area, where rambling old houses, some fine examples of Modernism, and large convents and religious schools stand side by side with modern apartment blocks. The **Monastery of Pedralbes**, founded by Queen Elisenda de Montcada, the last wife of James II, is one of the best examples of Catalan Gothic architecture. Within its walls the nuns of the order of Saint Clare have maintained religious life since the 14th C. The chapel of Sant Miquel, decorated by Ferrer Bassa, opens onto the cloister. On the Avinguda de Pedralbes stand the **Pavellons Güell**, former stables designed by Gaudí with an extraordinary wrought iron dragon at the gate. To the south, in the once independent borough of **Les Corts de Sarrià** which was split into two parts when Diagonal was built, are the **Palau de Pedralbes**, the **University campus** and the magnificent **Camp Nou** stadium with room for 98,000 spectators which belongs to Football Club Barcelona, Catalonia's best loved team.

Sant Gervasi de Cassoles, at the foot of Tibidabo, is another residential district. It has a distinguished history, being the site of the villa **Bellesguard**, built by King Martin I *the Humane* at the beginning of the 15th C. and completely converted in modern



Monastery of Pedralbes

times by Gaudí. Spacious second homes and Modernist-style houses remain, as well as many convents and religious schools. The Convent of **Les Teresianes**, by Gaudí, is particularly remarkable for its architecture. The area includes various interesting green spaces, especially the hilltop parks of Monterols and El Putxet which command good views over Barcelona.

Horta also lies at the foot of the Collserola hills, in a valley where many springs rise and where an important Hieronymite monastery, known as the Vall d'Hebron, was founded at the end of the 14th C. The monastery has disappeared but not so the mansion built in 1799 by the Marquises of Alfarràs. This beautiful neoclassical building, with gardens containing statues of mythological figures, a pavilion, a pond and a maze of cypress hedges, is now a municipal park, the **Laberint d'Horta**. Close by is the Velodrome and many hospitals and other health care establishments are also located in the area.

Lying below Horta, mostly on the Barcelona plain, is **Gràcia**, possibly the former town which has best succeeded in maintaining its original personality. Throughout the 19th C. it was famous for its republican, liberal ideas and for its role in the working class movement. The famous "Campana de Gràcia" (Gràcia bell) which, during a revolt against troop levies in 1870, tolled unceasingly from the tower in Plaça de Rius i Tauler, has become a legend. Gràcia has a multiplicity of associations and numerous festivals and customs, like the festival of Sant Medir, which includes a horseback procession to Sant Cugat del Vallès, or the lively celebrations that mark the Assumption (Aug. 15th), when the streets are decked with garlands and there is dancing under marquees. Noteworthy buildings include the 17th C. church of **Sant Josep**, which once belonged to a Carmelite convent, the iron structure of **La Llibertat** market and several



Parc del Laberint d'Horta
"Mistos", sculpture by Claes Oldenburg and
Coozje van Bruggen
Sculpture-poem by Joan Brossa

Modernist houses, including **Casa Vicens**, one of Gaudí's first works (1889), and others overlooking the bustling main street, Carrer Gran de Gràcia. In Gràcia we can also admire one of Gaudí's best known works, **Güell Park**, included by Unesco as a "World Heritage" site. Originally planned as a garden city, it was never completed. However, the buildings by the entrance still stand, together with a staircase, guarded by a dragon, which leads up to a great hall (intended as a market) with 86 Doric columns supporting a mosaic ceiling. Above it is a great round esplanade offering a magnificent panorama over the city and edged by the famous undulating mosaic bench. Also of interest are the curious appearance of the paths, resting on strong retaining walls and stout arcades, and the Casa Museu Gaudí.

Sants, to the west of the city and of Montjuïc, remains today what it was in the past –an industrial area with venerable old factories like **L'Espanya Industrial** or **El Vapor Vell**. The recently developed area round the large new Sants central railway station includes two interesting examples of new trends in urban architecture: Plaça dels Països Catalans and Parc de l'Espanya Industrial, which are described below.

