

# CATALONIA NEWS

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## MEXICO AND CATALONIA, A COMMON HISTORY

LEARNING CATALAN ON THE INCREASE AROUND THE WORLD

CATALONIA, A MODEL FOR THE USA IN FIGHTING POVERTY

CATALANS ABROAD ALSO HAVE THEIR SAY ON NOVEMBER FIRST

GERMANY OPENS ITS DOORS TO CATALAN CULTURE

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 **MILLENNIUM CAMPAIGN**   
*VOICES AGAINST POVERTY*

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## THE EXTENSIVE COMMUNITY ABROAD

We're celebrating: two important Catalan communities, in Santiago, Chile, and Mexico City, are 100 years old. It shows how far back the involvement of Catalans in the life of these two Latin American countries goes.

While in exile from Franco's regime, Catalan society increased its contact with the outside world in an effort to ensure the survival of its culture despite Franco's attempts to wipe it out. But contacts date back further - and these were the first officially recognised Catalan communities abroad. The first was founded in 1840 in Havana, Cuba. In 1906, a group of manual labourers who helped re-build San Francisco formed the Orfeó Català choral society in Mexico. The fact that this community had put down roots in its host country explains the key role that it played during the years in exile and is explained here by the historian J. M. Solé i Sabaté.

We find ourselves today with a large variety of Communities: old ones formed during Franco's times and those that emerged in recent years, particularly in North America and Europe and which have a very different character.

Given their diversity, the work done by the Generalitat in giving support to Catalan Communities Abroad makes a lot of sense. These days we don't talk of 'Casals' (community centres) in the sense of organisations based in their immediate environment. That's because the Government's wish - one that is, I believe, shared by the majority of people, is to give support to a community of organisations capable of interacting and strengthening each other.

New technology makes that not only possible but easier. As always, there are Communities which are growing whilst others are in decline. Nevertheless, the global Catalan community goes on.

*Catalonia News* wants to keep on bringing them together in a spirit of unity. Nowadays it's fashionable to talk of things global and things local. What we aspire to do is to transcend the individual situation of each city and each country so we can feel ourselves bound together as a group with an origin, a culture and a language in common.

*Àlex Masllorens i Escubós*



# CATALAN ON THE INCREASE

**INTEREST IN LEARNING CATALAN INCREASING ALL OVER THE WORLD. MORE STUDENTS ARE SEDUCED BY THE BRIGHT LIGHTS OF BARCELONA AND WANT TO DISCOVER A SURPRISINGLY RICH LITERATURE, HIDDEN UNTIL NOW BY CENTURIES OF OFFICIAL PERSECUTION. AND IT'S NOT JUST A HOBBY: CATALAN, STUDENTS SAY, WILL BE VERY USEFUL TO THEM.**

"I began studying Catalan by accident. I spoke English and French and I wanted to learn Spanish. But I saw an advert for Catalan lessons. I went along to the first class and said to myself that this was a beautiful and interesting language." Eva Skocdopolova, a 25 year old physiotherapy student at Prague University, knew hardly anything about Catalonia a year ago. Now she's an enthusiast and says that knowing the language has helped her to get work with an airline.

The advert must have been put in the right place by teacher, Andreu Bauçà, because it also caught the eye of an economics student Valdo Adamis. This Czech student also took up Catalan by chance. A classmate on his Spanish course spoke a few words to him in Catalan, and it made him curious. "When you start learning the language, you get interested in news about Catalonia, you listen to its music, the radio, television... and I admire Barça a lot! You can't enjoy these things without knowing some Catalan. And getting to know not only a country but also its people is the best experience that any of us can have," he says.



Students from the University of California doing a pair-work exercise.



*Catalan teachers abroad on a visit to Parliament.*

Like Eva and Valdo, thousands of students all over the world are taking up Catalan classes. Until quite recently, there were few opportunities to learn Catalan outside Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, Valencia, parts of Aragon, Andorra, Northern Catalonia (Perpignan in France) or Alghero (Sardinia, Italy).

Since the restoration of democracy in Spain, however, things have really taken off. At the time of writing there are 1,726 students enrolled in classes in the 39 Catalan Communities Abroad, almost 60% more than last year. The number of students is growing in line with the number of Communities that give classes - there are 12 more now than last year - . These courses receive support from the Catalan Government. The Ramon Llull Institute is responsible for educational support and organizing the official exams; the Department for the Support of Catalan Communities Abroad finances the costs. On top of this, the Ramon Llull Institute, is involved with 5,000 other students divided between 93 university Catalan language and culture courses. Even Cervantes centres are offering Catalan classes: this year they have organised 37 courses, almost twice as many as last year, and they have 200 students.

Not everyone comes to the classroom out of curiosity. Bart Van Leynseele, from Brussels, went “because my girlfriend is from Barcelona and we'd like to go and live there but to find work I have to learn Catalan.” His teacher, Anna Tribó, explains that “the student profiles are very varied: from a retired person to a European bureaucrat; from a student, an ophthalmologist, a housewife, a lawyer and a journalist to a soldier or IT technician. One of the main reasons why they study Catalan here in Brussels is for personal or sentimental reasons, or for practical reasons; because of professional

or other requirements”. Tribó tries to communicate to her students “the language and culture, leaving politics to one side. I tell them that the language of Catalonia is Catalan, and that, of course, it comes together with a literary and artistic tradition... a culture that hasn't been invented by us but exists whether we want it to or not.”

Many miles from Catalonia, in the charming city of Alghero in Sardinia, this culture is claimed by many who speak a Catalan, handed down through the generations since the arrival on the island of King Pere the Ceremonious in the 14th century. However, the use of the language suffered seriously from the arrival of television which was broadcast almost entirely in Italian. Because of that Salis Paolo, 42 years old, is learning Catalan almost as if it were a foreign language. “I decided to start after a trip to Catalonia with my choir; we took part in an international competition, 'Cantonigròs', and I found myself fascinated by the good manners of the Catalans, who treated us like brothers. I didn't feel like I was in a foreign country, it was more like my homeland. Now my life has changed, I am in contact with Catalans at all cultural levels. Anyone who speaks Catalan is already my friend!”.

Despite the enthusiasm of many of these students, at times they find it difficult to speak the language they have learnt in the classroom in cities like Barcelona. When people realise they are foreigners they usually switch to Spanish. “I don't like it when some people don't speak to me in Catalan when I've made the effort to speak it myself,” explained María del Rosario Pejovés a teacher from Peru who now lives in the Catalan capital.

The reverse is also the case: there are those who come from non-Catalan speaking regions of Spain and have learnt Catalan, like Cristina Gómez Alonso, a computer engineer from Vigo, María de la Paz Torres Nieto, an English Language graduate, or Arantza Beltrán de Heredia Kerejazu, who works in the library of the Basque Department of Education.

1. Anna Paakkulainen, a 31 year old from Finland, is studying Catalan while working at the Finnish delegation to the EU in Brussels.

2. Adela Elena Budulacu studies at the Faculty of Languages and Letters in the University of Bucharest, Romania.

3. Kara Furlong, 21 years old, is learning Catalan in Los Angeles.

4. Eva Skocdopolova is studying for the 'B' and 'C' level Catalan exams in Prague.

5. Valdemar Adamis combines studying Catalan with his final year of accounting (economics) in Prague.

6. Karel Vujtek went to the Pollença Campus University this year and took the opportunity to experience at close hand the Moors and Christians festival.



Cristina wanted to come to work in Tarragona; María de la Paz wanted to understand Catalan culture better and to make friends, and Arantza says she felt "a great admiration for the Catalan people" and she wanted to travel to Catalonia.

In Spain Catalan classes are still an exception; in fact there are more courses abroad. Kara Furlong, a 21-year-old from the US, tried to study Catalan in Granada, where she was studying Spanish, because she liked the language she'd heard on trips to Mallorca and Barcelona. But she found it impossible. "I learnt pretty quickly that the language was very peculiar to Barcelona, Mallorca and Valencia! And so I felt really excited when I got the chance to study it at the University of Los Angeles".

Kara has loved the experience of getting to know "how the Catalans have maintained their quite distinct individual identity within Spain." Adela Elena Budulacu, from Romania, also appreciates "the way the Catalans promote their language and culture". Just like Faysal Mohamed Al-lal, from Melilla. "The position of Catalan as a language is very similar to the position of Tamazight in Morocco", he said.

The affection with which Catalans receive foreigners who show an interest in their culture is something the students rave about. As Galina Yanygina, a Russian living in Berlin who learnt Catalan at the University of Humboldt, said. "I first came into contact with Catalonia in 2003 when I was working in Barcelona for an international ecology organisation. I made lots of Catalan friends who introduced me to Catalan culture, music, art, customs... it left me with really good memories of Catalan society and I made strong links with people there". Marilena Friguras, a 36-year-old working for Romanian customs, went a different route: she studied Catalan at university because with its Latin roots, like Romanian, it seemed like an easy option, and afterwards she got to know Catalan culture in Catalonia, Andorra and Mallorca at summer schools



BELÉN VICENS

People of all ages are enrolled on the courses. In the photograph, Antonia is a student at the University of California.

**“TO ME STUDYING CATALAN SEEMS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT IS SPOKEN IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES BY MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, MORE THAN ANY OF THE SCANDANAVIAN LANGUAGES”**

Christopher, Los Angeles

organised by the Ramon Llull Institute. "They were unforgettable experiences: discovering the richness of Catalan culture, history, cuisine, the Catalan welcome, the strong sense of identity". And suddenly she was applying what she knew in a secondment to Andorran customs. And students highlight the usefulness of Catalan at work. Something that Anna Paakkulainen, a 31 year old Finn who has worked for five years at the Finnish EU delegation in Brussels, emphasises, hoping that Catalan "will help me find a job in Spain; I'd like to work in a government Ministry".

Agnes Borges, a Brazilian lawyer, has more personal motives: "it's a way of getting close to my husband's culture, something that's important in a relationship between two such different people". Christopher van Langeveld who, like Kara, was taught by Belén Vicens in California, puts it more generally: "Catalan is important because it's an official language of Spain spoken by some ten million people from different countries, more than any of the Scandinavian languages".

Marilena goes even further: "How happy I felt attending Mass in Andorra, feeling close to God in another language!".

Work, curiosity, love, mysticism. Any motive is a good one for taking a Catalan class.

Sandra Buxaderas



# AMBASSADORS BY VOCATION

**YOUNG CATALANS WHO GO ABROAD WANT NEW PERSONAL, ACADEMIC OR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES. OPENING UP THE WORLD DOESN'T MEAN FORGETTING WHO THEY ARE. ON THE CONTRARY, MANY WANT TO ORGANISE CULTURAL EXCHANGES WITH THEIR HOST COMMUNITY. OFTEN THEY JOIN ONE OF THE MORE THAN 100 CATALAN COMMUNITIES ALL OVER THE WORLD, OR EVEN START THEM FROM SCRATCH. THEY HAVE BECOME TRUE AMBASSADORS FOR CATALONIA.**

Experience tells us that Catalans have, historically and traditionally, a great facility for integrating themselves into other communities. When young people go abroad these days they spend a few months observing the country and want to participate in its economic, social and cultural life. As the months and years pass they often

seek to answer questions they have asked themselves: whether the language they speak is a dialect - or a language in itself with as rich, literary tradition dating back almost a millennium; whether they see Catalan culture more as a statement rather than a way of excluding others; whether Catalan has a vocation to exist...

Alternatively they may be looking for youngsters with whom their children can speak in the same language outside the family, or for a community that holds events to which they can invite friends and acquaintances from the country in which they live to give them a taste of Catalonia.

This is how young people discover that starting a Catalan Community Abroad (CCE) or joining one that already exists, would be very useful. At the moment there are 15,000 members of the 114 international communities recognised by the Generalitat of Catalonia. Not all their members are Catalan: there are also people from host countries that feel attracted to the cultural life of Catalonia. And it is the young people who are the hope for the future of these communities.



*Young people are the hope for Catalonia abroad.*

Some of these youngsters took part this year in the first Youth Forum of Catalan Communities Abroad. A Catalan Government initiative, the Forum aimed to foster networking between the communities in order to promote Catalan culture abroad. The Forum became a space for learning and reflection to debate new management strategies for the communities and consolidate the impulse for renewal through the generations. The communities exchange views to find answers to the need to modernise.

Naama Melero, from the Californian Casal, believes that the challenges facing most of the communities are very similar and that “the problem that really stands out is the hand-over from one generation to the next”. A large number of Catalan communities were created during the period of exile from Franco’s regime - or earlier - and it’s important to try to guarantee continuity by involving young people as soon as possible in decision making, and to give them responsibility. Life today is different from the past, “and the Casal has to explain to new generations what it means to be Catalan,” says Naama. The delegates to the Forum also gave their views on how Catalonia is seen from the outside: “At least they know we exist, even if people don’t know that Catalonia has its own language that co-exists bilingually with Spanish, and they usually think that Catalan is a dialect,” explains Teo Ruiz, a member of ‘Amics Catalans’ of Berne.

The director of the Catalan Agency for Cooperation and Development, Àlex Masllorens, promised to give maximum resources for networking “to those young people who are excited and enthusiastic about working for organisations that have as one of their aims the promotion of Catalan culture, traditions and festivals”.

