



Costa Daurada

Catalonia



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Costa Daurada

Alt Camp

Baix Camp

Baix Penedès



Conca de Barberà

Priorat

Tarragonès





## Costa Daurada, the Aroma of the Mediterranean

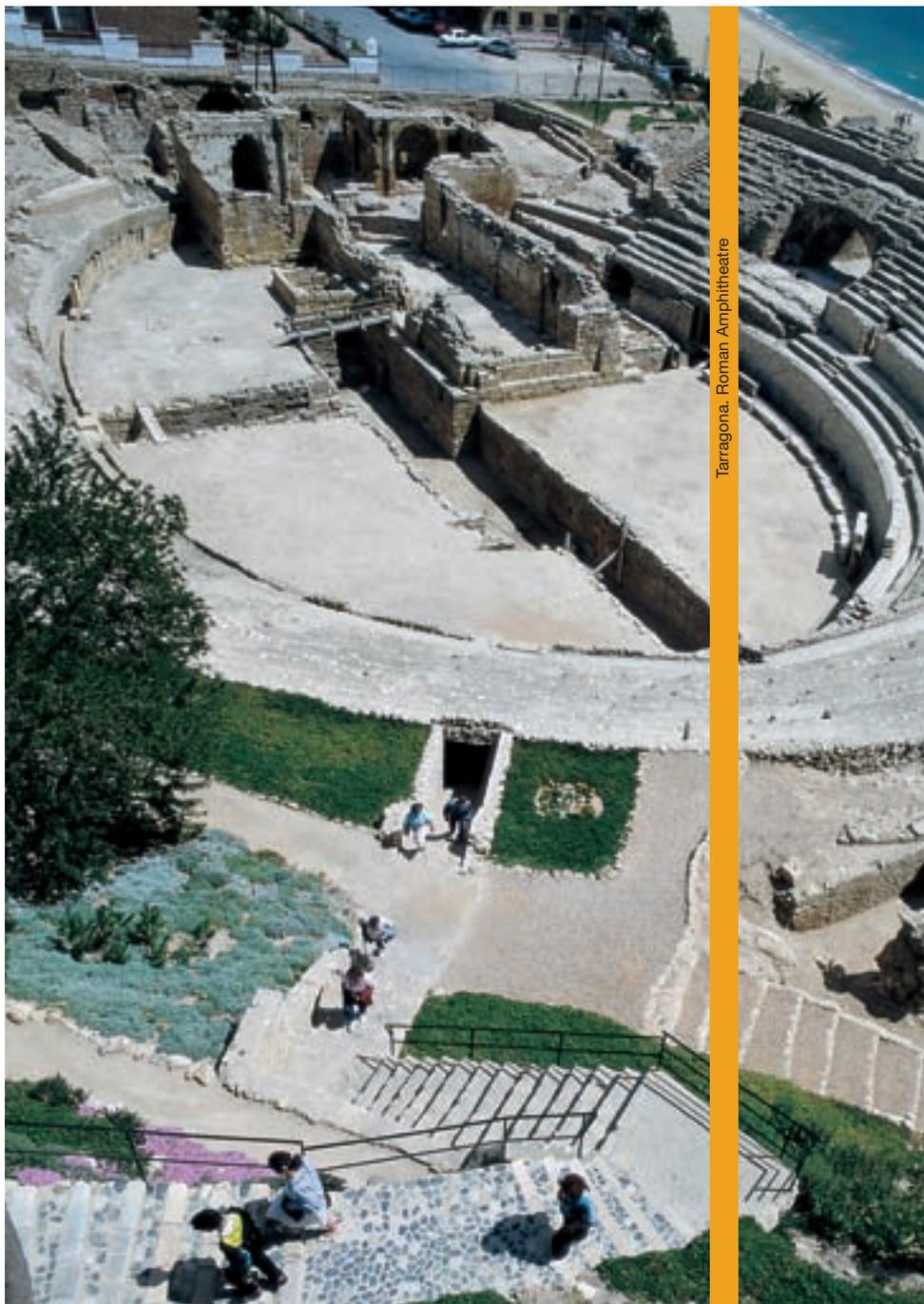
Bathed by the Mediterranean Sea, these lands are named after the fine golden sand of their beaches. A coastline that stretches from the seaside towns of L'Hospitalet de l'Infant to Cunit – to the south and to the north of Tarragona – and a hinterland that rises towards the Prades Mountains.

If you enjoy the sea and like nature activities, here you will find not only long beaches but also sheer cliffs that drop to the sea, from which many routes and paths climb. You will be able to wander through the coastal mountains, explore the Serra del Montsant mountain range and the Prades Mountains and follow the Way of Saint James as it heads inland. And anyone in search of festivities will be able to soak up the atmosphere of local traditions: *castells* (human pyramids), devils' dances and parades of *gegants i capgrossos* (giant-sized and large-headed figures). The territory can also be discovered through its gastronomy: fresh fish and seafood, market-garden produce, game, *calçots* (leek-like vegetables) and *xató* (a dish prepared with escarole, anchovies, salted cod and tuna, and

dressed with a sauce made from almonds). All washed down with red wines from the Priorat, Conca de Barberà, Tarragona and Montsant regions, or the more refined white wines from the Penedès region.

Tarragona, the capital city of these lands, was a very important centre in the Middle Ages, though the city particularly stands out for its Roman past. Some of the 2,000-year-old Roman ruins have been preserved, and the Archaeological Ensemble of Tarraco has been designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. But the Costa Daurada has many other towns where the influence of their history can still be felt: the town of Montblanc and the monasteries forming part of the Cistercian Route – Poblet, which is also a World Heritage Site, and Santes Creus – are some of the best examples of Catalan mediaeval heritage.

In addition, many of these towns and villages conserve the memory of several internationally renowned artists: the musician Pau Casals, the playwright Àngel Guimerà, the painter Joan Miró



Tarragona, Roman Amphitheatre

and the *Modernista* architect Antoni Gaudí all left their mark on them. In fact, the essence of this architectural style is very clear to see in the wineries dotted among the vineyards and also in the territory's towns, particularly in Reus. Indeed, the buildings of this 19<sup>th</sup>-century trading centre are some of the best examples of *Modernisme*, a style linked to European Art Nouveau, albeit with specific Catalan traits.

Beaches, natural areas, traditional festivals and feasts, gastronomy and architectural heritage make the Costa Daurada one of the most unique places on the Mediterranean Sea.

[www.costadaurada.cat](http://www.costadaurada.cat)

Plate of *Xató*





↑ L'Hospitalet de l'Infant

Gratallops γ



## Tarragona, a Roman City

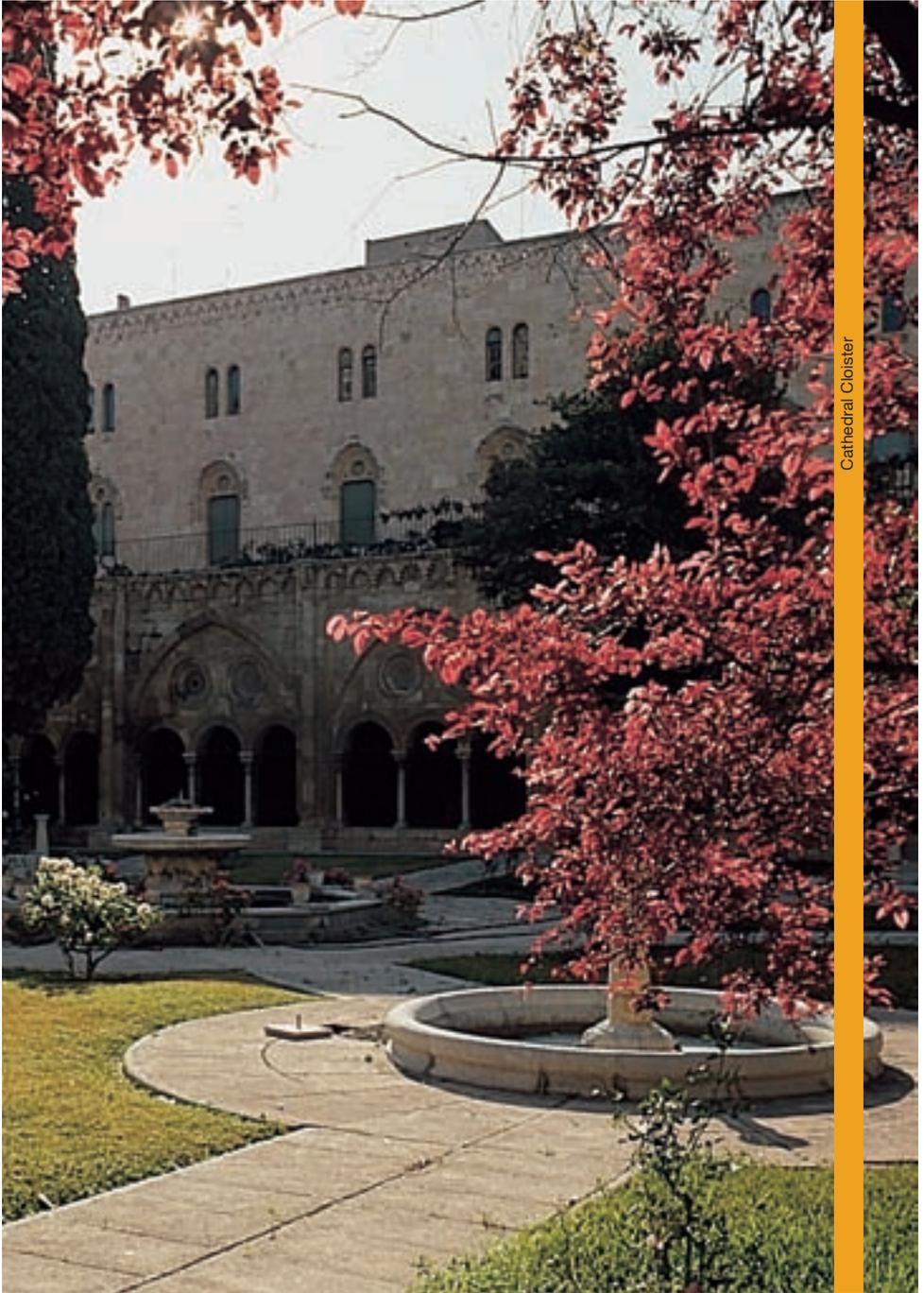
The Roman ruins are the urban essence of Tarragona, the legacy of the former Tarraco that, 2,000 years ago, was destined to rule more than half of the Iberian Peninsula as the capital of the large province called Hispania Citerior. In fact, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C., the city had become so important that even Emperor Augustus lived there between the years 27 and 24 B.C. Of particular note are the Roman walls and amphitheatre; located right by the sea and with many tiers of seats still intact, the elliptical amphitheatre was able to accommodate up to 14,000 spectators. With a little effort, today it is still possible to imagine the gladiators and lions battling it out in the arena.