To the east of Barcelona, before reaching the Besòs river, are the two former independent boroughs of **Sant Andreu de Palomar** and **Sant Martí de Provençals**, the latter with a long seafront. In the course of the 19th C., both were industrialised and they became, especially in the 20th C., the home of large numbers of workers from other parts of Spain. The latter district has been most widely influenced by the Games of 1992, and the Olympic Village was built in the **El Poblenou** district.



Güell Park

From the hills

A view of Barcelona from the sea reveals a natural wall of tree-clad hills which surrounds and protects the city, as well as providing incomparable panoramas. These are the Collserola hills, the veritable “lungs” of the city, now being converted into a large park. The headland of Montjuïc, which rises above the sea to the west of Old Barcelona, is another important green space and leisure area.

The highest point in the **Collserola** hills, which separate Barcelona from the Vallès region, is the **Tibidabo** area, which was built up at the turn of the century as a result of private and municipal initiative. The Tramvia Blau (blue tram), one of Barcelona’s most popular and distinctive features, links up with the funicular railway which climbs up the hillside. On top stands the great expiatory church, the **Sagrat Cor**, a neo-Gothic work by Enric Sagnier, whose unmistakable silhouette is an integral part of the city’s profile. In front, on the great esplanade, is an **amusement park** featuring a 50 m. high watchtower, a popular aeroplane and a Museum of Automats, as well as restaurants and bars and splendid views over the city, all of which have made Tibidabo a favourite spot for the citizens of Barcelona.

Further west along the Collserola range, the residential district of **Vallvidrera** stands amid pine woods. Formerly part of Sarrià, Vallvidrera can also be reached by a funicular railway and boasts several fine Modernist residences and Vila Joana, which today houses the Museo Jacint Verdaguer. Very close to the Tibidabo, perched on the hillside, is the prestigious **Observatori Fabra** (1907) where meteorological, seismic and astronomical research is carried out. The great 260 m. high **Torre de Collserola** (telecommunications tower) stands on the crest of the hills. The design, by the British architect Norman Foster, is ultra modern and the technical facilities are located underground. The Carretera de Les Aigües, located



Torre de Collserola

half-way up the hillside, winds from one edge of the range to the other.

Montjuïc is a rocky headland rising between sandy areas at the mouths of the Llobregat and Besòs rivers. Owing to its strategic position overlooking the city, it fulfilled a military function from the high Middle Ages onwards. The original Castell del Port was replaced in the mid-18th C. by the great hulk of the **Castell de Montjuïc**, built after the style of Vauban in the shape of a star with wide moats, bulwarks and pillboxes. For many years it served as a military prison, becoming a symbol of political repression until donated to the city in 1960. It now houses the Museu Militar.

Large-scale development took place on Montjuïc on the occasion of the 1929 International Exhibition. The slopes were landscaped according to a project by Forestier and Rubió i Tudurí. Approaching Montjuïc from **Plaça d'Espanya**, where the great monumental fountain stands that was designed by Jujol as well as sculptures by Blay, we pass between two large towers inspired by the Campanile in Venice and a semicircle of columns into the exhibition hall enclosure. At the far end stand the giant **luminous fountains** designed by Gaietà Buïgas. Behind these are the stairs that lead up to the **Palau Nacional**, a neoclassical building of giant proportions with a central dome. The Palau Nacional is the home of the magnificent collections of the **Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya** comprising Romanesque art as well Gothic works that are singular in the world.

Nearby, the old Casaramona textile factory, a Modernist building by Puig i Cadafalch, is now an important cultural centre, CaixaForum, housing a magnificent collection of contemporary art.