Many people get involved in the communities. They take part in every kind of activity to promote Catalonia in their host country: exhibitions, conferences, cinema seasons, round tables, concerts, workshops and courses. They also celebrate traditional festivals like Saint George, the International Day of Catalonia Abroad, Saint John, the *Castanyada* [1st November], Christmas and the *Diada* [Catalonia’s National Day] on 11th September. Each

community finds different ways to celebrate, adapted to the country they are in. For example, on Saint George’s day this year, when women traditionally give a book to their husband, boyfriend etc., members of the Catalan Institute of America in New York promoted the festival at a Barnes & Noble flagship store, one of the bookshops best known to that city. In Washington, the Paulí Bellet Foundation organised a street party and created a website ([www.dayofthebook.com](http://www.dayofthebook.com)) to tell people in the US about the day. In Paris, the Casal Catalunya organised a launch party for the book ‘Catalan Exiles in France’. In Rosario, Argentina, the Catalan community had a stall with books and roses in the city’s main street, while in Brussels the ‘Casal Català’ set up a stall near to the European institutions. Scotland’s Catalan Centre also had a stall and organised children’s games and stories. The centre also prepared a book, opened an exhibition about Salvador Dalí and organised a debate about “Women and the Second Republic”. In Melbourne, the Casal Català mounted an exhibition of books from the first Catalan families to arrive in Australia at the end of the 19th century, explained the significance of the festival and held a poetry reading. But the list doesn’t end here. Almost every Catalan community did something to promote Saint George’s day to the world. In addition, the Department for the Support of Catalan Communities Abroad distributed bookmarks promoting the festival.

However, to be able to continue talking about a Catalonia in transition in a changing world, to promote new art forms and Catalan cultural activities, young people have to be allowed to set out in new directions. As the person in charge of the Support Department, Rafel Caballeria, says, “the involvement of young people must bring with it the renewal and updating of cultural activities all over the world”.



The Forum became a space for learning and reflection.



The director of the Catalan Agency for Cooperation and the mayor of Puigcerdà.

## SPECIAL ENVOYS

For the first time, various Catalan communities around the world are benefiting from a special kind of help: the arrival from Catalonia of a graduate or undergraduate to offer support. Over nine months, they update or help to create websites, live up activities, strengthen contacts with other nearby Catalan communities... These undergraduates, also help students in the host country get to know the higher-education system in Catalonia.

The graduate acquires professional experience abroad, benefits from a cultural exchange programme with the country, gets to know Catalonia Abroad at first hand and receives a grant of up to 1,200 euros (in addition to travel and accommodation costs) from the Generalitat's Department for the Support of Catalan Communities. This year, envoys have gone to California, Mexico, Toronto, Buenos Aires and Brussels, amongst other destinations.

The next group of envoys leaves this October and will head for places like Rome, Caracas, Melbourne, Amsterdam, San Joan de Costa Rica, Guatemala City, Paraná (Argentina) and Santiago (Chile).



## YOUNG PEOPLE WITH INITIATIVE WELCOME

The world of Catalan communities is one of constant exchanges involving young and old. For example grants are available for tertiary studies from the Government ([www.casalscatalans.cat](http://www.casalscatalans.cat)). In the same way, older people who are young at heart can participate in Catalan social activities. This October, for the first time, 45 delegates took part in the Elderly People's Congress (see photo). They all have a history full of struggle, highs and lows, but generous hearts and an abiding love of their native land.

*Catalonia News*



*Many people are involved in organising projects in their communities.*

# IMITATED BY THE USA

**THE UNITED NATIONS HAS CHOSEN CATALONIA AS A MODEL FOR THE UNITED STATES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY. AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION HAS INVITED THE CATALAN GOVERNMENT TO EXPLAIN ITS COLLABORATION WITH THE UN AT A CONFERENCE OF LEGISLATORS FROM DIFFERENT STATES IN THE USA.**

The UN wants to encourage the different states of the most powerful country in the world to take part in the Millennium Development Goals Campaign, the most ambitious initiative ever carried out in the struggle against poverty. It has taken advantage of the latest National Conference of US State Legislators that also brings together Washington senators, to declare the need for US states to stand up for the most disadvantaged people on the planet. And, to do it, the UN has used Catalonia as a model. If the Catalan public authorities can contribute to international campaigns, why can't the 50 states of the country that wave the star spangled banner?

The organisers of the Campaign invited the Generalitat of Catalonia to the Conference, which took place in Nashville (Tennessee). It was represented by Pilar Pérez Ordoño, co-ordinator of the Catalan Agency for Cooperation and Development (ACCD), who led the Generalitat's delegation. The choice of Catalonia as a model was no accident. The Government of Catalonia was the first executive in the world, at non-state level, to pledge itself to the Millennium Goals Campaign, signing last December an initial agreement for three years' co-operation. It was for this reason the Campaign chose Barcelona as a location to set up an office which aims to persuade other non-state governments and authorities in the world to join the campaign. The office was opened last May in Avinyó Street in central Barcelona. Recently the UN Campaign has also been asking for the help of the Catalan Government to bring on board other participants, as has been the case with the US legislatures.

In Nashville the Generalitat's representative explained that "Catalans have always had a strong international presence", ever since the Middle Ages, and in the last century they were behind two first class events - the Universal Exhibition and the Olympic Games. Their presence abroad also includes significant contributions via NGOs and other aid organisations. This activism on the part of its citizens has led the Catalan Government to dedicate increasing resources to international aid resulting in the creation of the ACCD, which doubled its



*Water-treatment programme in Mozambique.*



Pilar Pérez Ordoño represented the Catalan Government at the Nashville conference.

budget this year. The ACCD has described contributing to the UN's multilateral task as one of its priorities because, as Pérez Ordoño told the Americans, "Catalans have always been convinced that the best backdrop for peace is prosperity, the same philosophy that shapes the UN's Millennium Goals campaign to help the world's poorest people".

The Millennium Goals Campaign is a UN initiative that aims to make sure that the promise made by every country and state in the world to improve the living conditions of people from the South, is fulfilled. Five years after the start of the campaign, the UN wants to

invite non-state, regional and local contributors to take part. Catalonia, through the ACCD, is leading this new phase of the campaign. The ACCD's director, Àlex Masllorens, explained it like this: "As the Government of Catalonia we have joined with the international community in its struggle against poverty and for better access to healthcare, education and drinking water for those populations with the least resources. We have committed ourselves to acting in such a way as to bring about transformation, following the recommendations of the UN".

Over the next three years, Catalonia will give a million dollars a year directly to the Campaign. It will also keep in mind the Millennium Goals in its budget for cooperation and development.

### *Catalonia News*

#### **The Eight Millennium Goals**

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development



Caribbean children taking part in one of the Generalitat's education programmes.

## From our correspondent... In Cairo



# THE CITY THAT DOESN'T SLEEP

**1001 ADJECTIVES DEFINE CAIRO. CHAOTIC, BUSTLING, FASCINATING, FRIGHTENING, NOISY, CROWDED, LIVELY, EXHAUSTING, BOILING...A CITY OF CONTRASTS, OF MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES: RICH AND POOR, HOSTILE AND WELCOMING, MODERN AND TRADITIONAL, HUMBLE AND LUXURIOUS, THE CITY THAT LIVES BY DAY BUT WAKES UP AT NIGHT.**

BY LALI SANDIUMENGE\*

A schizophrenic city where everything is possible and nothing is as it seems. A metropolis of images, often surreal, of disparate smells and deafening sounds. Walking through Cairo is finding yourself next to a Mercedes and a donkey-drawn cart, finding a woman in a Saudi Abaya buying sexy bras, realising that Mahfuz's characters are still here but that now they talk on mobile phones, and

seeing children swimming in a flooded street because a pipe's burst and there are no drains. It's sniffing the stench of rubbish mixed with the sugary smell of the Shisha water-pipe-, and hearing the harsh cacophony of horns and the Muezzin calling the people to prayer.

Thousands of Catalans visit the Pyramids and the Museum of Egypt every year, so many that the guides have taken to spontaneously reciting something long the lines of "Barcelona is good...", but the city's Pharaonic past is little more than a story for its inhabitants. The Pyramids are there, imposing, forming part of the skyline - providing it's a clear day, the air's not too polluted and the wind isn't blowing sand in from the desert - but they quickly become another part of the scenery.

Everyday Cairo is a hubbub of people, elderly taxis, 3,000 minarets, 30,000 cafés, markets, half-built buildings, and rooftops crammed with rubbish. It's a sprawling city, besieged by the desert and taking shelter by the banks of the Nile. Gigantic and abandoned, it makes you feel that everything is about to fall to pieces and stop working, but 'maalesh' (relax) - nothing happens. It's welcoming because the people of Cairo are curious and hospitable, but at the same it's unfriendly and repressive: the pressure of Islam and the lack of freedom is stifling. Contrary to expectations, it's safe, crime is low and the police are everywhere, but the traffic is so



*The Fishawi Café, at the heart of Nobel Prize-winning author Naguib Mahfuz's neighbourhood.*

LALI SANDIUMENGE



LALI SANDIUMENGE

*The neighbourhood around the Zayeda Zeinab mosque is one of the most popular in Cairo.*

lethal that you're afraid of being run over.

If I had to choose one of the many faces of Cairo, I'd settle for its evening face, bursting with the vitality of an erupting volcano and all the magic of the 1001 Nights. The shops don't close, families take an evening stroll, the cafés fill up with backgammon players, couples court on the banks of the river. It was the first thing I noticed when I arrived. It was early morning, but the lights were on in many houses. "Half of us live by day, the other half by night", joked the taxi driver. "Otherwise we'd never fit!"

I've heard it said sometimes that Cairo is the New York of the Arab world, the cultural and political capital, the metropolis that never sleeps and that takes people in wholesale from all over the place: Africans, Arabs, Muslims from other countries. 15 - 20 million inhabitants is a lot, but can't explain the Egyptian relationship with time, as soft and malleable as chewing gum. There aren't any timetables for anything, everything will happen tomorrow, perhaps, 'inshallah' ('Allah willing'). You have to be very patient, but it's a relief to know that stress is not a universal evil. Here, life meanders along, without hurry, but without stopping, like the waters of the Nile.

*\*Journalist, Cairo correspondent for various media organisations.*



LALI SANDIUMENGE

*The minaret of the Ibn Tulun mosque offers a privileged across Cairo's rooftops.*



# BCN DESIGN

**A DOZEN YOUNG DESIGNERS FROM BARCELONA HAVE MADE A SPLASH ALONGSIDE THE BIGGEST NAMES AT PARIS FASHION WEEK. THEIR COLLECTIONS WERE PRESENTED AT THE PLACE DES VOSGES IN LE MARAIS. THE DEBUT OF SHOWROOM BARCELONA GAVE A FRESH AND YOUTHFUL EDGE TO THE FRENZY OF FASHION WEEK BY THE SEINE.**

From 3rd - 8th October, the most fashionable neighbourhood in Paris played host to Showroom Barcelona. The name recalls the fact that fashion is associated with individual cities. And the Catalan capital is one of the most fashionable cities in Europe, making it easy to bring together creations from all over the country under one banner.

Between the stone arches of the Place des Vosges and the medieval atmosphere of the old Jewish quarter beats the heart of Parisian creativity and it's right here, in the

Nikki Diana Marquandt Gallery, that an exhibition of creations by Catalonia's most innovative designers can be seen. In the past the Place des Vosges has been witness to collections by Christian Dior and Karl Lagerfeld.

Taking part in this first collective sortie to Paris by young Catalan designers were established names, like Josep Abril and Txell Miras, along with other noteworthy designers: Miriam Ponsa, Silvia Presas, Mariana Méndez, Marta Giménez and Jorge Zuazo, Óscar León, Lucía Blanco, Cercilia Sörensen, Susana Escolano and Dante Anton, and José Castro.

Young designers find it difficult to get themselves known in a world as competitive as that of fashion. It's even more difficult to present a collection in Paris, the great European fashion stage. But these twelve designers have managed it thanks to the determined support of the Catalan Government which, little more than a year ago, transformed the way it helped the fashion world. The Generalitat is seeking to reorientate its resources not just to be able to have one fashion show of its own but to be present at other well-known shows too. To be where the



Works by Txell Miras on the Barcelona catwalk.



**BETWEEN THE STONE ARCHES OF THE PLACE DES VOSGES AND THE MEDIEVAL ATMOSPHERE OF THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER BEATS THE HEART OF PARISIAN CREATIVITY AND IT'S HERE, IN THE NIKKI DIANA MARQUANDT GALLERY, THAT AN EXHIBITION OF CREATIONS BY CATALONIA'S MOST INNOVATIVE DESIGNERS CAN BE SEEN**

**THERE WILL BE MORE DISPLAYS OF CATALAN FASHION AT INTERNATIONAL SHOWS. THE IDEA BEHIND THE CATALAN GOVERNMENT'S FASHION PLAN, A YEAR IN THE MAKING, IS TO GIVE SUPPORT TO DESIGNERS WHO WISH TO MAKE IT ON THEIR OWN**

cameras click and flashlights pop.

The Catalan Government has put 500,000 euros into this event and each designer has contributed 1,500 more towards transport and accommodation. They have all welcomed the Alpha programme run by COPCA, the public organisation funded by the Department of Commerce which helps companies that want to make the move into international business. The Commerce and Tourism secretary, Oriol Balaguer, believes that all these designers can take on the challenges that presented themselves landed in Paris. "It's not just a pipedream", he says.



ABRIL STUDIO

06/07 Autumn-Winter collection designed by Josep Abril.

To attract clients they are using a first-class fashion press agency, Totem, whilst, inside the 500m2 showroom the presentation has been masterminded by the experienced company DEMOfashion.

There will be more displays of Catalan fashion at other international shows. The idea behind the Catalan Government's fashion plan, which was a year in the making, is to give support to designers who wish to make it on their own in Milan, London or New York. The Generalitat will also give help getting into the big distribution chains or to open boutiques, taking advantage of synergies. For example, when Catalan culture lands at the Frankfurt International Book Fair in 2007, it will benefit from the fact that Catalonia will have held promotional activities in Germany during the rest of the year.

And there's more. In order to place Barcelona on the 'creative' world circuit, it will hold a competition with an international jury to judge designers from all over the world.