Apart from these, there are many other ruins, as you will see while strolling through the city: the Roman circus (one of the best-preserved examples in the West), the praetorium, the ruins of the theatre and the fora. On the outskirts of the city, of particular note are the Pont del Diable aqueduct, the Torre dels Escipions funerary tower and the Arc de Berà triumphal arch. Needless to say, the **archaeological ensemble of ancient Tarraco** is one of the most complete examples of

Roman Hispania and, for good reason, it was designated a **World Heritage** Site by UNESCO in 2000.

Once a year, Tarragona goes back in time to relive daily life in the Roman period. The **Tarraco Viva** festival helps people to understand what the daily lives of Tarragona dwellers 2,000 years ago were like through guided tours, children's workshops, simulations of gladiators' fights and gastronomic tastings, among many other activities. But, to be able to grasp the complexity and magnificence of Roman Tarraco, the city's museums are well worth a visit. The **Museu Nacional Arqueològic (MNAT)** exhibits ceramics, coins, utensils, sculptures and mosaics to enable visitors to learn more about the daily lives of the city's inhabitants at that time. The Museu d'Història de la Ciutat exhibits archaeological and ethnographic pieces corresponding not only to the Roman period, but also to mediaeval and modern periods.

The most characteristic example of mediaeval Tarragona is the **cathedral**, the construction of which began in the 12<sup>th</sup> century on top of the Roman forum ruins. Located at the highest part of



Cathedral Cloister

the city in front of a long staircase, the cathedral's Gothic-style façade constitutes an important symbol of power. You can visit the central nave, the cloister and the Museu Diocesà, which has a collection of some 6,000 pieces ranging from the Roman period to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when work started on building the neighbourhoods of the Eixample, or city enlargement, which would join the old town to the port. It was for this purpose that the **Rambla Nova** was built; it leads pedestrians towards the immensity of the Mediterranean Sea. Flanked by some impressive *Modernista* buildings, the Rambla leads us to the Balcó del Mediterrani, a good vantage point overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, the beaches and the **Serrallo** fishing quarter.



Passeig de l'Escullera

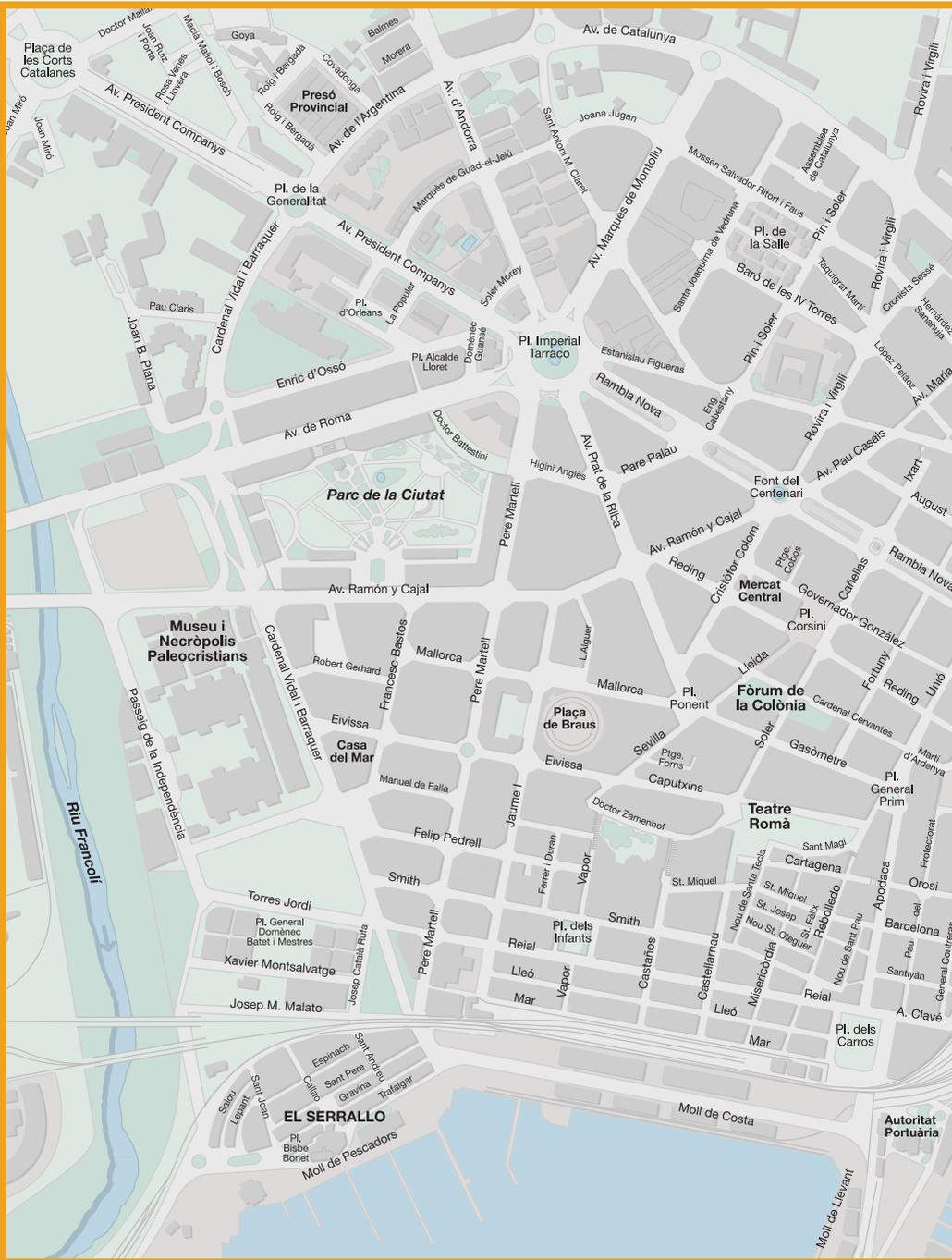


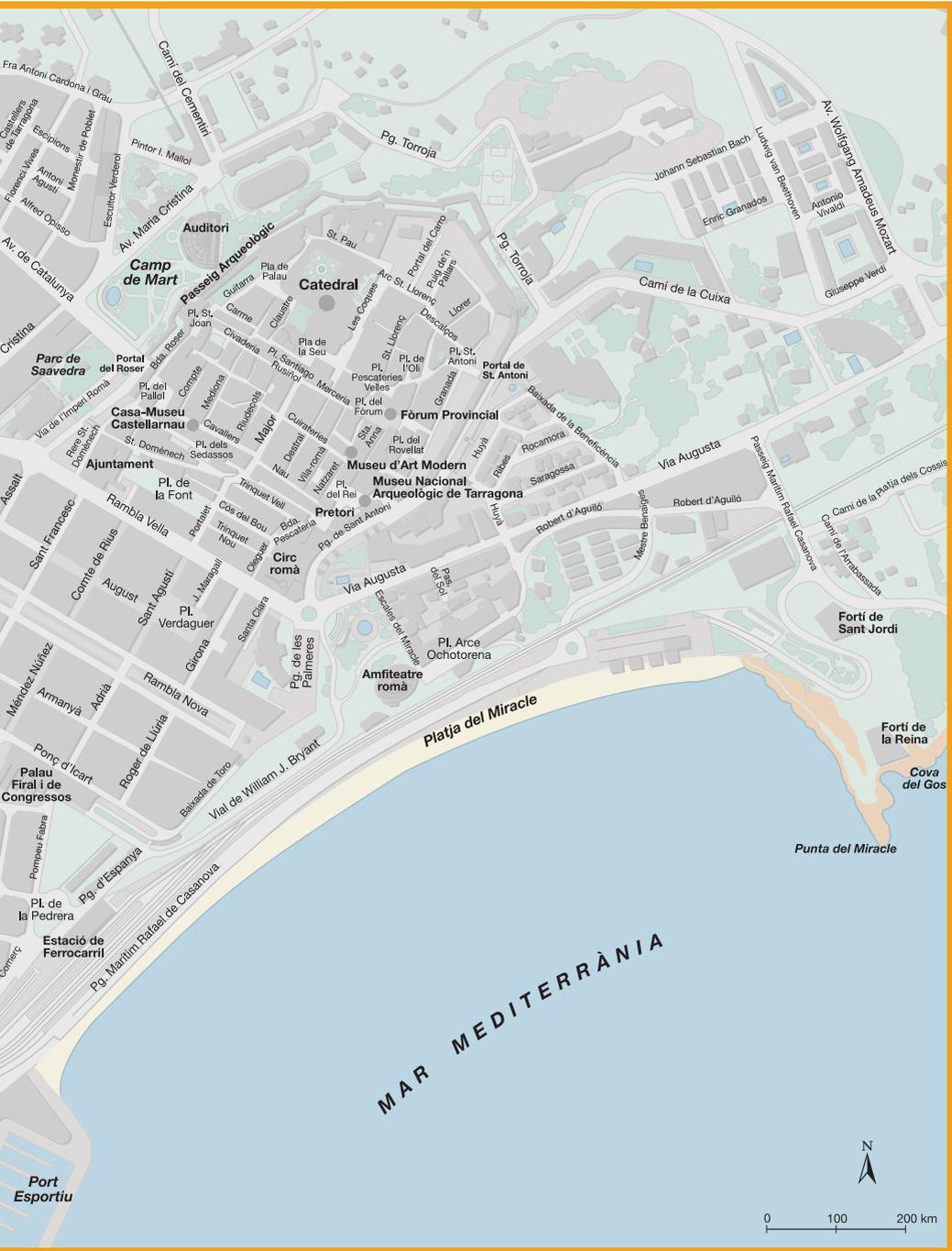


Pont del Diable Aqueduct



Fish Mosaic (MNAT)





MAR MEDITERRÀNIA



0 100 200 km



## Reus, *modernista* Splendour

The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries represented the golden era for Reus, when it became Catalonia's second most important city. It was the local bourgeoisie's desire to immortalise that moment with buildings that symbolised its wealth, and now the city is home to some of the best examples of Catalan *Modernisme*. In order to appreciate this extensive architectural ensemble, the city has a *Modernisme Route*; it is a signposted route through the historic centre where visitors can marvel at the main exponents of Catalan Art Nouveau.

Among the key figures of Reus's *Modernisme* is the architect Antoni Gaudí. While there are no clear indications that he was actually born in Reus, he did live there from a very young age. Despite the fact that his artistic legacy in the city is minimal, the **Centre Gaudí** was opened in 2007; it is a modern interpretation centre on the life and work of the most internationally renowned Catalan architect, who was the mastermind behind Barcelona's Park Güell and the Sagrada Família.

The other representative architect of that time was **Lluís Domènech i Montaner**, who designed the Institut Psiquiàtric Pere Mata, a mental health centre that took a pioneering approach to the treatment of people with psychiatric disorders. Domènech i Montaner also stood out for his design of private residences in different parts of the city: the Casa Rull and the Casa Gasull, both in the street called Carrer de Sant Joan, and the Casa Navàs, located in the square called Plaça del Mercadal.

The economic golden era that Reus experienced 100 years ago also had an impact on the cultural life of the city. Indeed, it led to the construction of two of Catalonia's most outstanding theatres: the **Teatre Fortuny** (1882) and the **Teatre Bartrina** (1918). The first is located in the square called Plaça de Prim, the past and present heart of Reus, where there is an equestrian statue of General Prim, a native of the city. And all of that hustle and bustle is just as noticeable today. Reus is a busy city, where shopping and culture are still the main



Teatre Fortuny

attractions. While taking a stroll through the city centre, visitors will find a wide range of shops and fashion boutiques that stand out above all for the high-quality services they offer and for the professionalism of the shopkeepers.