Parc de Montjuïc offers a variety of other attractions. The **Poble Espanyol** consists of a large collection of reproductions of popular architecture from throughout Spain. Concerts and festivals are held there and there are many interesting craft workshops including the use of wood, engravings, glass and



foundry work. Nearby, on a vantage point overlooking the city, stands an equestrian statue of *Saint George* by Josep Llimona which is a veritable masterpiece. The area of Montjuïc situated around the **Olympic Stadium** and **Palau Sant Jordi** is known as the Olympic Ring. Barcelona's most illustrious guests stay at the **Palau Albèniz**. The former **Mercat de les Flors** (flower market), the adjoining buildings and the **Palau de l'Agricultura** will form the site of the new Ciutat del Teatre comprising several theatres, the premises of the Institut del Teatre and the new home of the Teatre Lliure. Also on Montjuïc is, the **Museu d'Arqueologia** and the **Museu Etnològic**. The **Teatre Grec** is a beautiful open-air theatre, surrounded by gardens, which was built into an old stone quarry. In summer it is the main site of Barcelona's foremost arts festival. The **Palau Municipal d'Esports** is a work of modern architecture, as is the **Fundació Joan Miró**, an active centre for the study of contemporary art with rich collections donated by the painter himself. The luminous and beautiful building by J.L. Sert (1974) was enlarged in 1988. From the Avinguda Paral·lel one can take a funicular up to the cable cars which carry visitors to the castle and the park that is dedicated to collections of native Mediterranean flora.

The former industrial district of **El Poble Sec** lies at the foot of Montjuïc, between Plaça d'Espanya and the sea. The familiar silhouette of an antique power station chimneys are found here, while along the edge runs the broad **Avinguda del Paral·lel**. At the turn of the last century numerous theatres and cabarets offering light entertainment opened here, earning the district the nickname of the Montmartre of Barcelona. Some theatres specialising in reviews and musicals still survive.

Fundació Miró

Correfoc





The new Barcelona

Various factors account for present day Barcelona's modern image and for the extensive remodelling that has taken place. One was the 1992 Olympic Games, which gave rise to new spaces and constructions, and another the desire to renovate the old city centre and redesign the outlying areas and provide them with new monuments. The following is a brief summary of achievements in the field of city planning.

Parc de l'Espanya Industrial in the Sants district was designed by the Basque architect Luis Peña Ganchegui, who conceived it as a modern version of Roman baths with a boating lake in the centre surrounded by tiers of steps and overlooked by ten towers which serve both as vantage points and overhead lights. It is decorated by sculptures in different styles, such as the great dragon by Andrés Nagel, which has children's slides inside, or the works by Anthony Caro, Pablo Palazuelo and others. The daring and controversial design of **Plaça dels Països Catalans**, opposite the Barcelona Central-Sants railway station, by Helio Piñón and Albert Viaplana, is ultra modern. In the immediate vicinity, towards Plaça d'Espanya, is the spacious **Parc de Joan Miró** which occupies an area equal to four blocks in the Eixample district. Popularly known as Parc de l'Escorxador (the municipal slaughterhouse, or *escorxador*, formerly stood here), its main features are an esplanade and pond from which a spectacular sculpture by Miró, *Dona i ocell* (woman and bird), stands tall. A large grove of palm trees, play grounds, pergolas, pines and eucalyptus trees complete the picture.

On one of the hills in the northern part of Horta is **Parc de la Creueta del Coll**, designed by the architects Martorell and Mackay. It contains a lake and a hanging sculpture by Chillida entitled *Elogi de l'Aigua* which is reflected in the waters, and others by Kelly and Lichtenstein. **Parc del Clot**, by Daniel Freixes and Vicente Miranda,

Parc de l'Espanya Industrial
Parc de la Creueta del Coll
Via Júlia
Parc de Joan Miró