*Sandra Buxaderas*



# MUTUAL ADMIRATION

**THE CENTENARY OF THE MEXICAN ORFEÓ CATALÀ CHORAL SOCIETY IS A SYMBOL OF THE TWO COUNTRIES' DESIRE TO CONTINUE TO INTERTWINE THEIR DESTINIES. THE CATALANS HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN TO HELP THE REPUBLIC AND ITS EXILES AFTER DECADES OF GOOD RELATIONS. AND THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT.**

BY JOSEP MARIA SOLÉ I SABATÉ\*

Relations between Catalonia and Mexico go back a long way. Put to one side the period of the 18th century, when eminent Catalans - on the orders of the Spanish Bourbon dynasty - took part in the colonisation of California and other territories now part of the USA. Do not dwell on the heroic (yes, as it sounds) refusal by General Prim in 1862 to get involved in European efforts to support the French occupation of Mexico. It was during the 20th century that ties between the two countries began to get stronger.

The first Catalan organisation created in Mexico was the Orfeó Català choral society in 1906. Having taken part in the re-building of San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake, a group of Catalan builders settled in Mexico City. It was during the final stages of the presidency of Porfirio Díaz and the country was starting a massive expansion. Amongst these workers we also find intellectuals, artists, musicians and people involved in industry and commerce. The Orfeó Català was the result of a fraternal link between people from the same homeland. It responded, also, to the need they felt to give vent to their nostalgia, their memories and their feeling for their culture. At the Orfeó Català they could express through music their longing for their motherland, their distant homeland.

It was, and is, an organisation drawing on all social classes which was shaken deeply when it was forced to take a position at the outbreak of Civil War from 1936 - 1939. The war may have started outside Catalonia but it tore Catalan society apart too.



*The reception of Josep Tarradellas (in the middle of the photograph) just before taking over as president of the Generalitat of Catalonia in exile.*



*The first group photograph of the founders of the Orfeó, taken in 1907.*



FC Barcelona which travelled to Mexico in the summer of 1936: standing, left to right, Ventolrà, Iborra, Raich, Munlloch, Fernández and Balmanyà; kneeling, Escolà, Areso, Argemí, Zabalo and Bardina.

The same happened to the Mexican Orfeó Català; in the end it could not but survive and remains, "a piece of Catalonia in Mexico". If there was general backing by the majority for the Generalitat and for Autonomy, the news of death and violence provoked by the Revolution brought an end to joint action beyond humanitarian aid to lessen the impact of the war.

Nevertheless the Orfeó devoted itself to organising humanitarian aid to try to alleviate the sufferings of the Civil War. The first effective action it took was to start to take in war orphans as refugees. In December 1937 the assembly agreed to receive the children and give them a welcome that would extend for years. These children would end up being known as "los niños de Morelia" in the state of Michoacán.

The organisation's statutes did not allow it to get involved directly in politics, but this was not an obstacle to communicating with representatives of the Catalan Government who supported the Republican Generalitat - like Josep Carner and Lleó Dalry, or later Jaume Miravittles, for the Propaganda Commissariat, which managed to persuade the Orfeó to contribute to the expense of sheltering 20 Catalan orphans.

The humanitarian aid lasted throughout the war. Collecting money and food was the main task even though it also gave shelter to groups of intellectuals and all kinds who came looking for different types of help in Mexico. In

one of these delegations from wartime Catalonia, Bartomeu Costa-Amic, travelled to Mexico in 1938 as a representative of the POUM (Marxist Unity Workers Party). In years to come Costa-Amic would be one of the best-known chroniclers of the Catalan exodus and a man with strong ties to the Orfeó (of which he would be the chairman). It was because of him, ultimately that an unfortunate fugitive from Stalinism went into Mexican exile: the linchpin in the Russian Revolution, Trotsky.

Another action that had profound repercussions on the organisation took place as part of FC Barcelona's American tour in the summer of 1937. The main stage of the tour was in Mexico. There Barça were used as propaganda, not only by the Generalitat of Catalonia but also by the Spanish Republic as a whole: Barça had such a profound impact that some of the players continued their footballing careers in Mexico and put down permanent roots there. As in the case of Ventolrà. At the same time the Orfeó regained its football team and its sports section.

Lázaro Cárdenas' Mexican government had given all the support that Mexico could give at that time to the Second Spanish Republic. But the key to the massive arrival in Mexico of Catalan and Spanish exiles is found in an edition of the *Diario Oficial de la República*, dated 10th November 1938, which said that an unlimited number of Spanish nationals who had fled to various countries at the end of the Civil War would be welcomed in Mexico as a land of freedom and promise.



*Homage by the Orfeo to Pau Casals in Veracruz, 1951.*

The number of Catalan exiles in Mexico is estimated at more than 6,000. It represented half of all the exiles who went to America. Little by little, the composition of that group has become known: rural and urban workers formed the majority, but the wealth of notable personalities from all the liberal professions, from the worlds of culture, history, engineering, Catalan and Republican politics in exile enriched both communities, fusing them together, over time, into one community.

From here the idea of being Catalan in Mexico emerged. However, there were also exiles who by age, position, attitude and relations never ended up being integrated, although their children, relatives and friends did. It was an exile which, as things turned out, had a clear beginning but, in the consciousness of those who lived through it, would never end.

The exiles brought so much to all sectors of Mexican society that in later years, around 1950, someone key to their welcome, the former President of the Republic, a mythical 20th-century figure in Mexico, Lázaro Cárdenas characterised their contribution lucidly: “and from your arrival in our land, you devoted your talent and energy to improving farm yields, to increasing factory production, to bringing the light of clarity into our classrooms, to building and dignifying your homes and to making, together with us, the Mexican nation greater. In this way you have done honour to our hospitality and to our

country”.

The relationship between Catalonia and Mexico has continued and grown with time, with the children, grandchildren and great grand-children of those exiles. It has also been strengthened by the continuous and ambitious actions of Catalan organisations in Mexico and the increase in economic, commercial, tourist and cultural exchanges. In addition, these ties are benefiting from the means of communication in a world ever-more interconnected and globalised.

*\*Professor of Contemporary History at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB)*



*Celebration of the Centenary, 9th September this year.*

# THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE ORFEÓ CATALÀ IN MEXICO

**THE MEXICAN ORFEÓ CATALÀ CELEBRATED ITS 100th BIRTHDAY ON 9TH SEPTEMBER BY UNVEILING OF A PLAQUE AND HOLDING A DINNER FOR 250 PEOPLE. THE HOSTS WERE THE PRESIDENT OF THE CATALAN PARLIAMENT, ERNEST BENACH, AND THE COUNCILOR FOR THE INTERIOR, XAVIER SABATÉ, AS WELL AS THE FAMOUS MEXICAN LEADER CUAUHTÉMOC CÁRDENAS, SON OF THE GENERAL WHO TOOK IN THE REPUBLICAN EXILES. THE DIRECTOR OF THE CATALAN AGENCY FOR COOPERATION, ÀLEX MASLLORENS, ALSO MET THE PRESIDENTS OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN NETWORK OF CATALAN COMMUNITIES AND THERE WAS AN EXHIBITION OF CATALAN FOOD PRODUCTS.**

Although it has lost some of the emotional significance of former years, the Orfeó Català continues to be a focus and reference point for Catalan culture in the largest country in Latin America. Housed in a relatively spacious, centrally located building, in a city of at least 20 million people, the 'casal' still has more than 400 members and organises a fair number of social and cultural activities. It hosts the largest Catalan library in America with almost 11,000 titles. There is also a noteworthy choir with fifty singers though, these days, only a dozen are of Catalan origin. On 10th December next they will be the star attraction at an event to mark the culmination of the centenary celebrations, a concert with the Minería Symphony Orchestra, where they will perform *La Nit de Nadal* (Christmas Night) by the Catalan composer Lamotte de Grignon. It was also possible to hear Catalan being sung in the same Nezahualcóyotl Hall on 20th August last, at the first of the centenary events when the same orchestra, conducted by Antoni Ros Marbà and with Catalan soloists, played *L'Atlàntida*, based on the work by Jacint Verdaguer.

The current Orfeó also preserves its 'esbart' group, with twice as many dancers this year, as the former children's group got back together to give a joint performance at the end of October. The organisation itself, holds a monthly art exhibition featuring Mexican artists and those

with links to Catalonia. Barça's matches can also be watched here. It also gives out information about official procedures related to the Generalitat, celebrates the major Catalan festivals (Saint George, Saint John, the Catalan national day), and makes itself available for book launches and talks about studying in Catalonia... It has also just restarted its young people's group, and was able to help bring the band Els Pets to Mexico this November. At the same time they will no doubt also give a push to future projects, like the resumption of the hiking group, to the Orfeó magazine and even to a children's area. One of the main attractions of the

organisation, naturally, is its Catalan courses, on which, in 2005, 140 people were enrolled, making it one of the 'casals' with most students in the world. They are as many descendants of Catalans who want to rediscover their parents and grandparents' language, as Mexicans interested in our culture. The majority, of course, are university-age youngsters who want to study in Catalonia, a goal viewed as so prestigious that Mexicans are today among the most numerous students.

*Òscar Palau i Just*



*The Orfeó in the middle of a performance during the celebrations on 9th September .*



*The headquarters of the Orfeó exudes history.*

## The expatriate's vision



### EXILE AND SILENCE

More than 50 years have passed since Ramon Xirau (born in Barcelona in 1924) published ten poems in 1951. It was a period of which the poet and philosopher of Mexican nationality was more productive than most. His thinking is worthy of his father, Joaquim Xirau, who brought his son to Mexico at the end of the Spanish Civil War. And his poetry has been integrated into the Catalan tradition, while at the same time possessing a personal voice that has developed in book after book. It is the fruit of exile - of writing Catalan in a country 10,000 km from Barcelona and the Costa Brava of his childhood, and of his work with Erich Fromm, Octavio Paz and Jorge Guillén.

For the English Catalan expert, Arthur Terry, Xirau is, with Joan Brossa, Pere Gimferrer and Gabriel Ferrater, the best of the Catalan poets from the last third of the 20th century. Xirau is part of the Catalonia that was lost forever in 1939, one of those who found a place to settle down in a corner of Mexico City. The Latin American country received a good number of the Catalan intellectuals who fled from the dictatorship. Xirau himself explains that they lived in a kind of bubble. He met his wife in German Romanticism classes given by Carner at the Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). He would be a follower of Agustí Bartra and would construct a rich poetic imagination blending Mediterranean nostalgia with the high plateau of Mexico.

Xirau has not always been the 'classic' poet of his mature work. He started out as a romantic, a man yearning for the past, for his grandmother's orange trees, the beaches, the light, the waves that he was forced to leave behind. To this period belong his first 10 poems and *Underground Mirror* (1955), both published in Mexico. Afterwards he spent 20 years dedicated to thinking. With the publication of his philosophical work he became a name in his adopted country with a knock-on effect in Europe where he has been recognised in Italy, France, Spain and Catalonia.

His publishing debut in Catalonia came with *The Beaches* (1974) and *Steps* (1979). These are two seminal books, which show Xirau in the process of transformation, a man navigating between exaltation and a restraint derived from a taste for the world of art and classical culture. *Said and Written* (1983), *Birds* (1986), *Living Natures* (1991) and *Spaces in Time* (1999) mark the start of the classical period.

Andreu Gomila

## THE EXILED



EFE

*Ramon Xirau is one of the best poets of the last third of the 20th century.*

I left Barcelona in 1938. I was 12 years old. I studied in France in 1939. I travelled to Mexico from New York with my parents: Joaquim Xirau was dean of Philosophy at the University of Barcelona, but both he and my mother came from Figueres. I was his student at the university here. I was also a friend, and something of a disciple of Agustí Bartra, a great mentor in terms of poetry. Exiled Catalans did a lot for Mexico: Carner, my teacher, and so many others. In fact, a large proportion of the Catalan, Balearic and Valencian literature of the 1940s was written here. And some fantastic magazines!

I didn't want to come back to Barcelona after Franco's death. I've always written my poetry in Catalan (it has been published in Barcelona, and this year it will be published in Catalan and Spanish by the Economic Culture Fund).

The Mexican Orfeó Català is a first-class venue, and very well directed these days by Mr Torroja. It's wonderful! Yes, the Orfeó is a hundred years old this year, and I intend to participate in some of the events. They deserve it and I deserve it. It was founded by Catalans well before the Civil War and is not only a venue for singing and dancing, it is also a cultural centre with a good library and collaborates in all sorts of productions (film, theatre, dance...and literature). I've often given conferences there. I now want to put the Orfeó in contact with Manuel Duran, from Yale University, and his sister Rosa. The aim is for the Catalan community in Mexico to continue being as dynamic as it has been in recent years.

*Ramon Xirau Subias*

# Catalans in foreign lands: Josep Ligorred



## “WE CLICKED WITH THE MAYANS STRAIGHT AWAY”

**JOSEP LIGORRED IS ONE OF THE LEADING EXPERTS IN MAYAN ARCHAEOLOGY. WE INTERVIEWED HIM IN MÉRIDA, THE YUCATAN CITY, WHERE HE ALSO PROMOTES CATALAN CULTURE IN MEXICAN SOCIETY.**

This archaeologist from Manlleu has been living in Mexico for 23 years. For the last 18 years he has been based in Mérida, the current capital of the region once reigned over by the Mayan civilisation, with which the Catalans have more than one thing in common... Married with one son, Arnau, Josep Ligorred has been the president of the Casal Català (Catalan Society) of the Yucatan Peninsula since 2003, and is the head of the network of Casals in Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean.

### What made you come to Mexico?

The archaeology school here had an elevated international reputation, and I decided to come here to study. In fact, the school was very much strengthened in the wake of the Republican exile by people such as Pere Bosch i Gimpera and Joan Comas. So coming here also meant learning about what the Catalan archaeology sector had had to stop doing.

### You were in Mexico D.F. for five years, but then came to Mérida. Why was that?

I got involved in projects in the Yucatan peninsula and in 1988 I decided to come and live here and do my thesis. Up until 1994 I was studying the sites of Mayan cities in the Puuc Zone: Uxmal, Kabah, Oxkintok, Sayil...