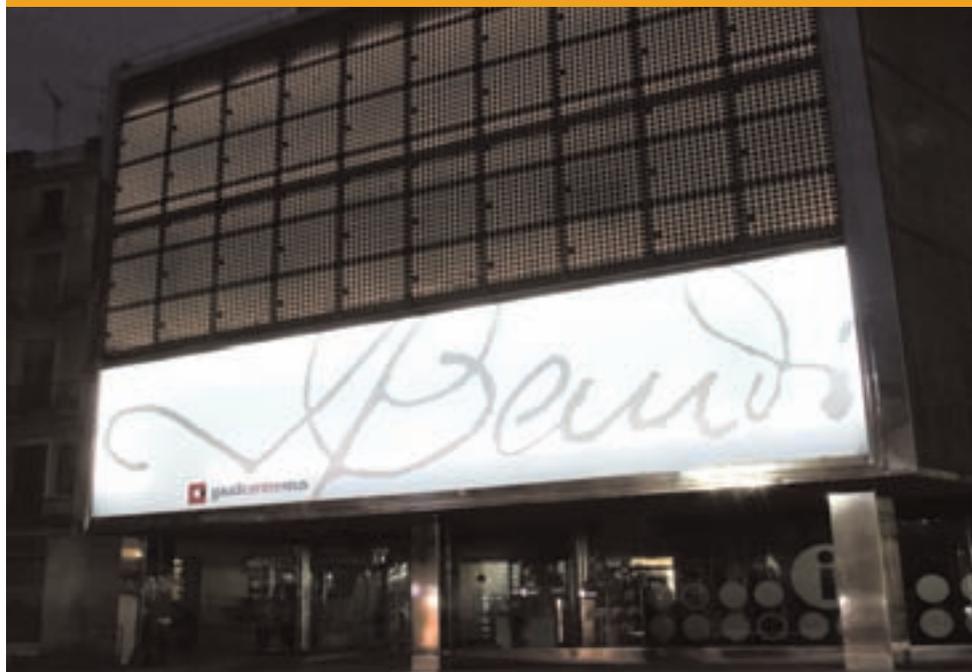


Casa Navàs



↑ Institut Pere Mata

Gaudí Centre ↓



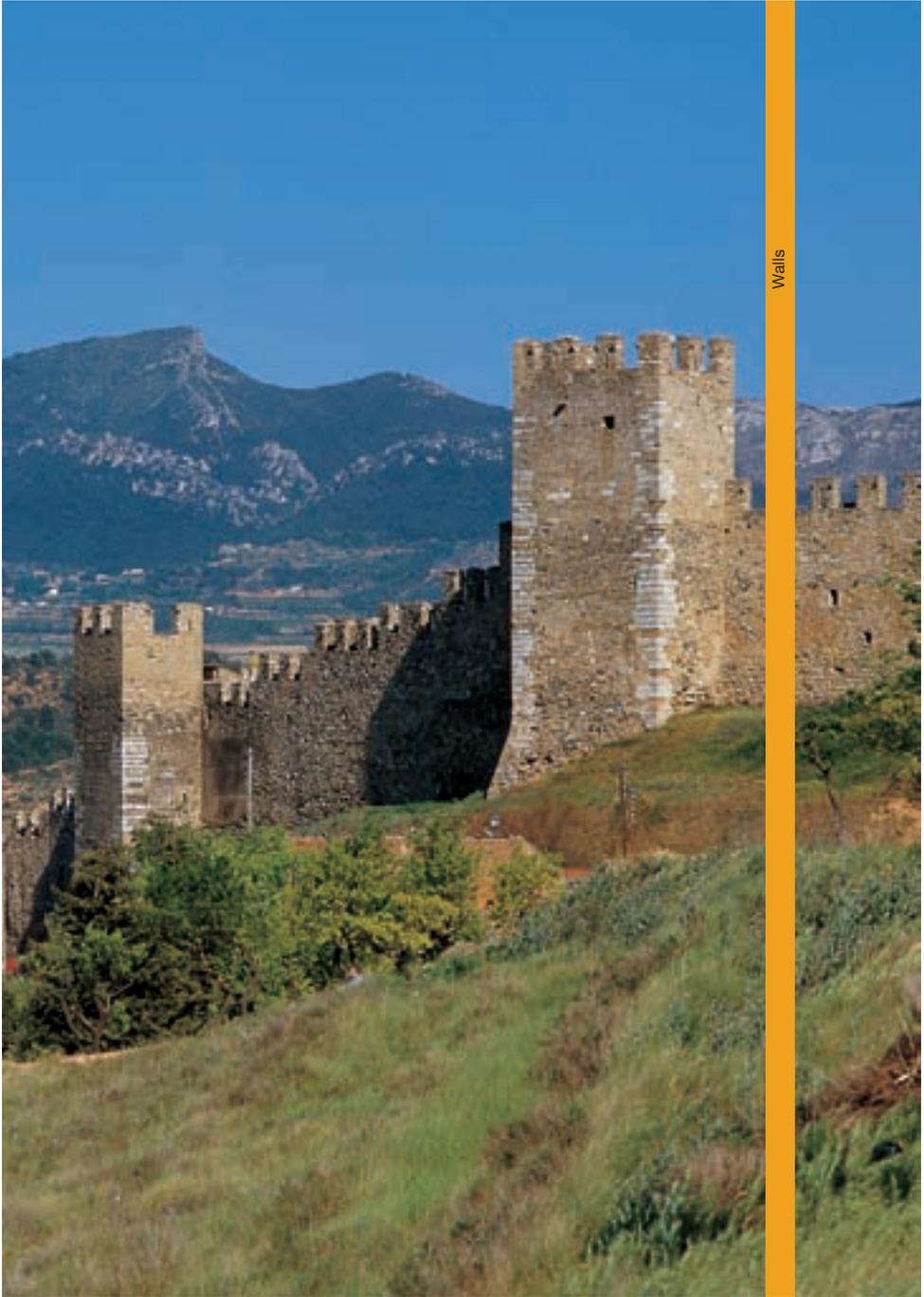
## Mediaeval Montblanc

Montblanc, the capital of the county of Conca de Barberà, experienced a period of splendour between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. The town was granted several royal privileges and its political influence became so consolidated that it was the venue for the Corts Generals Catalanes (Catalan Parliament) on four occasions. From that period, of particular note are the Church of Sant Miquel, the Palau Reial (Royal Palace), the Jewish quarter and the Convent of Sant Francesc. Today, all of these buildings and areas constitute the main architectural legacies of what was one of the principal Catalan towns in the Middle Ages.

However, one of the most outstanding aspects of this town is the 1.5-km **perimeter wall** with 31 towers and five gates. In fact, the gate that formed the exit towards the Prades Mountains was where the Knight Sant Jordi, the Patron Saint of Catalonia, slew the dragon that had been holding a princess hostage. This, of course, is what the legend recounted by the Catalan folklorist Joan Amades tells us.

Every year, around the time of the Feast of Sant Jordi (23 April), Montblanc hosts its **Mediaeval Week**. The town's streets, squares and wall towers are bedecked with heraldic flags and standards while a whole variety of events takes visitors back to the Middle Ages. Anyone taking part in these festivities, which are held over two weekends, can relive scenes of life at that time while enjoying the mediaeval market, the enactment of the legend of Sant Jordi and the staging of the Corts Catalanes (Catalan Parliament). Due to its historical accuracy, range of events and external projection, Montblanc's Mediaeval Week has been designated a **Festival of National Interest for Tourism** in Catalonia and in Spain.





Walls



↑ Jewish Quarter

Mediaeval Week ↓





Portalet del Foradot

## Inspiration for Great Artists

While strolling through the Costa Daurada's towns, you will be able to follow the footsteps of many internationally renowned artists. In El Vendrell, for example, of particular note is the figure of Pau Casals, a pre-eminent cellist and composer of music for the cello, as well as a celebrated intellectual committed to peace. In Mont-roig del Camp, on the other hand, of particular note is the avant-garde painter Joan Miró; from a very young age, he spent his summers in this rural village in the county of Baix Camp.

### Joan Miró and Mont-roig del Camp

The **Miró farmhouse** was the refuge for the painter Joan Miró (1893-1983) during his summer stays in Mont-roig del Camp. The contrasts in the landscapes around the village – crowned by the extraordinary natural mirador of the **Hermitage of Mare de Déu de la Roca**, immortalised in the painting *Mont-roig, Sant Ramon* – won the love of one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most famous artists. Miró went there for the first time in 1911 to convalesce from a bout of typhoid fever, and that is why he considered Mont-roig as the paradise where he not only regained his health

but also had the freedom to do what he most liked doing: painting. As time went on, the ties between the painter and the village became stronger. In fact, in the 1920s and 1930s, the painter alternated stays in Paris with summer holidays in Mont-roig. As a result, the painter's friends – Ernest Hemingway, Alexander Calder and Josep Lluís Sert, to name but a few – visited this peaceful village on the Costa Daurada more than once.

The **Centre Miró**, located in the village's old church, gives visitors the opportunity to see reproductions of the artist's paintings, inspired by the municipality's landscapes. The centre explains the extent to which nature, work, objects, landscapes and Joan Miró's relationship with peasants played a decisive role in his oeuvre. Some examples are paintings like *The Farm; Mont-roig, Village and Church*; or the impressive tapestry *The Lizard with the Golden Feathers*.

In the village, visitors can follow the footsteps of the painter by taking the **Miró itinerary**, a route that passes through several points from which the artist drew inspiration for his creations. In total, there are nine locations from which he created



Mont-roig del Camp. Centre Miró



▲ Sant Salvador, El Vendrell. Vil·la Museu Pau Casals

▼ El Vendrell. Monument to Pau Casals





↑ El Vendrell. Church of Sant Salvador

Mont-roig del Camp ↓



some of his best-known paintings. Thus, visitors are able to discover the 'originals of the originals'. The itinerary starts at the municipality's beach, which he painted in *Mont-roig Beach*, goes past his farmhouse, through the centre of the village and the tilled-earth fields, and ends at the aforementioned Hermitage of Mare de Déu de la Roca; the chapel located at the top was immortalised by Miró in the painting *Mont-roig, Sant Ramon*. The dry-stone shack route allows visitors to find out why the artist loved this truly authentic, rural land.

### **Pau Casals and El Vendrell**

El Vendrell and Pau Casals (1876-1973) are two names that are intrinsically linked. It was in this town, the capital of the county of Baix Penedès, where one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most significant cellists was born. However, the Spanish Civil War and his forced exile in 1939 kept Casals far away from his land in the final 34 years of his life. A man of great democratic principles, he only returned once to El Vendrell and died in Puerto Rico in 1973, two years before the end of Francoism.