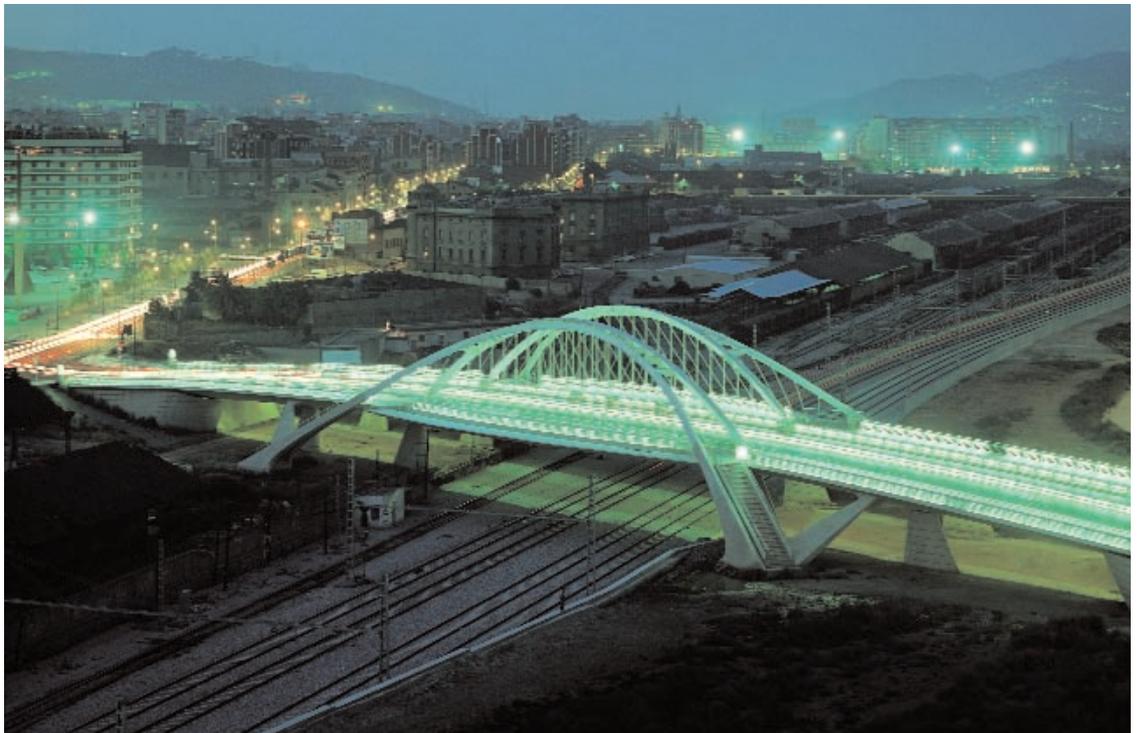
in the densely populated district of the same name, is a prodigy of design which takes advantage of a disused railway and an old chimney, and is decorated with a fine piece by the American sculptor, Bryan Hunt, *Rites of Spring*. In the nearby district of La Sagrera, **Parc de la Pegaso** stands on the former site of the Pegaso factory. The plans by Joan Roig and Enric Batlle provide for a paved square with a sculpture by Ellsworth Kelly, groves of trees and a small lake.

In the midst of **Plaça de la Palmera**, in La Verneda district of Sant Martí de Provençals, stands a large conceptualist wall sculpture by Richard Serra consisting of two concentric concrete blocks. **Plaça de Sóller**, in the Porta district, is adorned with a pond and a sculpture by Xavier Corberó.

In the district of Verdum, a Rambla-type promenade known as **Via Júlia** has been built from Plaça Lluçmajor to Via Favència. On it stand two sculptures, one by Sergi Aguilar (a slender iron structure) and the other by Antoni Rosselló, a great lighthouse-column. More sculptures have been placed on Plaça de Lluçmajor: a monument to Francesc Pi i Margall by Josep Viladomat, on a pedestal by Piñón and Viaplana, and another work by Susana Solano.

An outstanding feature of the transportation network is the great **sculpture-bridge** by the architect and engineer Santiago Calatrava which joins the districts of Sant Andreu and El Poblenou between Carrer Bac de Roda and Carrer Felip II, providing access in a north-south direction to the east end of the city. Barcelona Airport, at El Prat de Llobregat, has been remodelled according to plans by Ricard Bofill.