### Do you speak Mayan?

I don't speak it, but I do understand it because I've studied both classical and colonial Mayan. At the moment the prestige of the Mayan culture is in a process of recovery, with associations and an intellectual movement fighting for its rights. There is also an increasingly important literary output, although it's not yet at the level it should be in view of its possible official recognition.

### The Mayan and Catalan cultures have got a lot in common...

Absolutely, and the casals make a good bridge in this respect, because we understand each other very well when talking about problems we have in common. We've organised various conference series and cultural activities to disseminate and explain the Catalan socio-historic and cultural identity, but at the same time we've opened the doors to representatives of the Mayan culture so they too can explain their concerns, and the fact is that we're very closely connected. When we talk, we understand each other straight away; it's very easy for them to understand our cultural issues. In addition, if we Catalans are the Phoenicians over there, the Mayans were the Phoenicians of America; they had a lot of dealings with other peoples.

### Is there an awareness of being a "Mayan nation", to put it that way?

The Yucatan has its own unique history, but there are Mayans in five Mexican states as well as in Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. There is a sense of general identification and cohesion through being Mayan, but the panorama is culturally very diverse. They don't all speak the same language - there are more than 30 languages - though they do all have the same root. It's estimated that around a million people speak the most widely-used language - Yucatan Mayan - but in total there are some six million speakers.

### Are the languages in danger of disappearing?

There is currently a normalisation process underway. The first thing that needs to be done is to make them official, but they also need to be recorded in textbooks and for



*Josep Ligorred has specialised in studying Mayan archaeology for many years.*

OSCAR PALAU



**“WE ARE WORKING ON PROJECTS SUCH AS A MAJOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK AND THE RECOVERY OF A CLASSICAL MAYAN PALACE, WHICH WE THINK WAS THE RESIDENCE OF AN IMPORTANT PERSON LIKE XOCLAN”**

there to be an orthographic standardisation, because at the moment there are several different alphabets...What we need is a Pompeu Fabra University! Mayan scripture was lost with the Spanish conquest, and now it is only being recovered using the Latin alphabet. There is an awareness-raising process underway, too, among the rest of the Yucatan people.

#### **Is the increasing global interest in Mayan archaeological heritage helping you?**

The ancient Mayans have left us a tremendous cultural legacy, and their monuments are currently being re-evaluated all over the world. Their archaeological heritage has also contributed to the resurgence and strengthening of their culture, which is now seen as a great historical civilisation.

#### **Why do you think it has taken until now for this to be discovered?**

History is written by the winning side - in this case, the Spanish. But people are more and more aware nowadays of the value of these cultures, especially in Europe, and they are being exhibited on the major museum and exhibition circuits such as Venice, Paris, etc. What I would highlight about the Mayans is their writing, their calendar, their architecture, their urban planning, their relationship with nature, their numerical system...We're now looking at all this heritage from a different perspective.

#### **Are Mayans different from other Mexicans then?**

Well, they still basically live off the land, they have a very strong bond with it. You can also see this bond in their language. With the Spanish conquest, the Mayan culture was cut off from trade routes, the political network, the oligarchies... Between the years 600 and 800 there was a population density similar to that of China today, but many of them died as a result of wars, plagues, diseases and the Spanish conquest...The only things that remain of the Mayans are their language and their family traditions. Mentioning the word apartheid may

seem a little strong, but there is a certain social discrimination; the Mayans tend to do more menial jobs.

#### **What do you do in Mérida?**

I've been working at the Coty Council since 1999 in charge of a division within the Urban Development department which I set up myself - Archaeological and Natural Heritage. This was once an extremely important and venerated ancient Mayan city and its conquerors founded Mérida on top of its remains. Where the market stands today, for example, there was an enormous pyramid 50 years ago...What we are doing is supervising the work taking place in the centre and trying to bring attention to the other sites because there's a total of 190 sites spread around the whole municipality.

#### **Have you got any Catalan assistance?**

Yes, from the University of Barcelona, through the Bosch i Gimpera Foundation, which has a lot of experience in heritage management and cultural tourism. We also have the support of the Generalitat (via its Excava programme), the Ministry of Culture and the University of Yucatan. We're working on projects such as a major archaeological park and the recovery of an ancient classic Mayan Palace which we think was the residence of an important personage like Xoclan. All this also helps to strengthen Catalan universities' knowledge of American archaeology, as students and professors come over here for educational visits.

#### **Are there many members in the Catalan Casal?**

There are 24 member families, though very few of them were born in Catalonia, and the children only speak Catalan if their mother has kept it up with them. There are no 'exiles' for example, everyone came here for different reasons: for academic reasons, a couple of them have hotels...So you don't necessarily have to be Catalan to be a member. We're a civil association open to the host society, and there are more and more people interested in Catalan culture and in going to Catalonia to study. The secretary, for example, is from Campeche and speaks Catalan. We're seeing more and more involvement.

#### **What activities and projects are you planning?**

The Casal was founded in 1996. For the last couple of years we've been renting new premises, and now we're trying to get the Catalan classes back on track. We also celebrate all the traditional festivals: Christmas, the Diada (Catalan National Day), St John, St George. We organise conferences, we've published a book of contemporary Catalan poetry... At the moment we're planning to organise the library a bit better, put on an exhibition on Gaudí in the Anthropology Museum, and publish a book in Mayan and Catalan. We've already been given a grant by the Generalitat.

*Òscar Palau*



# A CALL TO VOTE!

**ON 1 NOVEMBER, MORE THAN 5.3 MILLION CATALANS ARE BEING CALLED ON TO ELECT A NEW PARLIAMENT FROM WHICH THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT WILL EMERGE. THE POLLING STATIONS ARE NOT ONLY IN CATALONIA BUT ALSO IN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD: 108,851 CATALANS RESIDENT IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES CAN ALSO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT TO VOTE.**

France, Argentina and Andorra are the countries where most Catalan 'absent residents' live, which is the name given to Catalan citizens living abroad who have duly registered with their consulate. Before leaving Catalonia, most of them lived in the province of Barcelona. Barcelona is followed by Lleida, Tarragona and Girona in order of 'absent residents'.

The level of participation of people living outside Catalonia has risen consistently over the last two Parliamentary elections. In 1999, 15,510 foreign residents voted, i.e. 17.78%. In 2003 this figure was 18,639, representing 18.56%. Most of them vote by registered mail.

Even though they may be a long way from home, everyone

still connected to Catalonia can vote like any other legal citizen; the only difference, obviously, is the process. The Electoral Census Office (OCE) issues the necessary voting documents at least three weeks before election day. To send out the documents, the Office refers to the Electoral Roll of Absent Residents (CERA). It is absolutely essential to be registered on this electoral roll in order to vote. Registering is easy: all you need to do is register at your nearest consulate. If the voter has any doubts about their registration on CERA, they can query it at the nearest consulate up until just over a month before the elections.

Once they have decided which way to vote, the ballot paper has to be put in the ballot envelope together with the certificate of registration on the electoral roll. The vote is processed in the provincial Electoral Office. When it comes to sending the vote, the foreign resident can either send it by certified mail or hand it in at the consulate. For the next elections, the deadline for posting is 31 October, while the last day for handing it in at the consulate is 25 October.

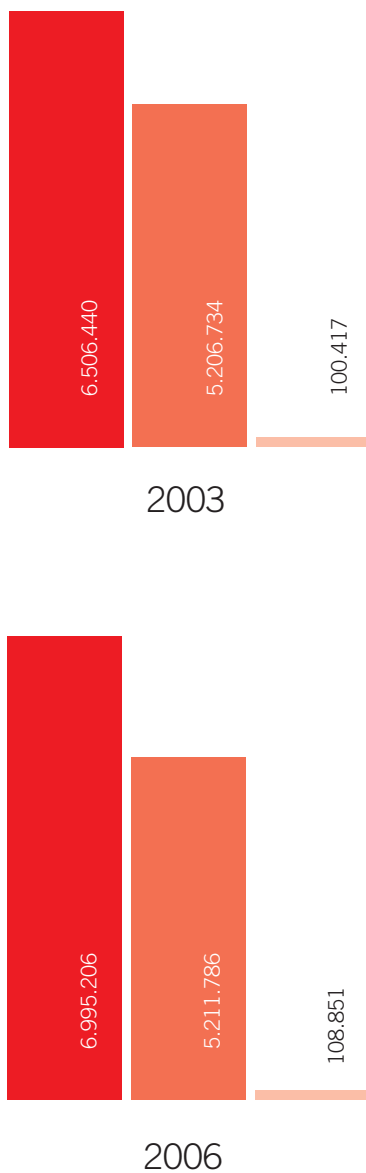
To encourage this collective to participate and get the highest possible turnout, some 23,000 informative leaflets were sent out by both email and post to voters on the Electoral Roll of Absent Residents associated with the *Comunitats Catalanes de l'Exterior* (Catalan



*The main candidates for the parliamentary elections in Catalonia.*

EFE

## CATALAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS



- Legally-entitled population
- Electoral Roll of Residents in Catalonia (CER)
- Electoral Roll of Absent Residents (CERA)

**“FRANCE, ARGENTINA AND ANDORRA ARE THE COUNTRIES WHERE MOST CATALAN EXPATRIATES LIVE”**

**“THE LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION OF CATALANS LIVING ABROAD HAS RISEN PROGRESSIVELY OVER THE LAST TWO PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS”**

Communities Abroad). Another thousand leaflets were distributed to various NGOs operating abroad. Also, by way of informative back-up, the Generalitat's Department of Governance and Public Administrations has set up an electoral information system which combines telematic, telephone and in-person sources of information. The new website ([www.parlament2006.cat](http://www.parlament2006.cat)), which is accessible from every country, is one example, though there is also the option of calling the 012 information line from abroad (00 34 902 400 012). The Catalan Communities Abroad has also offered to answer queries either by telephone or in person.

*Catalonia News*



# MICROSOFT CHOOSES LLEIDA

**THE COMPUTER GIANT IS TO SET UP A EUROPE-WIDE PROGRAMMING CENTRE IN LLEIDA. MICROSOFT'S INTEREST IN THE CITY WAS AROUSED WHEN LLEIDA CITY COUNCIL TRANSFORMED THE OLD TURÓ DE GARDENY MILITARY BARRACKS INTO AN AMBITIOUS WORLD-CLASS SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND AGRI-FOOD PARK. IT'S AN INVESTMENT OF MORE THAN 18 MILLION EUROS WHICH HAS EVEN CAUGHT THE EYE OF BILL GATES**

Microsoft is setting up in Gardeny in conjunction with the Lleida firm IFR, constituting a new company: IFR Software Factory Microsoft Dynamics. It will be designing computer programmes for other companies around the world in the sectors of transport, food and public administration. With an initial investment of between one and one-and-a-half million euros, some 100 jobs will be created and 20 students will attend courses at the University of Lleida.

The new company will be established as part of the Lleida Agri-Food Science and Technology Park (PCiTAL: [www.parctelleida.es](http://www.parctelleida.es)), which the City Council has set up to boost economic activities and provide a catalyst for innovation, especially in the agri-food sector. The Park forms part of a major network of agri-food R+D+Innovation facilities and infrastructures located around Lleida, and aims to strengthen university research groups, attract new investors, reinforce the competitiveness of the business sector in Lleida, attract new business ventures with added value and create new skilled job positions and professional opportunities. Both the Ministry of Education and Science (MEC) and the Generalitat of Catalonia's Department of Education have officially confirmed their financial support for the project.

To achieve its aims, Lleida City Council, together with the University, aims to provide the tools necessary to foster the generation of new R+D+Innovation projects



MICROSOFT

*Microsoft will be manufacturing computer programmes in Gardeny for companies around the world.*

and their dissemination by upgrading and equipping 75,000 m<sup>2</sup> in a privileged location in the city of Lleida - the Gardeny Park. All the areas and buildings will be equipped for carrying out research, development and innovation projects (R+D+Innovation).

The Park will include the faculties of Biology and Agriculture and the Centre and Institute of Agri-food Research and Technologies, which will focus on animal and vegetable production. There will also be research centres associated with the design and development of foodstuffs and agro-industrial production. The University of Lleida will be the scientific and technology leader of the project, and will be moving its R+D+Innovation facilities to the site in the areas of agricultural industry, food-related technologies and innovation in agri-food transformation and production processes.

The Park's management entity is the Agri-Food Science and Technology Park Consortium, which is responsible

for motivating enterprise start-ups and attracting companies and technology and research centres. The Consortium will also be encouraging synergies between the Park's users; providing advice, training and management of common services; and cooperating in projects to transfer the technology and innovation developed by the institutions and companies on the site.

The Consortium is looking to attract companies with a technological and/or service sector background, whether public or private, as well as public organisations involved in the fields of agri-food, food technologies and innovation in agri-food production and transformation processes. It will also welcome companies working in biomedicine, mechanical engineering and computer systems with an emphasis on technology and cutting-edge activities.

The Park will also serve as a magnet for the Spanish and Mediterranean business sector and has already joined the prestigious International Association of Science Parks (IASP), founded in 1984 to drive forward the development of science and technology parks around the world. The IASP has set up a knowledge-transfer network involving more than 300 parks, which is defined as a “an organisation managed by expert professionals whose objective is to increase the wealth and wellbeing of their community by promoting a culture of innovation and competitiveness in their companies and institutions founded on knowledge”.

## THE PARK HAS ALREADY JOINED THE PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE PARKS

At present, 25 companies have already established themselves in the Park, including Soluziona, the Consorci Lleidatà de Control, the Lleida Technology Institute (a member of CIDEM's Technology Dissemination Centres Network), the Catalan Wood Institute, Ilercim SL, Aldabert & Bellet Controls Electronics, Sofos Solar SLL and Eguren R+D Solutions, as well as various new business ventures generated recently with the advice and support of the Park's business incubator.

The headquarters of the PCiTA in the city of Lleida is a strategic location close to the main communications networks in Spain, with direct access to the motorway network and high-speed railway line. The Park offers everything necessary to continue attracting more national and international companies to this ambitious Catalan project.