Despite this long exile, the mark of this musician is still tangible in the town. The **house where he was born** is open to visitors so that they can find out what the life of a humble family in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was like. However, his legacy is concentrated in the **Vil·la Museu Pau Casals**, a house built in the seaside neighbourhood of Sant Salvador that is also the headquarters of the Fundació Pau Casals, an institution that works to strengthen music as a tool for creating a better, peaceful world, the same ideals that had motivated Casals throughout his lifetime. A major artistic legacy is exhibited in the Vil·la. Besides personal objects, there is an extensive collection of sculptures. The **Auditori Pau Casals** was built very nearby and has a busy musical and teaching programme encompassing not only classical music but also traditional music, popular tunes and jazz.

**El Vendrell** offers several itineraries in order to discover and make the most of the great master's legacy. However, besides Pau Casals, the town also has other illustrious natives; of particular note is the playwright and poet **Àngel Guimerà**, the author of works like *Sea and Sky* and *Marta of the Lowlands*. While visiting El Vendrell, something that should not be missed is the **Church of Sant Salvador** (18<sup>th</sup> century) with its characteristically thin belfry and the organ that Pau Casals played when he was young, following in the footsteps of this father, who was also a musician. And to round everything off, eating at one of the town's restaurants is highly recommended; you will be able to taste the local cuisine, particularly the *xató* (prepared with escarole, anchovies, salted cod and tuna, and dressed with a sauce made from almonds), which is one of the county's most succulent dishes.

The **Geniuses' Route** links the three great, universal artists with the landscape of the Costa Daurada's municipalities, where they all spent a considerable amount of time: Antoni Gaudí in Reus, Joan Miró in Mont-roig del Camp and Pau Casals in El Vendrell. In the interpretation centres devoted to each of these greats, visitors will also be able to discover the essence of the territory and of its towns and cities, nature and gastronomy.





↑ Mont-roig del Camp. Hermitage of Mare de Déu de la Roca

El Vendrell. Birthplace of Àngel Guimerà ↓



## The Way of Saint James

**Nature and heritage:** the binomial encompassing hiking and culture is one of the main attractions of the Way of Saint James, a route that was originally of a religious nature that links various points in Europe to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, where the remains of Saint James the Apostle are worshipped. One of the branches of the way, which attracts both believers and non-believers drawn by the history and beauty of the route, begins in Tarragona. The stretch that links this city to Lleida has recently been devised and signposted as part of the commitment to reinstate the branches of this pilgrimage while fostering tourism in the inland counties of Catalonia.

It is based on the historic route that pilgrims leaving from Tarragona would have taken to follow the Way of Saint James, making the most of the Roman road linking the city to Lleida, where this branch merged with the one coming from the medieval Monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes in the county of Empordà. At a little over 150km long, the Way of Saint James that links Tarragona to Lleida is suitable for walkers, cyclists and horseriders. The itinerary was devised to ensure that anyone following the route will come across

villages, towns or facilities every 10km to make it less strenuous.

Walkers go through the villages and towns of El Catllar, Renau, Vilabella, Bràfim, Vila-rodona, Aiguamúrcia and Santes Creus, El Pla de Santa Maria, Cabra del Camp, Barberà de la Conca, Montblanc, L'Espluga de Francolí, Senan and Vimbodí. This route was devised to be done in five or six stages if the final destination is Lleida, the longest of which – some 33km – goes from the Cathedral of Tarragona to the Monastery of Santes Creus. In fact, the route coincides with the main monasteries that can be found on the **Cistercian Route**, such as Santes Creus, Poblet – designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO – and, in the territory of Urgell, Vallbona de les Monges.

[www.camidesantjaume.cat](http://www.camidesantjaume.cat)



Signage\*



Signage





## The Cistercian Route

The monasteries of Poblet, of Santes Creus and of Vallbona de les Monges form the backbone of the Cistercian Route. Since their foundation, all three follow – and live according to – the Rule of Saint Benedict, who advocated a return to basics and a will to seek austerity and isolation from the world.

### Monastery of Santa Maria de Poblet

The Monastery of Santa Maria de Poblet is located on the northern side of the Prades Mountains, in Conca de Barberà, right in the middle of the **Poblet woods**, which have been designated a **Natural Site of National Interest**. Founded in 1150 by Ramon Berenguer IV, the Count of Barcelona, on land won back from the Saracens, the monastery was closed down due to the State's laws in 1835 and refounded in 1940 by a group of Italian Benedictine monks.

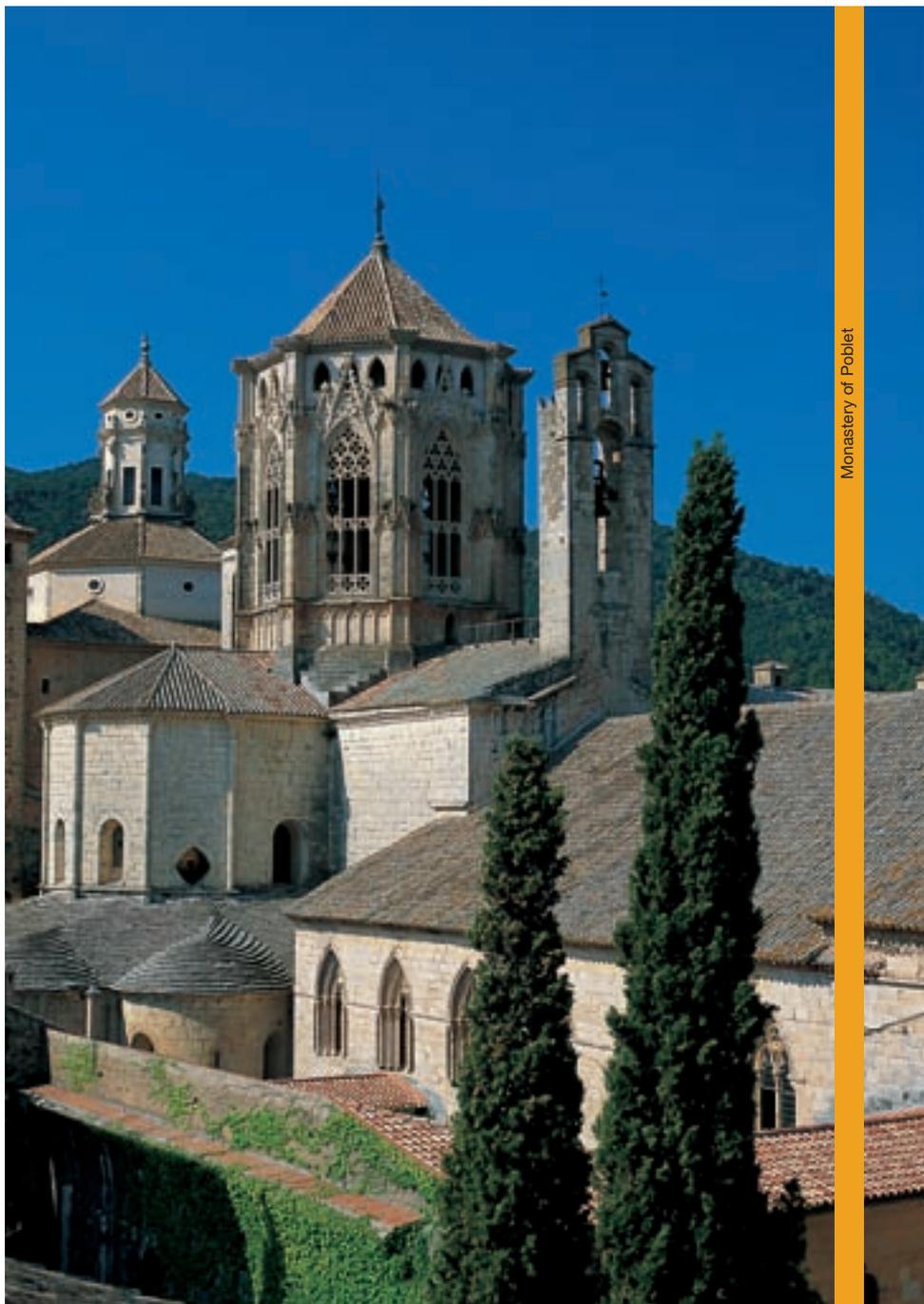
Built between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the ensemble is one of the most significant monastic monuments in Europe. The complex comprises three buildings preceded by a large walled courtyard. The layout of the 12<sup>th</sup>-century monastic church includes three naves with a transept and a

highly complex apse. From the ensemble, of particular note is the Baroque portal set in the wall, the Renaissance altarpiece by Damià Forment and the grand cloister with its respective rooms.

Poblet became a **royal pantheon**. Alfons the Chaste, the son of the monastery's founder, was the first monarch to be buried there. In 1340, King Peter the Ceremonious turned Poblet into the official pantheon of the House of Aragon. Hence, the remains of kings James I the Conqueror, Alfons the Magnanimous and Martin the Humane are found in the monastery. Today, besides taking care of the monastery, Poblet's monastic community has turned this monumental ensemble into a dynamic religious and cultural centre designated a **World Heritage** Site by UNESCO.

### Monastery of Santes Creus

The Monastery of Santes Creus is located in the municipality of Aiguamúrcia, in an isolated valley on the **banks of the Gaià river**. It is one of the largest and best-conserved Cistercian monastic ensembles still open to the public. It was founded in 1168 and has always benefitted from the



Monastery of Poblet



↑ Monastery of Poblet

Monastery of Santes Creus ↓



protection offered by royalty and the nobility. Consequently, it became an important centre for spirituality, learning and territorial colonisation.

The church houses the **royal tombs** of Peter the Great and of James II of Aragon and his wife Blanche of Anjou, as well as the great admiral Roger of Lauria. The Latin-cross floorplan, the three robust naves, the Romanesque portal and the impressive Gothic ornamental window are clear examples of an imposing sobriety. The monastery was fortified in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. From the ensemble, of particular note are the scriptorium, the monk's huge dormitory with diaphragm arches and the magnificent **Gothic cloister**, whose outstanding sculptural richness has been attributed to the English master Reginald Fonoll.

The Cistercian Route carries on towards the Monastery of **Santa Maria de Vallbona** located in the territory of Lleida. It is a convent located in the far south of the county of Urgell, next to the counties of Segarra and Conca de Barberà.



Monastery of Vallbona de les Monges

# Mediterranean Cuisine

The **Mediterranean diet**, designated as **Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** by UNESCO, is one of the values that tourists visiting the Costa Daurada appreciate the most. Fish, fruit, vegetables, pulses and olive oil characterise this cuisine that uses local, seasonal products. The result is a varied, innovative gastronomy based on traditional principles, where pride of place is given to vegetables like *calçots* and dishes like *xató*.

## Fish and seafood

Cambrils and Tarragona are two of Catalonia's main seaside towns and cities with fishing ports. The fish caught there – from oily fish to seafood – manages to satisfy those with the most discerning palates. Thus the restaurants of Tarragona and of Cambrils – a seaside town where the Galera Gastronomy Days are held – are some of the best places on the Costa Daurada for visitors to enjoy a Mediterranean cuisine that combines fish and seafood products with other land- and mountain-derived food items.