One of the most ambitious projects for the restoration of buildings of historical and artistic significance is in progress at the Palau Nacional de Montjuïc, the home of the **Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya**. Directed by the Italian architect Gae Aulenti, it aims at converting the building into one of the largest museum complexes in



Plaça dels Països Catalans
Sculpture-bridge by Santiago Calatrava

Europe. The **Pavelló Barcelona** by Mies van der Rohe, which housed the German exhibit to the 1929 International Exhibition, was reconstructed in 1986 on the same side of Montjuïc. Considered a paradigm of modern rationalist architecture, it contains the *Barcelona Chair* designed by the architect himself and a sculpture by Georg Kolbe. The exhibition complex at Montjuïc, where the annual Fira de Mostres (trade fair) and other exhibitions are held, has also been enlarged, while the **Passeig de Maria Cristina**, which runs from Plaça d'Espanya to the Palau Nacional, has been restored and embellished.

As part of the renovation of the El Raval district, the Piñón-Viaplana team of architects has remodelled the former Casa de la Caritat which houses the **Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona** and Centre de Recursos Culturals. Nearby stands the **Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona** (MACBA), a remarkable building by the American architect Richard Meier. The University of Barcelona's new Faculty of Geography and History and Philosophy Faculty are located in the same area.

In the vicinity of the Plaça de les Glòries Catalanes, which according to the Cerdà plan was to have been the centre of Barcelona, important cultural facilities have been built. The **Teatre Nacional** was designed by Ricard Bofill, comprising three theatres in a building incorporating cutting-edge technology and in the shape of a classical temple with metal structures and large expanses of glass. **L'Auditori** was designed by Rafael Moneo, which consists of three concert halls in a building combining new forms of architectural expression with classical strength and sensitivity to the urban environment. This building also houses the Escola Superior de Música and the new **Museu de la Música**, thereby completing the great cultural centre in the Plaça de les Arts. On the site of the nearby former **Estació del Nord**, a



Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona
(MACBA)
Auditori

spacious park has been developed with two large ceramic sculptures by the American Beverly Pepper, *Cel caigut* and *Espirai arbrada*, dedicated to Gaudí and Miró.

A new sort of night life has grown up which has led to a vast amount of creative energy being devoted to the conception, design and construction of new places of amusement. The interesting feature of such projects is that they invariably involve the interplay of interior, graphic and industrial design.

Some are former factories, garages, cooperatives, warehouses or shops, whereas others have involved the renovation of big old houses or mansions with some architectural interest. They can be classified in terms of their location, design and clientele. Some correspond to a marginal, or alternative aesthetic, while others offer a vague idea of 'modernity'.

The venues for the various Olympic events and the necessary services and infrastructures were built in four areas equidistant from one another (the four 'cantons' of the city) and linked by the outer Rondes, a 40 km long beltway.

Some of these areas were extensively remodelled. One was the seafront of El Poblenou district, east of La Barceloneta, where the **Olympic Village** was built. The redevelopment of this area, was planned by the architects Bohigas, Martorell, Mackay and Puigdomènech. The **Marina** is by the engineer J.R. de Clascà. The two spectacular high-rise blocks overlooking it, one housing offices and the other a large hotel, have transformed the city's seafront skyline. The port, with its abundant supply of bars and seafood restaurants, has become a favourite leisure spot for the city's inhabitants, and El Poblenou beaches have also received a facelift.

Another area which benefited from the Games was **Montjuïc** hill. The accesses were improved, a park with an area for concerts –Parc del Migdia– was created, and easier access was provided from the neighbouring El Poble Sec and Zona



Franca districts. But the most outstanding feature is undoubtedly the **Anella Olímpica** ('Olympic ring'). The Olympic Stadium retained its original 1929 façade but the interior was entirely remodelled by a team made up of Gregotti, Correa, Milà, Margarit and Buixadé. The new **Olympic and Sports Museum** is innovative and pioneering in that it offers a global approach to sport in general and Olympic sports in particular, which is historic, recreational, ethical and educational. The metal-roofed Palau Sant Jordi sports arena is a beautiful construction by the Japanese architect Arata Isozaki. In front lies a refined forest made of stone and metal, the work of sculptor Aiko Miyawaki. Other works of interest are the INEFC pavilion, or Sports University, designed by the Ricard Bofill workshop, and the lofty telephone communications tower by Santiago Calatrava.