*Sara Bosch*



*Southern aspect of the Lleida Agri-Food Science and Technology Park.*



## THE REINCARNATION OF MODERN ART

**MORPHINE WILL AGAIN TAKE A HOLD OVER THE REBELLIOUS YOUNG WOMAN; THE STOREKEEPER WILL BERATE HIS ARTIST SON; MYSTERY WILL HOVER OVER THE MOST IRREPROACHABLY BOURGEOIS HOUSEHOLDS. SITGES TOWN COUNCIL IS PROMOTING SANTIAGO RUSIÑOL AS AN EMBODIMENT OF MODERN ART - 75 YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH.**

There is no doubt that this young woman sprang from his paintbrush. The impenetrable hair and gaze, the languid air, the dreamy pose. But the poetry it evokes is not deadened but alive and sharp; this is shown by the

stark contrast between black and white, or the flaming red of a flower. This year is a great time to rediscover the legend of the Modernist woman who enchanted Santiago Rusiñol but whom he couldn't separate from a harsh reality: the solitude and incomprehension of a bourgeoisie fascinated by appearances and artists obsessed with turning the social order on its head.

But the impact of Santiago Rusiñol, which is now being revisited 75 years later, was not limited to his paintings. The Sitges Town Council is reviving the *disbauxa* (dissolution) of the Modernist Festivals, polishing the sinuous shapes of the forged metal in the Cau Ferrat Museum, and promoting the reissue at the end of the year of *L'Auca del Senyor Esteve* (Edicions 62). The events commemorating this very complete artist, of European scope and international recognition, will be



ARENALIA

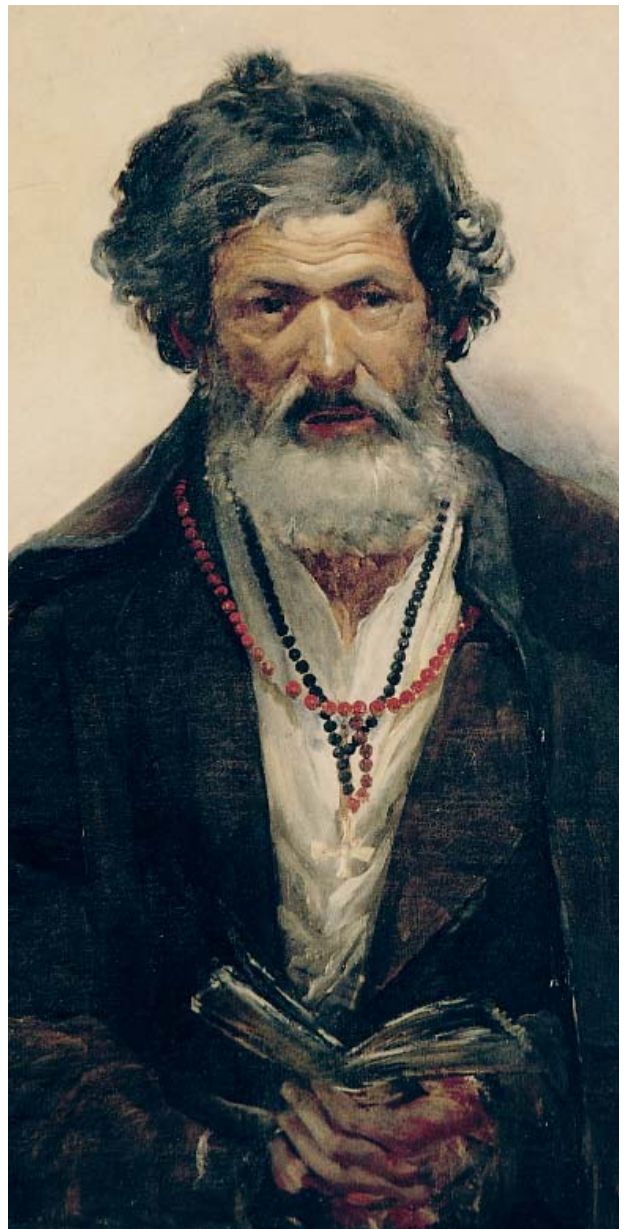
*Santiago Rusiñol was the leader of literary and pictorial Modernism, a complete artist with an international impact.*

coming to an end next June.

One of the ways of rediscovering Rusiñol is to visit the Rusiñol Year website ([www.rusinositges.com](http://www.rusinositges.com)). The site states that the painter, writer, collector and dramatist was born in Barcelona to a family of textile industrialists from Manlleu. Despite being the heir to the family business, recently married and with an infant daughter, at the age of 28 Rusiñol departed for the Montmartre district in Paris where he lived between 1889 and 1893. He exhibited in the Paris Salons and also showed his work at the Sala Parés in Barcelona. Accompanied by the painter Ramon Casas, the sculptor Enric Clarasó and the art critic Raimon Caselles, he set about stirring up the waters of Barcelona's stagnant cultural life, and got involved in a project with a group of young Modernist intellectuals: the magazine *L'Avenç* (1889-1893). This is how he became the most visible exponent of Modernism. His contribution was his capacity to build around himself the image of the modern artist, a priest of art and a defender of art for art's sake, in a materialist, prosaic, society, and to turn this image, with the support of literature and public activities, into a myth. An inseparable part of this image was the painter's relationship after 1891 with the town of Sitges - the *Blanca Subur*, the Mecca of Modernism - with the creation of the Cau Ferrat as a Temple of Art, and the organisation of the provocative Modernist festivals, performances such as the streamer dance and the monument to El Greco, between 1892 and 1899.

As the website explains, "the pictorial and literary production from these years shares the bittersweet tone and ironic and lyrical distancing with which the artist's ego confronted reality". A reality which, at the end of the 19th century, at the height of a crisis of positivism, called for new approaches which would go beyond the boundaries of reason and bring back emotion, suggestion and intuition as forms of knowledge. These hypotheses, which positioned Santiago Rusiñol in the sphere of European symbolism, were systematically reflected in some of the texts published in *L'Avenç*, especially *Els Caminants de la Terra* and *La Suggestió del Paisatge* (1893), the first prose poems in Catalan literature. In 1896, along with another twenty texts, they became part of the book *Anant pel Món*, a work which profiled the model of the modern artist in the image of a hypersensitive, refined individual; a sceptic standing apart from the world; a committed Modernist and fervent defender of poetry against the prose of modern bourgeois society. It is the voice of this artist-priest that recites the *Oracions a la Bellesa* (Prayers to Beauty; 1897), which could be regarded as the first book of prose

poems published in Spain; the same voice that resonates in *Impresiones de Arte* (1897), a collection of articles by the artist published in the newspaper *La Vanguardia*, written during his trips to Paris, Florence and Andalusia, a whole compendium of aesthetic theory, and the collected works in *Fulls de la Vida* (1898), a series of short stories and prose poems with a decadent register which formed the cornerstone of Santiago Rusiñol's subsequent dramatic work.



Doctor Faust, an interpretation of Goethe's myth.

Between 1889 and 1899, Santiago Rusiñol personally embodied his ambition of transforming artistic creation into a means of exploring the outer limits. This exploration was aided by his morphine addiction, which would dictate the course of his life and work from 1894 onwards, the year when he created two of his most emblematic paintings: *La Morfina* (Morphine) and *La Medalla* (The Medal). It was also the year he would discover one of the quintessential themes of his painting and literature: the abandoned garden. The treatment for his morphine addiction, which the artist suffered in 1899, and the surgery which, a year later, left him with just one kidney, managed to hold him back from the abyss, and he entered a new creative period. This was marked by his dedication to the theatre, with an increasingly more commercial component, and his specialisation in painting gardens all over Catalonia and Spain, with short but significant forays to Italy". It was around this time that he was reconciled with his family.

The Rusiñol Year website recalls that "with the publication of the lyrical poem entitled *El Jardí Abandonat* (The Abandoned Garden) at an event with musical illustrations by Joan Gay, and the publication of the *Jardins d'Espanya* (Gardens of Spain) portfolio in 1903 - a collection of



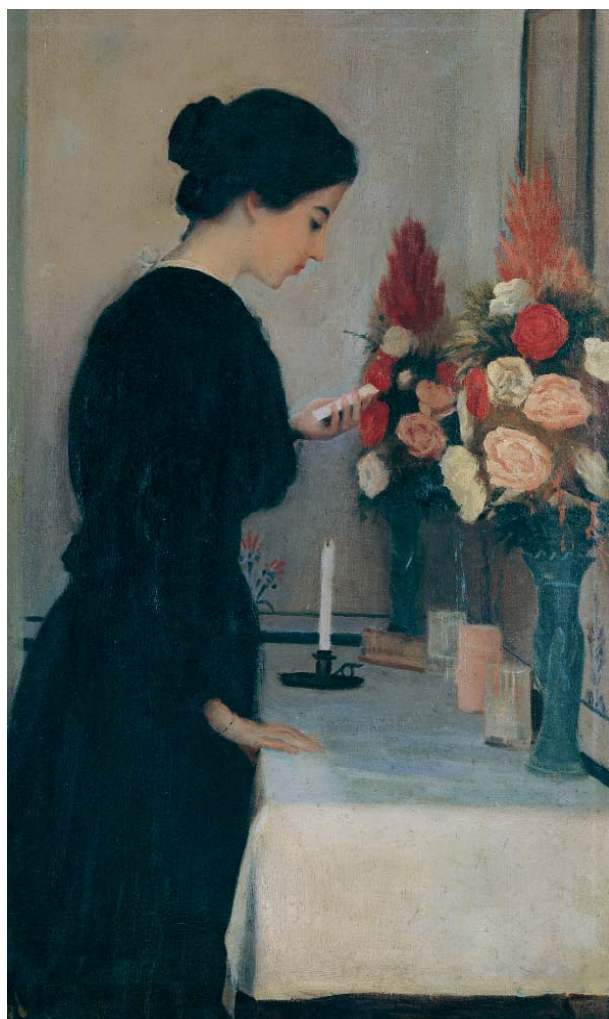
*La Morfina* (Morphine; 1894), by S. Rusiñol. Oil on canvas, 88.5 x 115 cm Cau Ferrat Museum, Sitges.

forty of Rusiñol's finest garden paintings accompanied by a sample of poetry by his favourite poets - Rusiñol seemed to say goodbye to art seen as an exploration of self, and began to try out ways of reaching the general public. In this respect, it is significant that a work such as *L'Alegria Que Passa*, a poetic play in one act with musical illustrations by Enric Morera - conceived within the context of Adrià Gual's Teatre Intim, which debuted in the midst of an aura of refinement and avant-gardism - was the work that elevated Santiago Rusiñol to the stage of the Romea Theatre, underlining the work's most theatrical elements. From then until 1930, the premieres, the triumphs and the controversies of Rusiñol's theatrical productions would form part of the history of Catalan theatre". These included, amongst many others, *Cigales i Formigues*, *Llibertat!*, *El Pati Blau* and *Els Jocs Florals de Canprosa*, and *L'Auca del Senyor Esteve*, a magnificent novel about modern-day Barcelona.

However, despite this more commercial approach, Rusiñol did not rest on his laurels. From the platform of the satirical magazine *L'Esquella de la Torratxa* he attacked *Noucentisme* (a cultural and political movement in Catalonia in the early 19th century), especially its platform, the 'Glossary' of Xènius, which was published by the daily newspaper *La Veu de Catalunya*. Rusiñol responded with the creation of *Xarau* and an alternative 'Glossary' (1907-1925). The texts in *Xarau* gave rise to some important books, such as *L'illa de la Calma*, *Coses Viscudes* and *Màximes i Mals Pensaments*.

Rusiñol thus upheld one of the two conflicting concepts of art and society prevalent during this vibrant period in Catalan history at the beginning of the century. He acquitted himself well in this dispute, as by the time he died in Aranjuez in 1931 he had already been regarded for some years as one of great standard-bearers of Catalan art.

Sandra Buxaderas



*Encens i Fum*, spotlighting the 'Rusiñol woman'.



# CATALONIA: A FILM SET

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION! THIS IS WHAT YOU MIGHT EXPERIENCE IN ANY CORNER OF CATALONIA, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE BARCELONA-CATALUNYA FILM COMMISSION (FORMERLY BARCELONA PLATO), RELAUNCHED IN FEBRUARY 2006 TO PROMOTE CATALONIA AS A VAST FILM SET. THE FILM COMMISSION IS TO PROMOTE THE AUDIOVISUAL INDUSTRY BY FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF OTHER EUROPEAN FILM COMMISSIONS, SUCH AS *TORINO-PIEMONTE*, *ROMA-LAZIO* AND *BERLIN-BRANDENBURG*.

Films such as *All About My Mother*, by popular director Pedro Almodóvar; *Mar Adentro* by Alejandro Amenábar; *Darkness* by Jaume Balagueró; *Soldiers of Salamina* by David Trueba, and *Perfume* by Tom Tykwer, are just some of the movies filmed in the streets and squares of Barcelona.

After 10 years in operation, Barcelona Plató had become too small. Up to that point it had facilitated more than 8,500 shoots in 450 locations. Most of these were for advertising (42%), followed by TV programmes (19%) and shorts (15%). Feature films only represent 5%, but are the products that give the greatest exposure.

This success has extended to the rest of Catalonia, which can now also be transformed into a film set for hours, days or even months with the support of the Barcelona-Catalonia Film Commission. This organisation belongs to the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI), the official professional organisation for film commissioners who assist film, television and video production throughout the world. With an overall budget of 700,000 euros from a collaboration agreement between Barcelona City Council and the Generalitat's Department of Culture, the Barcelona-Catalunya Film Commission provides a support service for audiovisual production companies both within and outside the city's metropolitan area.

There's no shortage of directors wanting to film in Catalonia. In April, young film director Albert Serra filmed the whole of *Honor de Cavalleria* in the countryside of the Alt Empordà region; the film was selected for Cannes 2006. Ventura Pons chose Montgat beach (Maresme) to finish filming *La Vida Abismal* in July, based on the novel by Ferran Torrent. Also in July, North American actress Julianne Moore filmed the first scenes of *Savage Green* in Barcelona and Cadaqués.