## From *xató* to the *calçot*

Besides fish and seafood, *calçots* (leek-like vegetables) and *xató* (a dish prepared with

escarole, anchovies, salted cod and tuna, and dressed with a sauce made from almonds) are the star products of the local cuisine of the counties of Tarragona. Towns like El Vendrell, Cunit and Calafell form part of the **Xató Route**, a gastronomic itinerary that joins several municipalities along the Catalan coastline where visitors can taste this seaside dish, whose recipe varies from one town to another. If you would like to taste it, look out for the gastronomic days that are organised from late winter to early spring by many of these towns along the Catalan coastline. And, to accompany the dish, you must try the local white wine and cava.

As is the case for *xató*, *calçots* are also accompanied by a sauce made from almonds called *romesco*. But what exactly is a *calçot*? It is a leek-like variety of spring onion – protected in these regions by the *Denominació d'Origen de Qualitat* (DOQ, Designation of Origin of Quality) – grown in the area mostly by smallholding farmers from the town of Valls, even though its cultivation has extended throughout Camp de Tarragona and beyond. It is known for its characteristic flavour that has a touch of sweetness. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it became fashionable among families living in



Grape Harvesting



↑ L'Espuga de Francolí. Cooperative Winery

Valls. Great Calçotada Festival



Valls to organise *calçotades*, a kind of informal get-together where *calçots* were cooked and eaten. Today, these popular feasts are very widespread.

From late January to mid April, restaurants in the area are full of diners ready to taste one of the most unique delicacies of Catalan cuisine, usually accompanied by barbecued meat. **Valls** has therefore become the heart of this culinary tradition, and that is the reason why it organises the **Great Calçotada Festival**, which marks the start of this quintessential gastronomic season. It is a festival that imbues the town's streets and squares with a very special atmosphere. The events programme for the festival includes all kinds of *calçot*-related events: parades, culinary exhibitions and a big contest for *calçot* eaters.

### A land of wine

The Roman territories that were part of Catalonia as it is today already stood out for the quality of their wines, and this trait is still present today. The Costa Daurada is home to four *Denominació d'Origen* (DO, Designation of Origin) Catalan wines and a considerable part of its territory comes within the area earmarked for DO cava. DO Tarragona, DO Conca de Barberà, DO Penedès, DO Montsant and, above all, *Denominació d'Origen Qualificada* (DOQ, Designation of Origin Qualified) Priorat apply to some of the best wines currently available in Europe.

### Aromas of Priorat and the Serra del Montsant mountain range

**Priorat's wines** form part of the unique *Denominació d'Origen* (DO, **Designation of Origin**) acknowledged as being of top quality in our country, the *Denominació d'Origen Qualificada* (DOQ, **Designation of Origin Qualified**). The tradition of winemaking in this county can be traced back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when it was introduced by **Escaladei**

**Charterhouse** monks from the French region of Provence. Today, a visit to the ruins of this charterhouse, the first one to be built on the Iberian Peninsula and located at the foot of the Serra del Montsant mountain range, is a must for anyone who wants to learn about the origins of the county of Priorat.

In Priorat, the land the vines are grown on is unique because of its soil, a compact substrate of slate that goes by the name of *llicorella*. With its very steep slopes, the rough terrain of this county makes it very difficult to harvest grapes, and this is something that has led vines to be grown on specially-constructed terraces on the side of the mountain itself. Strong, bright, high-alcohol content wines come from this land. Red wines are the stars of Priorat's wine production and account for 90% of the total. Carignan, Cabernet, Grenache Noir, Merlot and Syrah are the grape varieties used to produce these wines, which are suitable for accompanying game. In contrast, Grenache Blanc, Pedro Ximénez, Chenin, Viognier and Macabeu are grape varieties used to produce white wines.

In the county of Priorat, we can find the **DO Montsant**. Aged wines with a high alcohol content predominate in this area, where 70% of the wine production is exported to markets such as Germany, the United States, France, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Despite the newness of the DO Montsant (just 10 years old), some experts in the world of wine have already noted its potential and have praised the exceptional quality of the elaborations. Within this DO, of particular note is the **Capçanes winery**, one of the few European producers that make **kosher wine** according to a strict elaboration process that conforms to the canons of Jewish law, and which is consumed by the principal Jewish communities worldwide.

## Tarragona, Conca de Barberà and Penedès

**DO Tarragona** encompasses wines produced in the vineyards of Camp de Tarragona and a considerable part of Ribera d'Ebre (in Terres de l'Ebre region). Made from grape varieties such as Tempranillo, Merlot and Syrah, the red wines of this DO are aromatic. In contrast, the rosé wines are crisp and have cherry-coloured tones; in the production of white wines, which are the true stars in this area, grape varieties such as Macabeu, Parellada and Xarel·lo, among others, are used to make wines that are suitable for accompanying the typical fish and seafood dishes served in this corner of the Mediterranean.

In the far north of the counties of Tarragona, we can also find a part of the **DO Penedès**, the biggest one in Catalonia in terms of hectares covered. Among the diversity of the white and red varieties grown there, the most characteristic one of Penedès is the Xarel·lo, a grape that is used to produce several highly valued crisp, fruity white wines, which are also used to add body to cava. But the winemaking tradition of the Costa Daurada does not stop there. Of particular note is the **DO Conca de Barberà**, which is connected with the history of the Monastery of Poblet. The fact is that winegrowing in the county was promoted by the monks from this Cistercian monastery. Trepat is the characteristic grape variety, which produces an aromatic, light and very refreshing rosé wine.

### Wine cathedrals

Winemaking is associated with the construction of **wineries**. On the Costa Daurada, most of these are **Modernista in style**. Given the nickname of 'wine cathedrals' by the playwright Àngel Guimerà, in **L'Espluga de Francolí** we can find one of the oldest buildings of this type (1913), designed by the architect **Lluís Domènech i Montaner** and his son **Pere Domènech i Roura**. They were also

the architects of other wineries, such as the ones in Pira, Barberà de la Conca, Sarraí and Rocafort de Queralt, which they designed to combine modernity and functionality, with several characteristic touches of Gothic art.

**Cèsar Martinell**, one of Antoni Gaudí's students, was also responsible for designing wineries and agricultural syndicates, conceived as architectural jewels of *Modernisme*. The cooperative wineries of Aiguamúrcia, Santes Creus and Nulles are all works by Martinell. Worthy of special mention is the cooperative winery of **Falset**, which is considered the most representative one of that period in Catalonia.





↑ Cambrils

La Morera de Montsant. Escaladei Charterhouse ↓





## Popular Culture

Popular culture is one of the most important identifying traits of any territory. It expresses feelings of belonging, puts dates in the calendar and links the present to the past. The Costa Daurada has plenty of these types of festive nuances, whether they be **castells** (human pyramids), *correfocs* (parades using fireworks and effigies of the devil), theatrical performances, religious celebrations or gastronomic events.

### **Castells, a unique tradition**

The **castells** (human pyramids) tradition is one of the most authentic, differentiated cultural manifestations of Catalonia, with a history that dates back over 200 years. Tens of people are involved in the construction of these pyramids; they join forces to raise different types of human towers – some have even been ten storeys high – without any mechanical assistance. This tradition, which combines the culture of effort, emotion and solidarity, has been designated as **Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** by UNESCO.

Even though the **tradition emerged in Valls** and the surrounding areas in the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup>

centuries, it gradually spread throughout Camp de Tarragona and Penedès. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it spread throughout the rest of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, where it has become consolidated over the last 30 years. Nowadays, from spring to autumn, several towns and cities hold **castells festivals**. The most popular ones are those held in **Vilafranca del Penedès** for the Feast of Saint Felix (30 August), in **Tarragona** for the Feast of Saint Thecla (23 September) and in **Valls** for the Feast of Saint Ursula (21 October). In addition, since 1980, the former bullring of Tarragona (now called Tarraco Arena Plaça) hosts a biennial **castells** contest that puts the skills of the country's main groups to the test.

### **Patron-Saint feasts and religious traditions**

Besides the unique *castells* tradition, every village, town and city on the Costa Daurada exhibits its cultural individuality at some time or other, whether as part of a Patron-Saint feast or of other festivities – mostly religious – that fill the yearly calendar; they kick off with the Feast of Saint Anthony in January and are followed by a succession of others right through to Christmas. In recent years,



Valls. Human Pyramids for the Feast of Saint Ursula

public authorities have been careful to conserve cultural heritage and, for that reason, some of these celebrations have been designated Festivals of National Interest by the Government of Catalonia.

One of the best examples is the **Feast of the Patron Saint of Tarragona**, held in honour of Saint Thecla. It is held around 23 September, and its origins date back to the Middle Ages. It has one of the most popular processions in the Catalan Countries and triggers a whole series of traditional dances, popular bestiaries (including *gegants i capgrossos* [giant-sized and large-headed figures]), farces, *balls parlats* (theatrical performances combining dance, acting, music and sung or recited dialogues), allegorical performances and *sonadors* (performers of traditional music). But the Feast's climax is on 24 September, when local *castells* groups raise a tower in front of the cathedral and go down the

stairs from Pla de la Seu – the area at the top – to the Town Hall square.

In most instances, **devils' dances** are an integral part of these Patron-Saint feasts. It is unclear where they originate from, though it would seem that they stem from mediaeval street theatre and dances. With devil-like characters playing the lead roles, they enact a conflict between good and evil and, over the years, fire and fireworks have gradually been incorporated into them. This activity has been kept very much alive in the town of **L'Arboç**. Its **Patron-Saint feast**, which is celebrated on the fourth Sunday of August in honour of Saint Julian and the Holy Martyrs, is renowned for its important procession, which has remained virtually unchanged for over 100 years. It comprises a devils' dance, the Badalot dragon and *gegants i capgrossos* (giant-sized and large-headed figures), among other expressions of popular culture.