Further sports facilities are located in the **Vall d'Hebron** area. One is the handsome Velodrome, designed by Esteve Bonell and Francesc Rius, set in attractive gardens which contain an interesting sculpture-poem by the poet Joan Brossa and afford access to Parc del Laberint. The **Pavilion of the Spanish Republic**, designed for the Paris International Exhibition of 1937, has also been rebuilt in the area. It is by Josep L. Sert and formerly housed Picasso's *Gernika*, as well as works by Miró, J. González, Calder, and others. In front of it is the sculpture *Mistos* by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen.

Diagonal-Pedralbes, is the fourth Olympic area. It is located in a zone which already possessed various sports facilities such as the Barcelona Football Club stadium, Camp Nou, and others belonging to the University Campus. These were completed by new constructions.

The city has evolved dramatically in the past twenty years to become one of Europe's top-ranking modern capitals. The sweeping changes made for the 1992 Olympics and the 2004 Universal Forum of Cultures have been followed by new projects: the transformation of part of the area of



Palau Sant Jordi
Olympic Ring

Poblenou into the **22@** technology district, for instance, or the extension –already provided for in Cerdà’s plan– of Avinguda Diagonal from Plaça de les Glòries Catalanes down to the sea to create the **Diagonal Mar** complex. Several distinctive new constructions have endowed this area with a brand new skyline, notably the **Torre Agbar** and **Central Poblenou Park**, both by the architect Jean Nouvel, and the **Museum of Design**.

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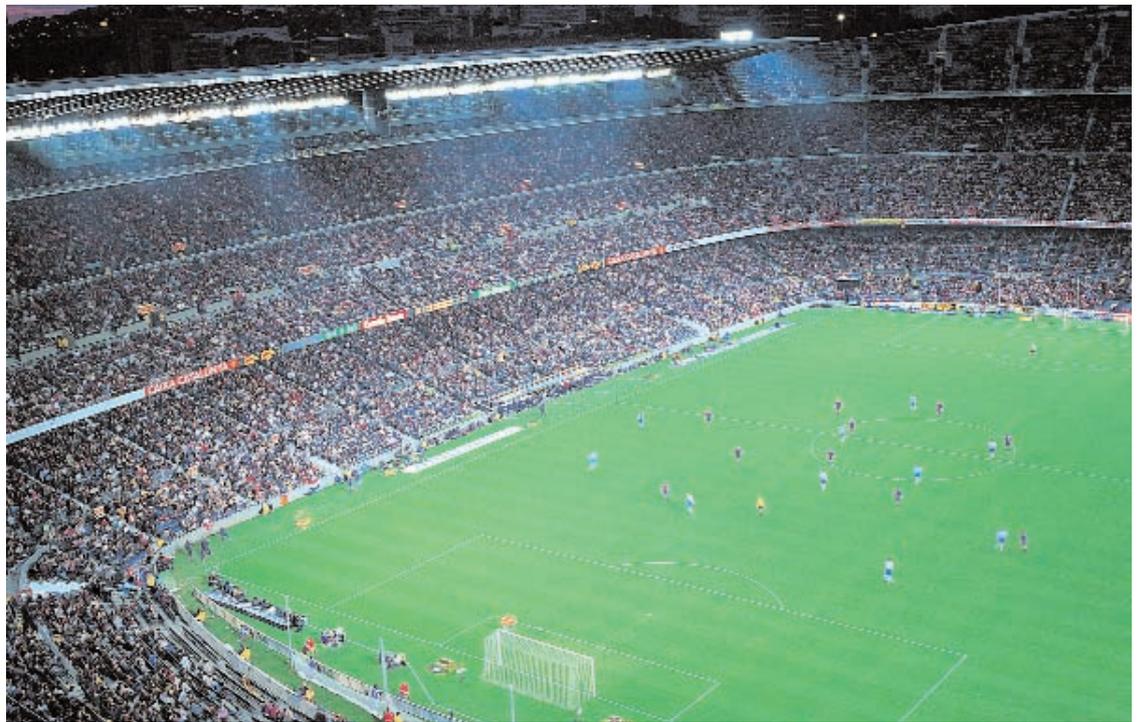
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