A moment during the filming of *Perfume* in the Horta Maze.

## THE BARCELONA-CATALUNYA FILM COMMISSION PROVIDES A SUPPORT SERVICE FOR AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTION COMPANIES OUTSIDE THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF THE CITY

### PRODUCING AND EXPORTING CATALAN CINEMA

Films produced in Catalonia are seducing more and more cinema-goers. Last year, Catalan films managed to claw back two market-share points from the big Hollywood blockbusters, achieving a share of 5%. This was made possible thanks to feature films like *Tapas*, by José Corbacho and Juan Cruz; *Princesas*, by Fernando León de Aranoa, and *The Secret Life of Words* by Isabel Coixet. This year, Catalan productions could well capture even more viewers, if we take into account the huge success of the film *Salvador* by Manuel Hueriga, which tells the



BARCELONA-CATALUNYA FILM COMMISSION

Putting up the set of *Salvador*, by Manuel Hueriga, in Plaça Universitat.



EL DISEÑO

A moment during the filming of *Bad Education* in the patio of the *Escoles Pies* in Alella.



BARCELONA-CATALUNYA FILM COMMISSION

Filming on a street in the Eixample district, reproducing the Barcelona of the 1970s.

story of the international outcry at one of the last executions of the Franco dictatorship - that of Catalan anarchist Salvador Puig Antich. The upsurge in Catalan film making is particularly positive given that a report from the European Audiovisual Observatory has noted a drop in cinema attendance in Spain and the rest of Europe.

The creation of the company *Mesfilms Inversions SL* last July may also help to revitalise the Catalan film industry. The new company will be co-producing feature films and providing finance for Catalan producers. The aim is to encourage long-term sustainable growth in Catalan audiovisual production, and increase exports to national and international markets.

*Mesfilms Inversions SL* was founded with a definite commercial and profit-making orientation. The company was set up by the Institut Català de Finances Holding, SAU (ICF Holding), the Catalan Institute of Cultural Industries (ICIC) and Catalunya Television, SA (TVC), which have invested a total of three million euros.

## FESTIVAL SHOWCASE

Numerous festivals bear witness to film production capacity in Catalonia. We need only mention the *Sitges International Film Festival of Catalonia*,

[www.cinemasitges.com](http://www.cinemasitges.com), which this year was held from 6 to 15 October, inaugurated by *Pan's Labyrinth*, directed by Guillermo del Toro and starring Sergi López and Ariadna Gil. Another of the stellar names at this edition of the festival was David Lynch, here to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the premiere of his film *Blue Velvet* at this same festival.

Other examples of the rude health that the Catalan film industry is enjoying are the *International Environmental Film Festival*, [www.ficma.com](http://www.ficma.com), the *CLAM -Navarclés International Film Festival*, [www.clamfestival.org](http://www.clamfestival.org), the *European Short Film Festival of Reus*, [www.poccfec.com/reu/index.html](http://www.poccfec.com/reu/index.html), and the *International Human Rights Festival*, [www.elcinetedrets.org](http://www.elcinetedrets.org).

Films such as *Una Casa de Locos (L'Auberge Espagnole)* are famous worldwide simply because they portray a group of European students of different nationalities sharing an apartment in Barcelona. The "Barcelona" brand turned the film into the "biggest box office comedy of 2001" in Spain. And now it's Catalonia's turn, which could find itself transformed into a vast film set for any kind of audiovisual production. *To be continued...*

Sara Bosch

# MAKING AN IMPACT IN GERMANY

**GERMANY HAS GRADUALLY OPENED ITS DOORS TO CATALAN CULTURE. NOT ONLY IS FRANKFURT FEATURING CATALONIA AT THE NEXT FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR, THE CITY HAS ALSO RECENTLY OPENED A CENTRE FOR CATALAN STUDIES.**

In the German university of Karlsruhe, an immaculate medieval Codex [???] paints with colour the imaginary lines traced in the air by the thoughts of an incisive, energetic, bearded old man. It is one of the many illustrations in the *Breviculum*, the most valuable medieval codex in Catalan culture which dates back to 1323, in which the figure of Ramon Llull is abundantly illustrated. The Catalan philosopher, mystic and missionary had a great influence in the Germany of that era. And even many centuries later, Leibniz was inspired by the *Ars Lulliana* in constructing his philosophical thoughts.

But the European influence of one of the most powerful cultures of the Middle Ages was gradually extinguished over the centuries. First it was suppressed by the power of its neighbour, the coloniser of America, and subsequently it suffered persecution, its light gradually fading as it aroused the interest of just a handful of cultured people on the continent. With the arrival of the Renaissance and a literary dawning, it was pitted against the inertia of centuries; bereft of the support of a state which, in fact, did its best to annihilate it during two dictatorships. But at the end of the Franco years, things changed. These new winds were not only blowing in Spain. The Germans, keen to turn the page, became particularly interested in cultures which, like the Catalan one, had been persecuted by one of the European fascist movements. Furthermore,



Students of Catalan at the University of Frankfurt also have a library.



The library is constantly being enriched with new acquisitions.

the case of Catalan could hardly go unnoticed: thousands and thousands of Germans, indeed millions, have visited Catalan-speaking lands in the last few years, especially Catalonia and Majorca. People's interest in cultural aspects was just a matter of time. And, indeed, this materialised in 2005 when Volker Neumann, at that time the director of the Frankfurt International Book Fair, put forward Catalan culture as a candidate for the guest of honour at the 2007 Fair. In October 2006 the guest culture was India, which will be handing over to Catalonia in 2007.

Several people played a key role in disseminating the culture of Ramon Llull in Germany, including Philology professor Til Stegmann, who started collecting Catalan literary works decades ago. The university where he teaches, Frankfurt University, now has the largest collection of publications in Catalan in the world, with more than 33,000 volumes. The files are currently in the process of being digitalised.

Stegmann's work has now materialised in the Centre of Catalan Studies, which was inaugurated in October 2006 and enjoys the support of the Ramon Llull Institute. In its initial years, the institution aims to make an inventory of all things Catalan in Germany: collections of paintings and sculptures in German museums, twinned cities, language studies, bibliographic heritage, academic activities and their publications, and so on.

According to Stegmann, the institution will not be purely academic or philological in nature, but will also be a creative centre. This is demonstrated by the fact that the inaugural ceremony was accompanied by an exhibition of paintings inspired by Catalan Romanesque, with the mountain of Canigó as a symbol and as a tribute to the *Cant dels Ocells* by Pau Casals. The Centre will also be concentrating on courses on Catalan culture on the Internet and disseminating advanced language learning methods. And of course it will not be forgetting its roots - because in the display cabinet at the entrance to the Frankfurt Centre there is also a reproduction of Ramon Llull's *Breviculum*.

*Sandra Buxaderas*

## Interview: Til Stegmann

# “There’s no lack of substance in Catalan literature; it just needs to be more widely know”

OF GERMAN PARENTAGE, TIL STEGMANN COMPLETED HIS DOCTORATE IN PHILOLOGY AT HAMBURG WITH A THESIS ON CERVANTES WHICH WAS LAUDED BY QUIXOTE ACADEMICS. HE HAS MET JOSÉ HIERRO, CAMILO JOSÉ CELA AND DAMASO ALONSO. HE STUDIED PORTUGUESE, ITALIAN, FRENCH AND ENGLISH LITERATURE. HE EVEN EXPLORED DANISH, ARABIC, GREEK AND RUMANIAN... UNTIL ONE DAY HE DISCOVERED CATALAN - THE LANGUAGE OF HIS BIRTHPLACE BUT ONE WHICH HE WAS DENIED BY FRANCO’S REPRESSION. HE IS NOW THE GREATEST EXPONENT OF CATALONIA IN GERMANY.

**Where does this great devotion to Catalan come from?**

For biographical reasons. I was born in Barcelona in 1941; my father was the head of the German School. And on the streets I was only spoken to in Spanish. I discovered that my city had its own language when I was 18 and had been back in Germany for eight years. I started learning it at the age of 30. It was my own moment of consciousness.

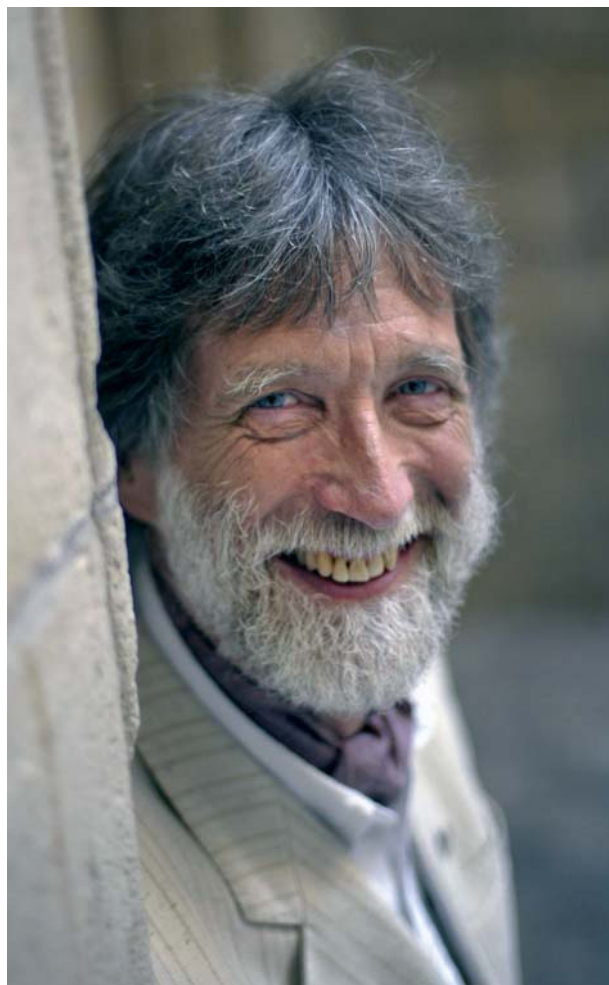
**But being German, what impelled you to become so dedicated to it? What made you so passionate about it?**

A feeling of combating an injustice. The fact that the language of my native city had been banned, blinkered. This made me react in a positive way to redress this deficiency. So once my consciousness was raised I started working to make the German people aware of the Catalan socio-historic and cultural identity, because I could see that what had happened to me was something that happened to all Germans. And that's how I fell into the role of ambassador for Catalonia!

**So what do the Germans know about Catalonia today?**

In 1978 I organised the first really comprehensive Catalan Week in Berlin, and I realised that this was the first information the German public had ever received. It got a lot of exposure on the radio and television, also because the dictatorship had just ended.

I would say that the image of Barcelona in the minds of



XAVIER BERTRAL

*Stegmann is passionately interested in Catalan culture.*

the German public could not be improved upon, as well as people such as Montserrat Caballé, Pau Casals, Dalí, Miró, Tàpies, Gaudí, and so on. All of this has meant that Germans know where Catalonia is, and even know that the Balearic Islands are Catalan-speaking. The culmination of this is the fact that Catalan culture is being featured as the guest culture at the Frankfurt International Book Fair next year. The fact that the publishers' association has accepted this proposal demonstrates that the Catalan socio-historic and cultural identity is also well known in this world.

**At the beginning, the new management of the Frankfurt fair was a little uninformed, though this has now changed...**

Initially there was a certain amount of ignorance on the part of the Germans, which was also motivated by the Catalans' own insecurity when it comes to externalising. I get the impression that the Catalan curator of the Frankfurt project is very keen that the literature presented is in Catalan, which is what receives the public funds

from the Ramon Llull institute, apart from which there is the possibility of giving cultural industry grants to publishers, who have the freedom to present authors in whatever language they like. I personally would like it to be made very clear that only writers in Catalan will be exhibited, but I do understand that publishers have to sell, and the Fair is a commercial platform. The argument needs to settle down, maintaining a strong presence of Catalan culture, and Barcelona and promoting Catalan publishers as a very significant force in world publishing.

### **Do you think the Catalans have a complex, then?**

Unfortunately, yes. They are still lacking a bit of confidence with regard to their identity as Catalan, and to defining themselves in their own language. Having said that, an identity that falls between two chairs is not a stable one. To guarantee the future, there has to be a definition of Catalan identity. There is a minority of Catalans and inhabitants of the Catalan-speaking regions who clearly believe that without 100% adherence to the Catalan language and their 'Catalanism', there is no way of ensuring the future of the unique Catalan socio-historic and cultural identity. Today, we are European and global citizens. That's why I'm an advocate of a modern multilingualism, for everyone. Especially the Catalans, who already speak more than one language, which is a great start. This bilingualism has to be a stepping-stone to other Romance languages, and to an interest in all the other languages that surround us. I don't mean that everyone should speak a lot of languages, but that they should take an interest in making themselves understood. Being able to understand an Italian and reply to him in Catalan, or managing to communicate bit by bit with a German, or knowing how to pronounce English properly even if it's only a few words. We need to devote our years

to learning many languages: perhaps a little less English and a little more German. This is the European way of coexistence.

### **Multilingualism is not an easy path.**

There are still no real European schools; there is a need for more multilingual educational challenges. Bringing young people into contact with different languages means opening them up to solidarity, inspiring them not to see another language as something strange or scary. In my opinion, opening up to other European cultures is the only way that all of us, as different peoples, can live together in peace. Getting to know each other, understanding a little of our respective languages, is the best way of civilizing the human aggressiveness we all carry inside us. If the Spanish, who are currently radically monolingual and opposed to other languages, were to make a bigger effort to understand Catalan or Galician, it would engender a much more harmonious political situation among the nations living together on the Iberian peninsula.