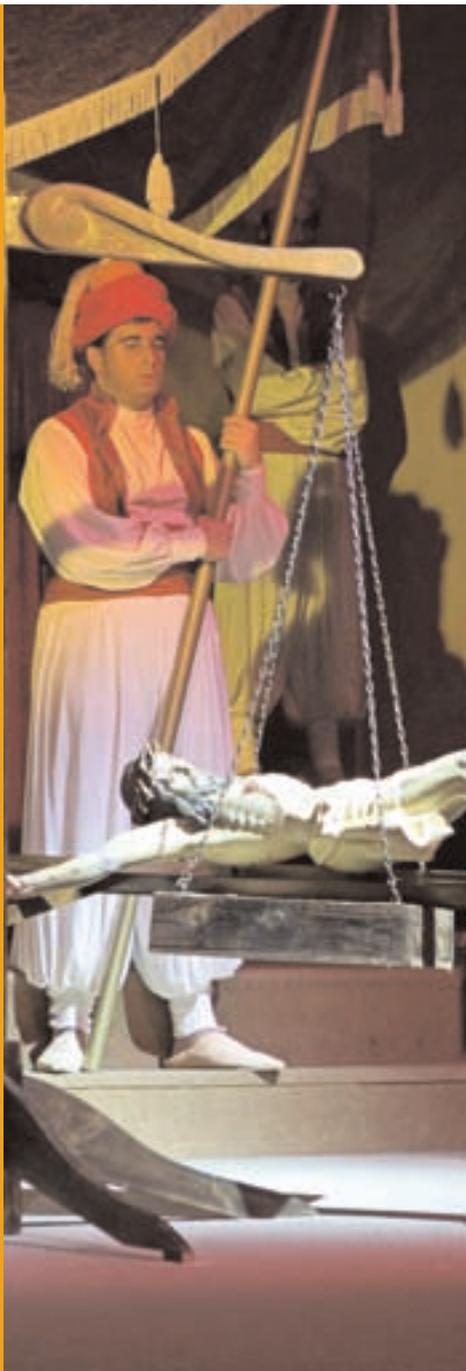
Reus. Traditional Dance: *Ball de gitanes*





↑ Tarragona. Good Friday Procession

Salomó. Medieval Theatrical Performance: Ball del Sant Crist ↓





Vilafranca del Penedès. Human Pyramids for the Feast Day of Sant Felix



Reus. Procession of the Three Graces

The cultural wealth of these lands does not end there. The programme for the **Patron-Saint feast in honour of the Virgin of Mercy of Reus** contains many similar events. But, the celebration in Camp de Tarragona that raises most expectation is the one held in **Valls**: the **Virgin of La Candela festivities**. It only takes place every 10 years though. The origin of the celebration can be traced back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when a plague epidemic caused thousands of deaths. Valls dwellers approached the Virgin of La Candela to ask her to put an end to it and, since people stopped dying, the festivities were and are still held in her honour. The spirit of these festivities has a major influence on the life of Valls, and the popular saying bears witness to this: “A Valls, es compta de deu en deu” (In Valls, people count in tens).

### Religious fervour

Many centuries of Christian tradition means that religion is present – in a more or less explicit way – in most of this territory’s cultural manifestations. The most obvious demonstration of this can be found in the events held at **Easter. Tarragona**, for example, commemorates mediaeval traditions with the Holy Burial procession, which had already been documented in 1550. It is held on Good Friday and includes 19 *passos* (sculptures depicting the final moments of Jesus’ life), most of which are carried on the backs of parishioners.

**Reus** is no exception either. Its **Patron-Saint feast in honour of Saint Peter** has been celebrated for over 400 years and preserves many of the original rituals, especially in terms of religious services and processions. But it is at Easter when the fervour of believers is truly palpable. The events held over this period bring together around 20 brotherhoods. Of particular note is the Procession of the Three Graces, designated a Festive and Heritage Element of National Interest. This massive procession starts at noon on Good Friday and the image of the Holy Christ is carried to the church. It also includes numerous rituals.

Over the same period, several towns in Camp de Tarragona enact the passion and death of Jesus. One of the best-known performances is held in **La Selva del Camp**, where it is very deep rooted. **Good Friday** has been designated a **Traditional Festival of National Interest**; of particular note is the power and emotion of the Stations of the Cross to Calvary, a march that is held in the early morning. The whole event is accompanied by processional music and the dance of death, which has recently been restored from mediaeval folklore. After Easter is over, the **Holy Christ dance** is held in May in the village of **Salomó**, between Tarragona, Valls and El Vendrell. Mediaeval in origin, it is a show that combines theatre and dance.

[www.festacatalunya.cat](http://www.festacatalunya.cat)  
[www.firesifestes.com](http://www.firesifestes.com)  
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[www.festesreus.cat](http://www.festesreus.cat)  
[www.balldelsantcris.cat](http://www.balldelsantcris.cat)



## Big Beaches, Small Coves

From Cunit to L'Hospitalet de l'Infant, the Costa Daurada's beaches are undeniably one of the main tourist attractions of this territory. On a 90-km stretch of the coast, there are around 60 beaches in total, a considerable number of which have been awarded the blue flag. An exceptional case is **Calafell** beach, for example, which is an uninterrupted 5-km stretch. But the beaches of **Coma-ruga** – with the therapeutic waters of the L'Estany i el Riuet spring – and those of Miami Platja and L'Hospitalet de l'Infant are interspersed with quiet coves and cliffs, where shady pine trees drop down to the shore. Further north, the Cape of Salou – a rocky promontory that juts out 2km from the coastline not far from Tarragona – also conceals a number of delightful spots, such as Cala Morisca, Cala de la Vinya, Cala de la Font, Cala de la Penya Tallada and Cala els Crancs.

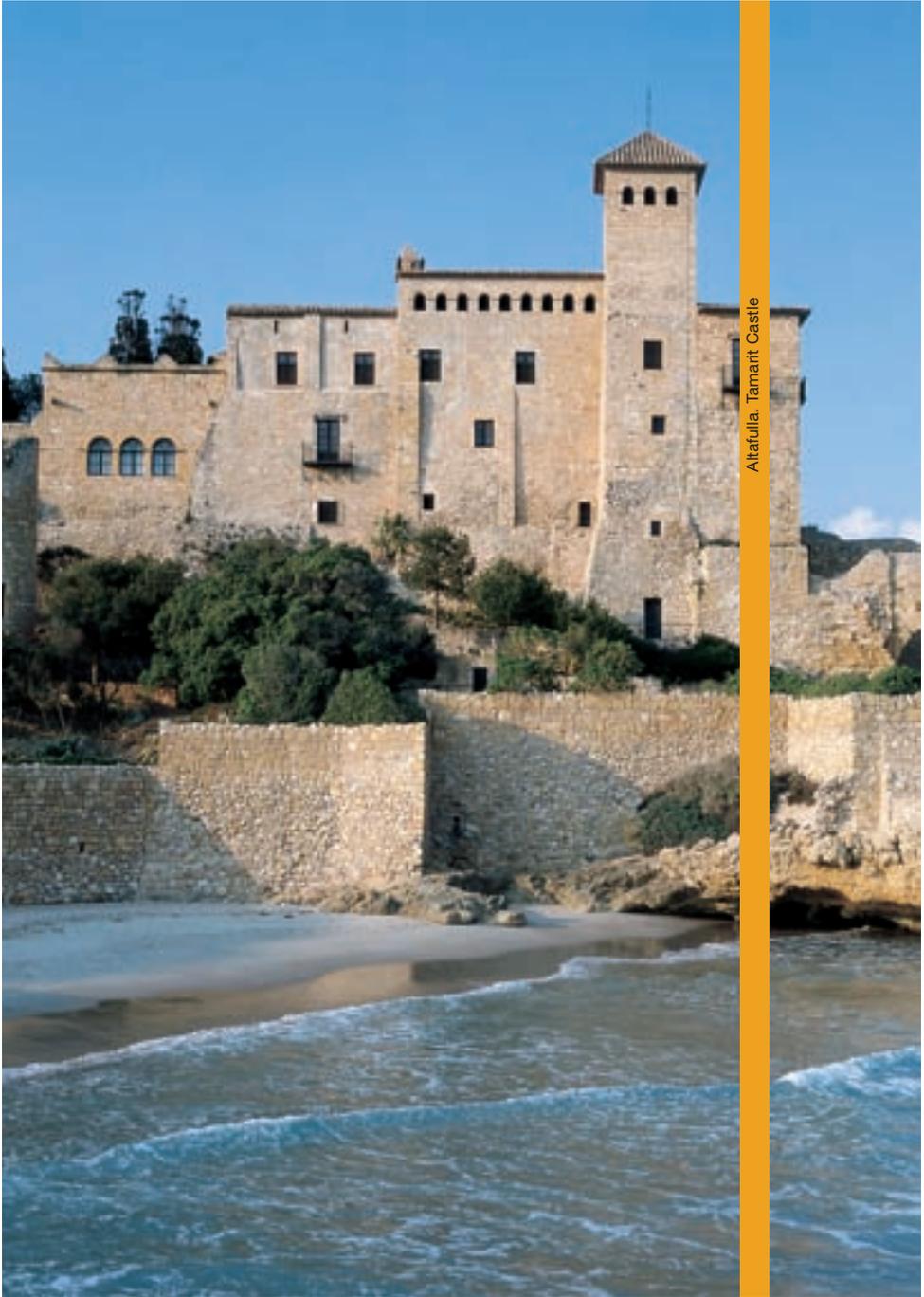
For lovers of the sea and of adventure, most towns along the Tarragona coastline offer a whole variety of aquatic activities. The **Estació Nàutica Costa Daurada** – covering the towns of **Salou**, **Cambrils**, **L'Hospitalet de l'Infant-Vandellòs** and **Mont-roig del Camp-Miami Platja** – is an organisation that coordinates the services of local

businesses to promote dinghy sailing courses for beginners, kayak excursions and underwater diving classes, among other activities. But, in recent years, kitesurfing has become the star of all the sports on offer; it is a modality that allows surfers to perform spectacular jumps off the sea by using kites.

If you are not used to doing much exercise, a good alternative is to hire a boat and sail along the coastline to discover the magic of this seaside territory. This is an activity aimed particularly at families. And it should be pointed out that **Calafell**, **Salou**, **Cambrils** and **La Platja de la Pineda** (Vila-seca) are all recognised as **Family Holiday Destinations**, a seal of quality awarded by the Government of Catalonia to quality, family-oriented services.

### Fishing villages

Besides the allure of the Mediterranean Sea, the Costa Daurada is a coastline imbued with history, right down to the shore. An example of this is the ensemble headed by **Tamarit Castle** on the estuary of the Gaià river. In recent years, this 11<sup>th</sup>-century



Altafulla. Tamarit Castle

building – as well as its Romanesque church – has been restored and is now used as an events venue.

Very nearby is the town of **Altafulla**, crowned by a mediaeval castle and the dome of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Church of Sant Martí. A little further north, **Torredembarra** has a magnificent Renaissance castle, built in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, overlooking the town; in **Creixell**, there is a Romanesque-origin castle, though everything that is now visible is post 16<sup>th</sup> century. Without going far, in **Calafell** we can find a castle and the Romanesque Church of La Santa Creu (11<sup>th</sup> century), and the town's ancient Iberian fortress (6<sup>th</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries B.C.). And, of course, there is the Costa Daurada's main historic centre: the Roman ruins of **Tarragona**, many of which were built near the shore as a symbol of this great Roman capital's ties with the Mediterranean Sea.

### **Around the world at PortAventura**

In addition to sun and sea tourism, which is especially important for towns on the coast, the Costa Daurada also has one of the biggest theme parks in southern Europe: PortAventura. Designed

to appeal to families, it offers a thematic tour around Polynesia, Mexico, China, the Wild West and the Mediterranean through rides, street shows, large-scale theatrical performances, restaurants and shops. The Dragon Khan roller coaster is one of the longest in Europe and has become a big favourite among visitors. Located between the towns of Salou and Vila-seca, the facilities also have an amusement park for younger family members, an aquatic park and a comprehensive tourist complex with convention centres, golf courses, hotels, swimming pools and direct access to the beach. Opened in 1995, the centre has become a major tourist attraction and welcomes over three million visitors a year.

### **Time for relaxation**

Wellness and health-related tourism has become very popular in recent years. In this particular area, the Costa Daurada has managed to combine tradition and modernity. For many years now, **medicinal waters** have put the village of **Vallfogona de Riucorb** on the map. It is situated in the far north-west of the counties of Tarragona, bordering on the counties of Segarra and Urgell. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, advantage was taken of such



Salou. PortAventura



Salou. Passeig Marítim Promenade



↑ Montbrí del Camp. Termes Montbrí

Salou. Cala els Crancs ↓



natural resources to build one of the most popular **spas** in the region. The properties of the waters that spring up in the village are ideal for treating illnesses like rheumatism, arthritis and asthma, as well as for anti-stress therapies. More recently, the rise in demand for services of this type has fostered the establishment of centres offering wellness packages. In **Montbrío del Camp** and **La Pineda**, for example, there are establishments offering spa treatments to provide relief from chronic rheumatism, skin and respiratory disorders, and to promote relaxation.



Altafulla





## Sport and Nature

As a complement to the seaside, visitors to the Costa Daurada can escape to the inland mountains, which are not very far away. The Serra de Llaberia and Serra del Montsant mountain ranges, the Gaià river valley and the Prades Mountains – with Poblet, a Natural Site of National Interest – are criss-crossed with routes that facilitate contact with nature and the discovery of lost villages and hamlets in the valleys, whether on foot, on horseback or by bike.

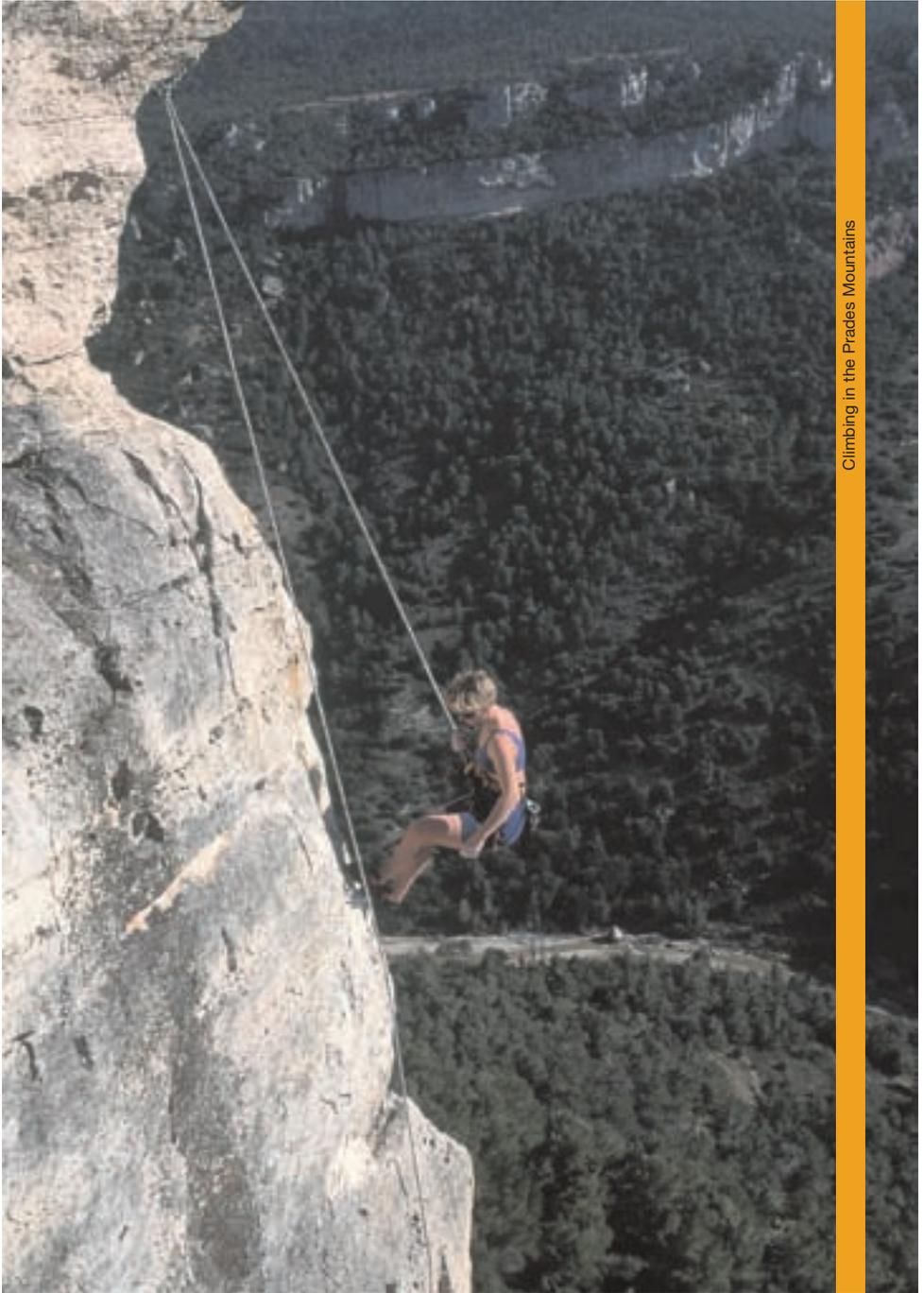
### From Montsant to Prades

The Serra del Montsant mountain range and the Prades Mountains rise up in the inland counties of Tarragona. The municipalities of **Cornudella de Montsant** and **Ulldemolins** serve as links between both mountain ranges, which are physically joined and have a shared history. The Serra del Montsant is a small mountain range that is both spiritual and full of mysticism. There are many **religious retreats** – such as the Hermitage of Sant Salvador in the municipality of Margalef de Montsant, the Hermitage of Santa Magdalena in Ulldemolins and the Hermitage of Sant Roc in Cabacés – hidden away in this massif enclosed by

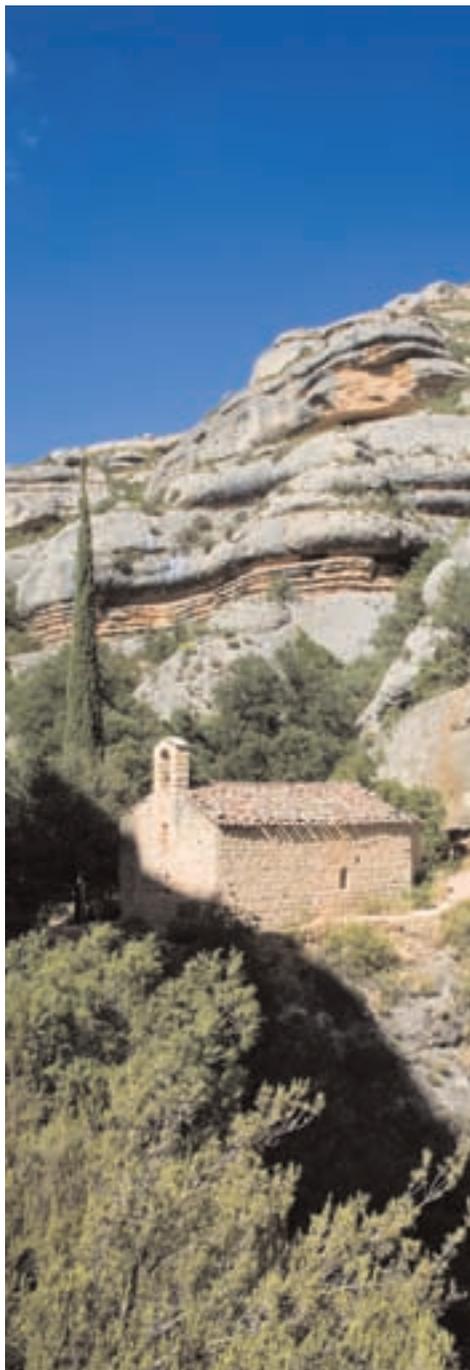
conglomerate rocky terrain and escarpments. The oldest of these religious retreats is the Hermitage of **Sant Bartomeu** in Ulldemolins, which dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. But the most representative religious ruins are those of the ancient **Escaladei** Charterhouse.

Founded in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, this monastery was a very active centre for almost seven centuries. The first monks to live there promoted the construction of mills at the foot of Montsant and spread the cultivation of vines across the territory. But, with the Ecclesiastical Confiscations of Mendizabal in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the State expropriated and sold many of the Church's properties, the religious community abandoned the monastery. In just two years, the cells, cloisters, church and hostel of the charterhouse became a pile of ruins that was ransacked by the region's peasants. Today, part of the space has been restored and the outside of the three cloisters, the church and the refectory can be visited, as can a detailed reconstruction of a cell.

But, in **Montsant**, heritage and **nature** go hand in hand. With a surface area of nearly 90km<sup>2</sup>, the

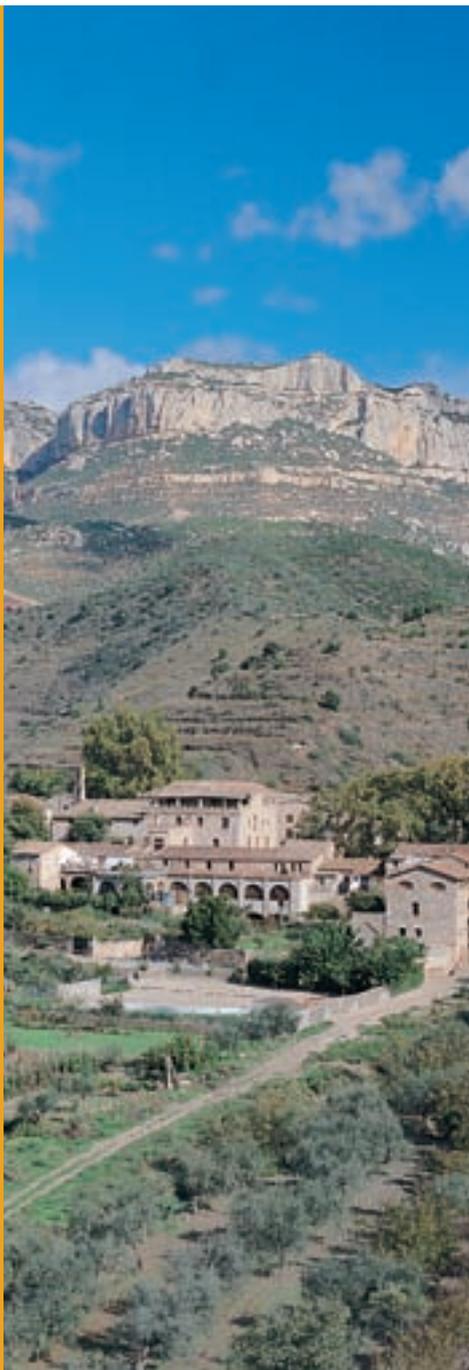


Climbing in the Prades Mountains



↑ Hermitage of Sant Bartomeu de Fragnerau

Escaladei Charterhouse ↓



orographic isolation of this mountain range – a territory far away from urban flows and large towns – has helped to preserve the landscape, the fauna and the flora. In addition, its rich **biodiversity** has been conserved thanks to both marine and continental influences. Animals such as the European badger, the fox, the Bonelli's eagle, the Eurasian sparrowhawk and the kestrel, among others, live in the mountain range. Consequently, the area has been designated a **Natural Park** by the Government of Catalonia.