### **Here is someone who did a doctorate on Cervantes and is now upholding the Catalan language! Catalan and Castilian are not incompatible interests.**

What I'm proposing is an opening up to all other cultures, and Spanish culture is no exception. What the Catalans need is for contact with non-Catalan Spanish culture to be more widespread; the Spanish culture cannot be dominant, it can't monopolise all the attention; it's better to introduce a little more French and not be so focused on all things Spanish; there's a need to be more European. Catalan does not have it easy and it needs help from all sides, including multinationals, in order to remain a central language among a wide range of tongues.

### **Is there a positive way of defending an identity? You mentioned a conversation with the philosopher Raimon Panikkar.**

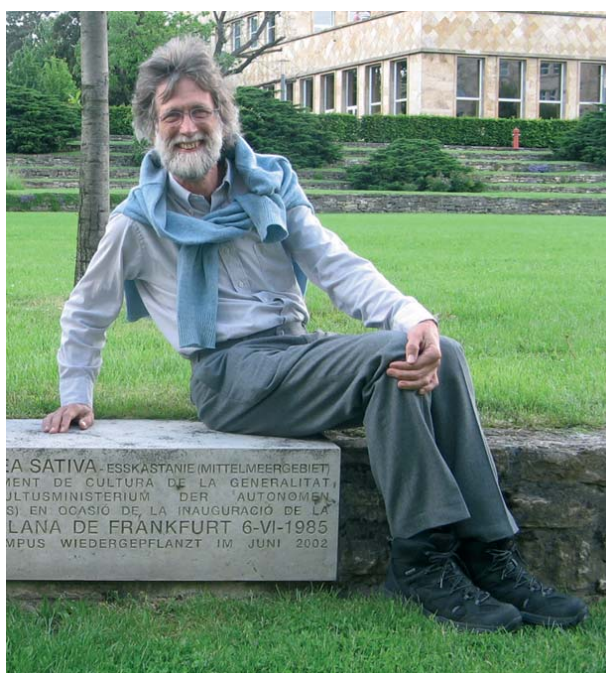
Yes, every European can defend their identity positively, binding it to European and even global solidarity. What Panikkar said is very interesting; he really opened my eyes by saying that defending your own culture against another is not the way to do things. What you have to do is love your own things and love those of your neighbour too.

### **What is the Catalan identity, seen from outside?**

Clichés work with some people, and with others they don't, regardless of nationality. There are bigger differences within the same culture than between the average Catalan and the average German.

### **Having studied Romance literature, do you see Catalan at the same level as the more well-known ones?**

Yes; the writer Joan F. Mira is going to deliver a lecture at the Frankfurt fair, and I'm sure he is going to leave everyone open-mouthed. There is no lack of substance



*Stegmann is a professor at the University of Frankfurt.*



*With his family at the Palau de la Generalitat, receiving the International Ramon Llull Award.*

in Catalan literature; what it needs is to be more widely known. We have this bad habit of only regarding German, French, English, Italian and Spanish literature as important, and that's it. We relegate Dutch, Swedish or Hungarian literature to a lower rank.

**Do you think Catalan literature needs a Nobel prize-winner to get more exposure?**

The fact that it is the guest culture at the Frankfurt Fair is already like winning a Nobel prize, and what's more it is well distributed among all Catalan authors... But promotional events are a one-off thing. I believe that European schools should be educating children in the knowledge of, and respect for, the literatures of the world. They should know the names of a Hungarian, or Dutch, or Catalan author, and they should know that the writers of these literatures have made an important contribution to world culture.

**Do you think these literatures should unite to form a kind of international lobby?**

For the last 20 years, Slovenia and Catalonia have produced joint anthologies of writers, for example. This is a policy of the Catalan Pen Club, which strongly believes that solidarity with other known literatures is a good thing. If you want to be known abroad, you have to make sure that other cultures and literatures are equally present in Catalonia.

What you're proposing is really very important. These languages could unite - not in opposition to the great

literatures, but what they can do is appeal to the sense of justice we all have inside us. They could say to readers: don't make the rich richer, but keep a space in your heart to support and respect other literatures.

*Sandra Buxaderas*

**“LITERATURES SUCH AS CATALAN, HUNGARIAN OR DUTCH COULD UNITE TO ASK READERS NOT TO MAKE THE RICH RICHER, BUT TO KEEP A PLACE IN THEIR HEART TO SUPPORT AND RESPECT OTHER LESS WELL-KNOWN LITERATURES”**

# UNIQUE SIMPLICITY

**A CHARACTER OF ALMOST FAULKNERESQUE SIMPLICITY, LA COLOMETA - ANOTHER SURVIVOR OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR FROM THE GRÀCIA DISTRICT OF BARCELONA - IS THE MOST INTERNATIONALLY FAMOUS CHARACTER IN CATALAN LITERATURE. HOWEVER, LA PLAÇA DEL DIAMANT IS NOT THE ONLY GREAT NOVEL BY MERCÈ RODOREDA.**

BY MARTA PESSARRODONA\*

At this time of Catalonia's re-emergence, it is difficult, though at the same time heartening, to imagine the society and the culture in which this novel appeared. We need to go back to 1962, the year when one of the few Catalan publishers in existence, Josep Cruzat, died; the year when a publishing house that strived for normality was born - Edicions 62, a very evocative name. There was virtually just one cultural magazine in Catalan, *Serra d'Or*, and obviously there were no daily newspapers and no radio broadcasts in the Catalan language. On top of this, the publisher of *La Plaça* had been exiled in 1939, like the author. I refer to Joan Sales and the Club dels Novel·listes (Novelists' Club). The publishing house's modest capital came from other exiles and fiction sales, and Xavier Benguerel, still exiled in Chile, was also a founding member. Meanwhile, the author Mercè Rodoreda (Barcelona, 1908-Girona, 1983) was practically unknown to the Catalan public, because the novel that had made her famous, *Aloma* (1938) was not available to the reading public. However, within two years the first edition of *La Plaça del Diamant* (The Time of the Doves) completely sold out (two thousand copies), something totally unprecedented at that time. Meanwhile, back in the "normal" world, two very different novels appeared in 1962 which, like *La Plaça*, would represent a before and after in their respective literatures. I refer to *The Golden Notebook* by Doris Lessing and *Tiempo de Silencio* (Time of Silence) by Luis Martín Santos. Can there be any doubt that there can be an *annus mirabilis* in the literary world too?

Furthermore, *La Plaça* is not THE novel of the writer, but just one of her works, although it is certainly the most emblematic and widely-translated of them. After a gap in publication of 24 years (it's frightening to think that if Rodoreda had died at the age of 50, for example, we would have missed out on *La Plaça* and all the novels which followed it), and having overcome terrible difficulties, the author had built up a notable oeuvre of fiction (short stories) and poetry, which we have discovered over the

years and which undoubtedly help to explain the enduring charm of *La Plaça del Diamant*, which is now the central theme of my critique. A novel which had no little difficulty in reaching the reading public, as it was kept away from the only platform that Catalan culture had in those days - literary prizes. It goes without saying, in this respect, that hovering in the background is the ghost of James Joyce and the odyssey of getting *Ulysses* published (1922).

What captivated the first and later readers of *La Plaça* First of all, the fact that it was so inopportune. In the 1960s, the climate of the harsh post-war years in Spain - which in Catalonia was accompanied by the disastrous destruction of its culture - was almost certainly still of more interest than the falling in love of an artisan from the Barcelona neighbourhood of Gràcia around the time of the Republic in the 1930s. I refer to Quimet, the husband of Natalia/Colometa in the novel. A cabinetmaker



ROBERT RAMOS

*Mercè Rodoreda is the most internationally known Catalan writer, despite the fact that, like James Joyce, she also had problems achieving recognition in her own country.*



**“IN 1962 TWO VERY DIFFERENT NOVELS APPEARED WHICH, LIKE LA PLAÇA, WOULD REPRESENT A BEFORE AND AFTER IN THEIR RESPECTIVE LITERATURES. THESE WERE *THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK* BY DORIS LESSING, AND *TIEMPO DE SILENCIO* BY LUIS MARTÍN SANTOS. CAN THERE BE ANY DOUBT THAT THERE CAN BE AN ANNUS MIRABILIS IN THE LITERARY WORLD TOO?”**

(the maternal grandfather of the author had been a woodworker in Terrassa!) who, like so many, had endured the Civil War. In addition, the technique of the author, who dispensed with direct dialogue and put all the narrative responsibility onto Colometa, who from the first chapter goes on to form part of the roll-call of unforgettable characters.

*La Plaça* was not the first novel about the Spanish Civil War written in Catalan. Joan Sales no less -*La Plaça*'s publisher- had written *Incerta Glòria* in 1956, though the first version reached readers severely mutilated because of the censorship of the time. But *La Plaça* is the one that ties in a domestic comedy which could turn out as a tragedy, a technique pioneered by Jane Austen in English literature. To put it another way, this could also be illustrated with Carmen Martín Gaité's *Fragments de Interior* - an author who had a great admiration for Mercè Rodoreda. That is, a historical explanation through a character, Colometa in Rodoreda's case, who, because of the genre, cannot participate directly in the struggle being narrated. However, as we well know, she does participate - as much as some of Austen's female characters, who indirectly took part in the Napoleonic Wars, the great event of her time.

Colometa, whose name was to give the novel its title, is thankfully not Rodoreda's only great character. She is accompanied by Aloma and Teresa Goday from *Mirall Trencat* (1974) and, of course, Adrià Guinart, in the most stylised of her novels, *Quanta, Quanta Guerra* (1980) or the gardener from *Jardí Vora el Mar* (1967). It would be a difficult task to attempt to reduce Rodoreda's excellent narrative talent to her female characters, because even the secondary male characters in her novels are



PILAR AYMERICH

Rodoreda's creation, *La Colometa*, is an apparently simple character but one with a unique form of expression that has moved and attracted readers around the world.

outstanding: take Riera, the notary in *Mirall*, for example.

Even now, Mercè Rodoreda and her works attract new readers to Catalan literature both in Catalonia and further afield. Her colleagues/admirers include renowned novelists such as Gabriel García Márquez (who wrote the prologue to the German edition of *La Plaça*) and Guillermo Cabrera Infante. Martín Gaité was joined in her admiration for our author by Rosa Chacel, to name but a few. In Catalonia, the literary work preferred by adolescents is - and has been for some years - *Aloma*, while generation after generation of adults continue to immerse themselves in the tragedy of Colometa, a character almost as simple, in theory, as some of Faulkner's characters. Because Mercè Rodoreda, a Catalan girl with no formal education, was always a voracious reader who never believed in her unquestionable talent. A love of reading that all her publics applaud and will applaud forever.

\*Poet, translator, and author of *Mercè Rodoreda i el seu Temps* (2005).

# “NANO” IS BACK

**THE POBLE SEC NEIGHBOURHOOD CAN STILL HEAR THE MUSIC OF WORDS OF LOVE, THOUGH THIS TIME THEY WERE WRITTEN IN MINORCA. JOAN MANUEL SERRAT IS BASKING IN THE SUCCESS OF HIS NEW ALBUM IN CATALAN, *MÔ*, AFTER OVER 40 YEARS IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS.**

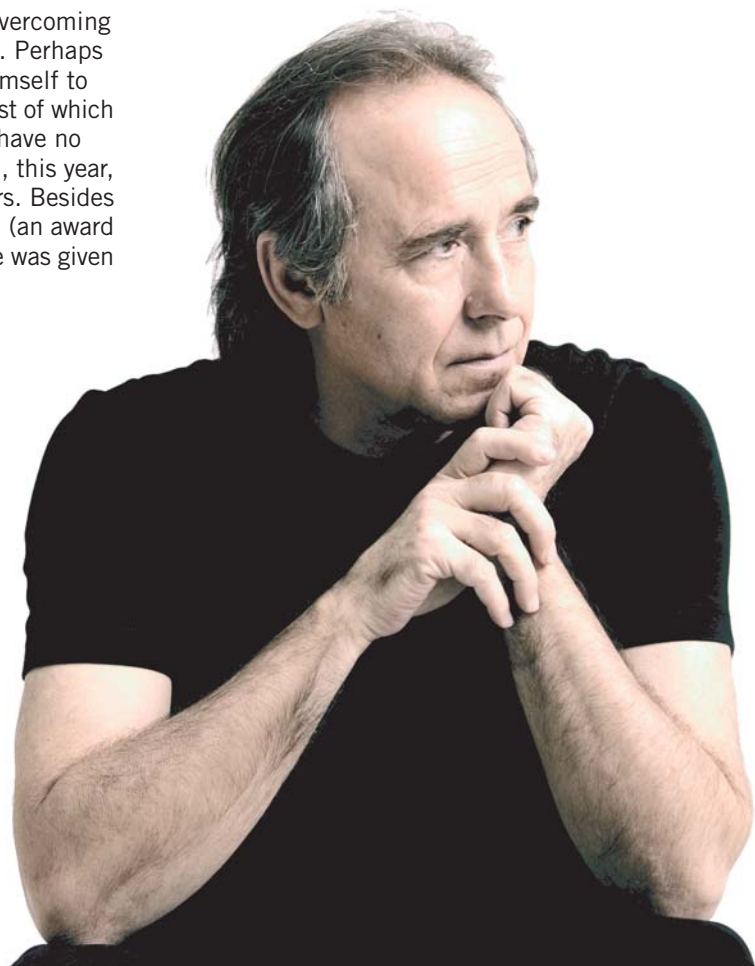
This new album by the Poble Sec born singer Joan Manuel Serrat, also known as “Nano”, contains 12 songs written entirely in Catalan. The Barcelona singer-songwriter had not made an album in Catalan since *Material Sensible* (1989), an unpublished album - though this did not stop it reaching the number 1 spot in Spain. In homage to his private refuge in Minorca, the title chosen for his latest work is *Mô*, a city described as a “Hiding place of furtive winds / Refuge of tired sails”. So Maó had to be the location of the tour's first performance, which continued with 17 recitals at the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya - all of which sold out.