Not far from Montsant, the **Prades** Mountains form a mass that rises above the plains of Camp de Tarragona and Conca de Barberà. The sources of several rivers can be found in these mountains, such as those of the rivers Francolí, Brugent and Siurana, which meander through large expanses of oak forests and Aleppo pine woods (lower down) and Norway pine woods (higher up). Small oak woods are a characteristic feature of the mountains; they surround the **Tossal de la Baltasana** peak, which, with an altitude of just over 1,000 metres, is the highest point on the Costa Daurada.

An unmistakable sign of the fact that these mountains had been inhabited in prehistoric times is the variety of **cave paintings**; these have been conserved and have been designated as **World Heritage** by UNESCO. Also worth visiting is the geological and prehistoric site of L'Espluga, right next to the source of the Francolí river, in the cave called **Cova de la Font Major**. This cave forms part of a subterranean system eroded by water and, with its 3.5km of galleries, it is one of the longest conglomerate caves in the world.

The space that is literally under the town of **L'Espluga de Francolí** has been turned into a museum. Visiting it is a good way to find out about the life, customs and hunting tools of humans in primitive times. It is also a way to learn about these types of geological formations. While it is only possible to see the initial section of the cave, more daring visitors can hire the services of

a guide to go deep inside and discover the most hidden corners of it; however, this does mean that you will need to be properly equipped for diving through zones that are flooded by the waters flowing under the Prades Mountains. Visits to L'Espluga de Francolí, the **Modernista winery** and the **Museu de la Vida Rural** are also highly recommended. Located in an old manor house, the museum contains a wide collection of objects – farm tools, ceramics, carriages, etc. – that help visitors to get an idea of what country life was like in inland areas of Catalonia.

### The Gaià river valley

This is another outstanding geographical feature of the Costa Daurada's hinterland. The source of the Gaià river can be found on the high plains to the north of the counties of Tarragona, near Santa Coloma de Queralt; the course of the river meanders through the craggy pre-coastal mountain ranges until it flows into the sea near Altafulla, below Tamarit Castle, where it forms a small lake that has been designated a **Wild Fauna Nature Reserve**. In the Middle Ages, the river marked the boundary between Christian counties in the north of Catalonia and Moorish territories, which extended across the southern half of the Iberian Peninsula; hence the considerable number of strongholds that have been preserved.

### Paths and cycling routes

If you like **hiking**, the Prades Mountains, the Serra del Montsant mountain range and the Gaià river valley offer an ideal opportunity to discover nature; old bridle paths, coal paths and millenary routes have now been turned into modern Grandes Routes (GRs). Furthermore, the limestone and conglomerate formations make these mountains an ideal place for **climbing**. Fans of this sport will be able to enjoy more than 6,000 ways that can be found in places like **La Mussara**, **Siurana** and **Arbolí**. But, for those who prefer cycling, the **Mont-roig del Camp Mountain Bike Centre** offers more than 140km of circuits in ten routes



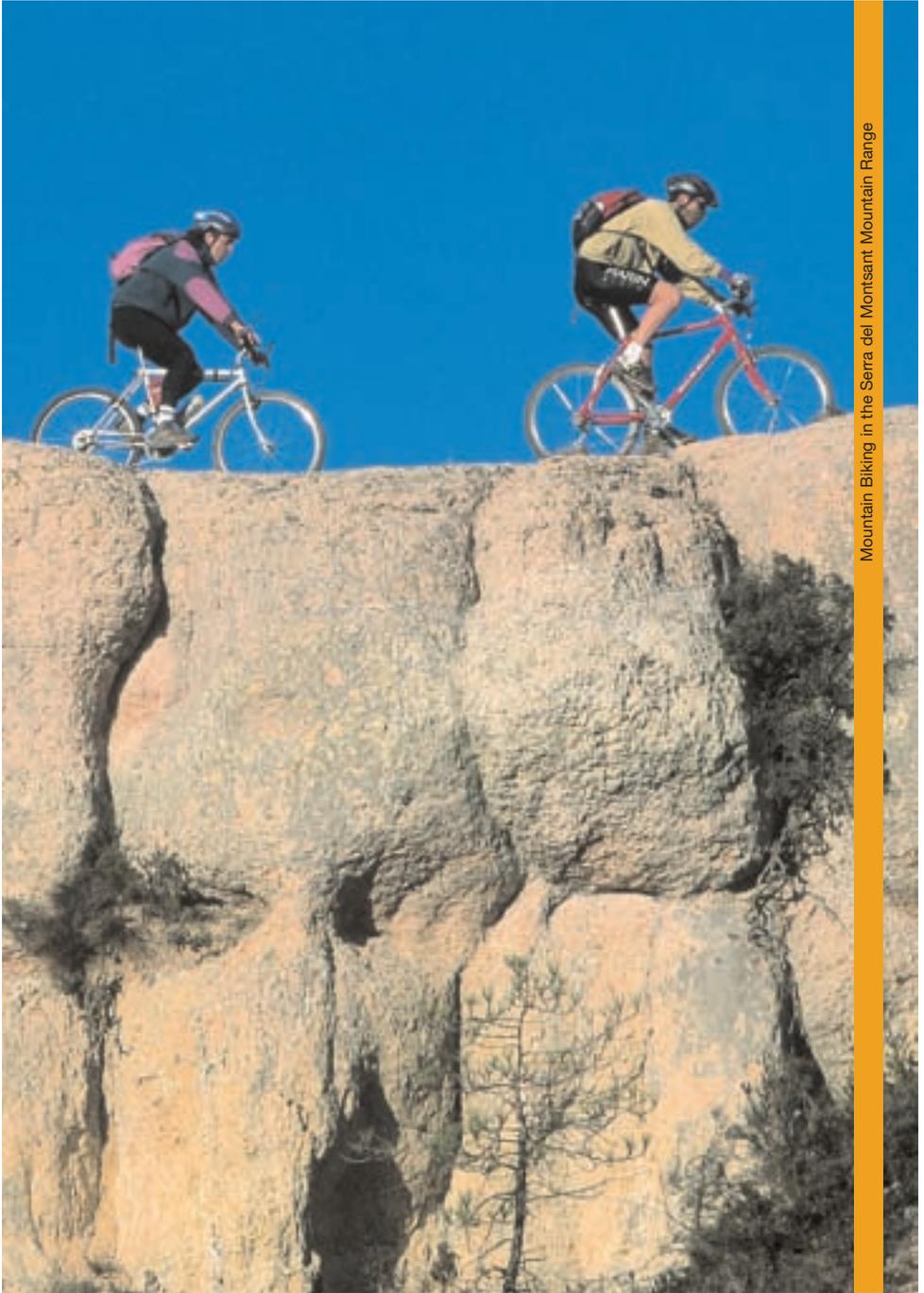
Prades Fountain

with four levels of difficulty, whereas Cambrils offers a whole network of routes to enable the Costa Daurada to be discovered by road bike. Vandellòs, El Vendrell and Sant Jaume dels Domenys also have excellent sports facilities. Another sport that is very popular on the Costa Daurada is golf; thanks to the Mediterranean climate, it can be played all year round. There are **golf clubs** in Calafell, Tarragona, La Pineda-Salou, Reus and Mont-roig del Camp.

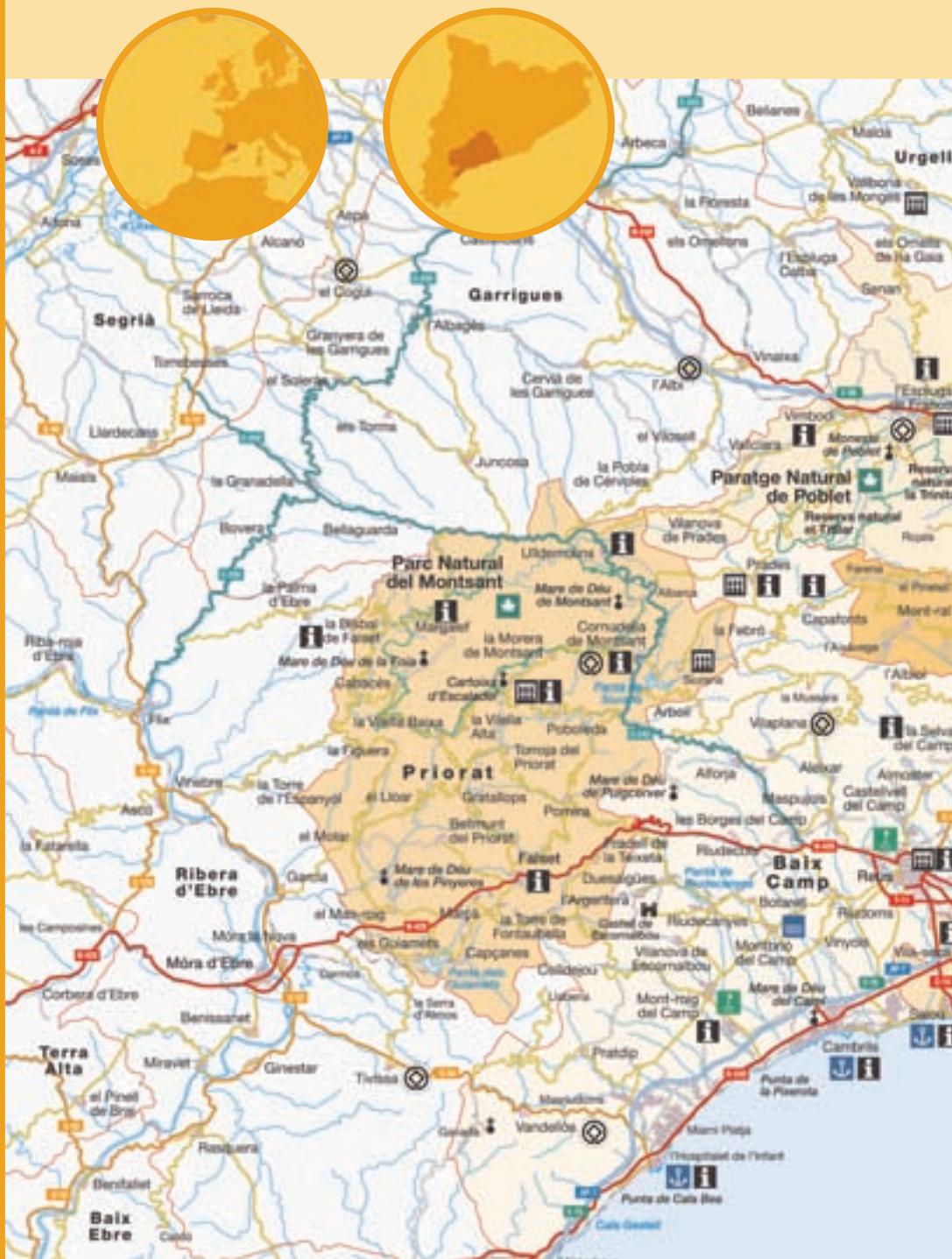


Horse Riding in Falset





Mountain Biking in the Serra del Montsant Mountain Range



# Costa Daurada Map



-  Airport
-  Spa, medicinal springs
-  Castle
-  Interesting church
-  Golf course
-  Tourist information
-  Building of historical interest
-  Natural park
-  World heritage
-  Marina

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