This voice is back on the music scene after overcoming the illness that kept him away from the stage. Perhaps this is why, in different ways, he dedicates himself to love and life in all the songs on this album, most of which he wrote himself. Although he confesses to “have no need for vanity, success, acknowledgement...”, this year, Serrat has been flooded with titles and honours. Besides being awarded the Medalla del Mèrit al Treball (an award in recognition of a person's work), in March, he was given

an honorary degree by the Complutense University of Madrid and, in July, he was granted the Medalla d'Or de Barcelona (Gold Medal of Barcelona). On this occasion, the singer declared that the city “is like me: a hybrid, a city that welcomes all people”. To round off this impressive collection of honours, the City Council of Maó has now awarded him its Medalla d'Or, the highest distinction that the Council can give to those who uphold the values and unique features of the city.

These honours aside, Joan Manuel Serrat continues to rouse the admiration of his followers, both in Catalonia and abroad. His tours still include South America, taking in countries such as Mexico, Puerto Rico and Argentina, where he has occasionally taken time out to visit Catalans living abroad, as he did at the Casal de Catalunya in Paraná. The unique voice of “Nano” already forms part of the sentimental memory of many generations around the world.

*Sara Bosch*



SONY BMG

*Serrat in a promotional photograph for the album.*

# PARIS WELLCOMES RAIMON WITH OPEN ARMS

**THIS SUMMER, THE FRENCH MEDIA AN *EXCEPTIONAL AND UNIQUE* CONCERT BY RAIMON AT THE OLYMPIA IN PARIS. THANKS TO THE PICAP LABEL EVERYBODY CAN HEAR THE VOICE DESCRIBED BY THE FRENCH AS *SUBTLE AND MYSTICAL*.**

"A mythical figure of protest songs, the phenomenon of Raimon is still going strong 40 years on. A point of reference in the struggle for democracy, Raimon is a singer and poet with a unique and very personal voice, far-removed from the trends and routine circuits of pop music". This is how Radio France International introduced Raimon to its listeners, adding that "since his first concert at the Olympia, Raimon has won international prestige confirmed by the fact that he has made more than 60 albums around the world and performed songs from almost all over: the United States, Japan, Mexico, Germany, Russia, Argentina, Italy, Britain...".

The occasion was worthy of such attention: the Xàtiva-born singer was back at the Olympia for the fourth time, 40 years after he began his idyll with Paris.

The highly prestigious *Le Monde* newspaper celebrated "this exceptional anniversary" with an interview. The country's most popular state television channel, France2, and the *Libération* newspaper were also there to ask questions. Maurice Failevic of *Humanité* preferred his own memories of when he heard Raimon sing in the French capital in 1966: he remembered "the moving and unforgettable evening", and still marvelled "at the passion, at that incredible communication with the public". *Le Monde Diplomatique* published an article on him and its editor, Ignacio Ramonet, did not want to miss the concert under any circumstances. Ramon Chao, the writer Jorge Semprún, and the poet George Raillard were also there. The devoted public gave him a standing ovation for more than ten minutes after the encores. They sang every song with Raimon, even the new "Terra negra", inspired by a painting by Tàpies. But the crowd really began to throb when he sang "El Vent" and "Diguem no".

As Àlex Vicente from the *AVUI* newspaper explained, Paris's love affair with Raimon began when "the owner of the Olympia, Bruno Coquatrix, saw him on TV and moved heaven and earth to get him to perform. That was the first time a Catalan had sung in the arena - founded by a businessman with family ties in Barcelona, Joseph Oller. The press of the time compared Raimon to Brassens, Dylan and his friend, Pete Seeger". This excellent anniversary performance can be re-lived with the recording made by Picap. S.B.S.



Raimon has made the Olympia throb four times since his first performance in 1966.

JOEL ROBINEFEFE



### A THOUSAND YEARS OF ART IN ONE MUSEUM

**THIS IS A UNIQUE MUSEUM THAT CONTAINS ALMOST TEN CENTURIES OF CATALAN ART AND IMPORTANT WORKS FROM ABROAD. RELAUNCHED IN 2004, THE MUSEUM HOUSES ROMANESQUE, GOTHIC, RENAISSANCE, BAROQUE, AND MODERNISTA ART, ALONG WITH PHOTOGRAPHY, SKETCHES, ENGRAVINGS, POSTERS, AND NUMISMATICS. THIS MUSEUM IS THE MNAC (THE NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF CATALONIA), WHOSE MISSION IS TO EXPLAIN ALL FACETS OF CATALAN ART AND RELATE IT THAT OF THE REST OF THE WORLD.**

Thanks to all the arts available to it, the MNAC offers a cultural combination unique to Catalonia. The Romanesque

art room, dedicated to the first artistic movement of Catalonia that crossed the border into Europe, contains some of the museum's most important works, presided over by the central apse of Sant Climent de Taüll (Vall de Boí, Alta Ribagorça) and the imposing figure of Christ as *Maiestas Domini*. There are also images carved in wood, exclusive pieces of the Catalan Romanesque period. The carvings represent the Madonna and Child, the Crucifix and the Descent from the Cross with a simplicity and intimate bareness, though with a powerful expression.

They include the *Batló Crucifix*, an exceptional piece around the world for the original polychromy it has retained. It depicts Christ nailed to the cross in a rigid, frontal composition. His attitude, with eyes open and a serene expression, arms outstretched horizontally, depicts Christ's victory over death. Its exact origins are unknown, though we know that it was purchased from an antiques



*The MNAC building, in the Palau Nacional on the mountain of Montjuïc.*



*Ticià's Girl in Front of Mirror (after 1515).*

dealer in Olot by the industrialist Enric Batlló, from whom the work takes its name. This piece has a special place in Romanesque art studies, both in Catalonia and the rest of Europe.

Romanesque art is an important section of the museum, but there is much more to see. The MNAC also exhibits works by great *Modernista* painters from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Joaquim Vayreda, Marià Fortuny, Ramon Casas, and Santiago Rusiñol. As well as Catalan artists, the museum has works by painters such as Velázquez, with his Saint Paul, or the Mannerist El Greco, together with the Renaissance painters Fra Angelico, Ticià, Il Tintoretto, and the exuberant Fragonard, not forgetting the Baroque painters Rubens and Canaletto, or the Impressionist Sisley, among others.

The permanent exhibition has almost 6,000 works, although the museum has access to almost 250,000 pieces. The Restoration Centre of the museum works constantly to preserve and restore the MNAC's art works and can also do so for other organisations if requested. However, a museum is not simply a selection of works on show and the MNAC is a clear example of this because it also provides visitors with an information centre in the form of its General Archive and History of Art Library.

The archive manages the museum's various collections. The other research service is the library, a vital component of the MNAC investigation centre. It is an essential study area and reference point for art historians because it holds 125,000 works and over 2,500 national and foreign journals. So not only does the MNAC house ten centuries of Catalan art under one roof, it also touches on four branches of musicology: conservation, restoration, documentation, and diffusion. This is, without a doubt, the first showcase of its kind in Catalan.



*Saint Paul (1619), by Velázquez.*



Tándem (1897), by Ramón Casas.

## WORKS AND VISITORS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

The MNAC's temporary exhibitions have included one of works by Caravaggio and one featuring European Realist painting, which showed 85 works from seventeenth-century artists as an example of the "Caravaggio revolution". The exhibition received over 195,000 visitors. Now, with the title *Humberto Rivas. El fotògraf del silenci*, the museum has reserved a space until December for this Argentinean artist who marked the before and after of Catalan photography when he arrived in Barcelona in 1976. Rivas's photographs depict abandoned places, usually without people in them, such as deserted streets, bare walls, and empty houses. This creates a unique sense of silence that speaks for itself. His work, described as "powerful and intense", has become a point of reference for today's generations of photographers.



Detail of the murals of Sant Climent de Taüll (Vall de Boí, Alta Ribagorça).



## A HISTORIC BUILDING

The MNAC is housed in the Palau Nacional on the mountain of Montjuïc, a building constructed for the 1929 International Exhibition and which stands out against Barcelona's urban skyline. In an academic and Mannerist style, the building was designed to be the focal point of a perspective that started off at Plaça d'Espanya; a protrusion on top of the mountain of Montjuïc that was to be demolished at the end of the exhibition. The demolition never went ahead and housed a museum for a time, until the Barcelona '92 Olympics relaunched the building when it hosted the official inauguration ceremony in the museum's Sala Oval, one of Europe's largest covered halls.

The decision was later taken to convert the Palau Nacional into the MNAC. In 1997, the museum inaugurated its permanent exhibition hall for Gothic art and its Cambó collection. In 2004, the construction work was completed and the permanent exhibitions of Renaissance and Baroque art from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were inaugurated along with those of the permanent exhibitions of sketches, engravings, photography, and numismatics. The Museum offices, Restoration Centre, and the History of Art Library were also inaugurated. Other new spaces include the restaurant, cafeteria, shop and bookstore, auditoriums, and rooms designed to host educational workshops.

The museum director is Maria Teresa Ocaña, who joined in March after 20 years of running the Picasso Museum in Barcelona. Ocaña is determined to complete some of the MNAC's collections and wants to encourage research by the museum curators in collaboration with university students.

*Sara Bosch*



*The domed room of the MNAC.*



# ONE CITY, ONE SENTIMENT

**NÀSTIC HAS REACHED THE FIRST DIVISION IN FOOTBALL AND TARRAGONA HAS GONE CRAZY. THE CITY IS AWASH WITH THE COLOUR SCARLET AND THE TEAM IS STIRRING FRENZIED PASSIONS.**

The majestic Roman amphitheatre, the striking Roman aqueduct popularly known as the Pont del Diable (Devil's Bridge); or the wall around the old quarter, are still the great symbols of Tarragona. But something has changed in the city. Tarragona is awash with the colour scarlet, the colour of Club Gimnàstic, Nàstic as it is popularly known, following the football club's promotion to the First Division. A multitude of flags have hung from balconies for months; on the streets, the inhabitants proudly wear the official t-shirt of Tarragona's favourite team; the bars are almost exclusively devoted to discussion about the team.

Nàstic had not played in the First Division for 56 years - 56 years! Only this can explain the explosion of Nàstic fever, the marea grana ("scarlet tide"), as their fans are known, who are passionately living every minute of their team's every match, home or away. No fewer than 5,000 fans accompanied the team on its return to the First division, watching them win the opening match of the championship at the Estadi Olímpic Lluís Companys de Montjuïc against Espanyol (0-1).

Passions are so high that membership of the club rose to 11,000 fans even before the start of the championship (Tarragona currently has 130,000 inhabitants), although 2,000 people were left without tickets because of the reduced capacity of the Nou Estadi, where the team plays.

What happens next is of little importance. Nàstic sees this season in the Lliga de les Estrelles (The League) - the world's best - as the reward for its excellent work last season, although its aim is to stay in the First Division.

The Tarragona team has maintained the same set up, headed by the Galician trainer Luis César Sampedro. On the field, half of the pre-promotion players will still play,

including footballers like the veteran Antoni Pinilla, aged 35. Pinilla is one of the few still playing from the team that won the gold medal at the Barcelona '92 Olympics.

The great farewell comes from the club's President, Josep Maria Andreu, now in his fifth season as the head of Nàstic's Board of Directors, who will resign from the position before the end of 2006. Having seen the team promoted twice in three years, Andreu will leave the club with his dream realised.

The club has a modest budget of 15 million euros - the lowest of the 20 First Division teams, though Nàstic will still try to make a nuisance of itself to big teams like Barça and Real Madrid. "Our excitement could win it all", predicts Josep Maria Andreu.

*Francesc Joan*



*Celebrating the promotion to the First Division.*

EFE





# THE LEADERS IN WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

**L'ESPANYOL ON TOP OF CATALONIA AND SPAIN WITH A TALENTED TEAM AND SOLID TACTICS. THE RESULT IS A FISTFUL OF TITLES AND ELATION FOR A CLUB USED TO DISAPPOINTMENT.**

In men's football, the top team for the Catalans and residents of Barcelona is FC Barcelona. Barça monopolizes the headlines and always has titles on its mind, while Espanyol moves in more modest circles. But this situation is turned on its head in women's football. The players, who have a blue and white strip, are the best team in Catalonia and Spain, with a solid basis that sees it lifting cups as its prize for a job well done. The *periquites* ("the budgies"), as they are known to Espanyol fans, beat the Barcelona side by a staggering 7-1 in the past two duels, in a clear display of who is leading who in Catalonia.

Now Espanyol cannot hide its excitement about playing in the Champions League for the first time ever. The side walked away with the Superleague title after a nerve-racking final match against Seville. Playing against the best teams in Europe is the reward for the hard work of these players who have won the League, the Queen's Cup, and the Catalonia Cup. The first prize won by the team this year was the Catalonia cup, when it defeated Barça 7-1.

The current success of Espanyol is the result of a solid course of action carried out over the last ten years. Women's football was given a major organisational boost when the Superleague was formed in 2001 to help promote the careers of girls who had made superhuman efforts to be able to play their sport. Espanyol with its blue and white strip was involved from the start. The competition, which Barça joined in its second year, has now grown and 7 of the 13 participating teams also have a team in the men's First Division and the Superleague. Espanyol's success is down to the work of 'Titi' Camuñez,



*Espanyol are the best team in Spain.*

now replaced by Santi Fernández as trainer, a team with lots of quality players, and the support of Antonio Martín, the third-largest shareholder of the club and a key figure in pushing Espanyol to the top.

This solid team makes the most of the skills of Adriana and Sara, bypassing the defence, the proof being that they scored 22 goals in the Superleague. It also uses the talent of players such as Marta Cubí and Marta Torrejón, who has a brother on the first team. This summer, the team had double cause for celebration because the top player of recent years, Raquel Cabezón, returned to the club after a spell at Barça due to differences with the managers. Alongside the return of the captain, the club also renewed its contract with Adriana, considered the best forward in the world and a player who had received better offers from clubs in Italy and the USA. They now have a consolidated project, the aim of which is to get Espanyol fans used to celebrating in the struggle for winning titles.

*Jordi Colomé*

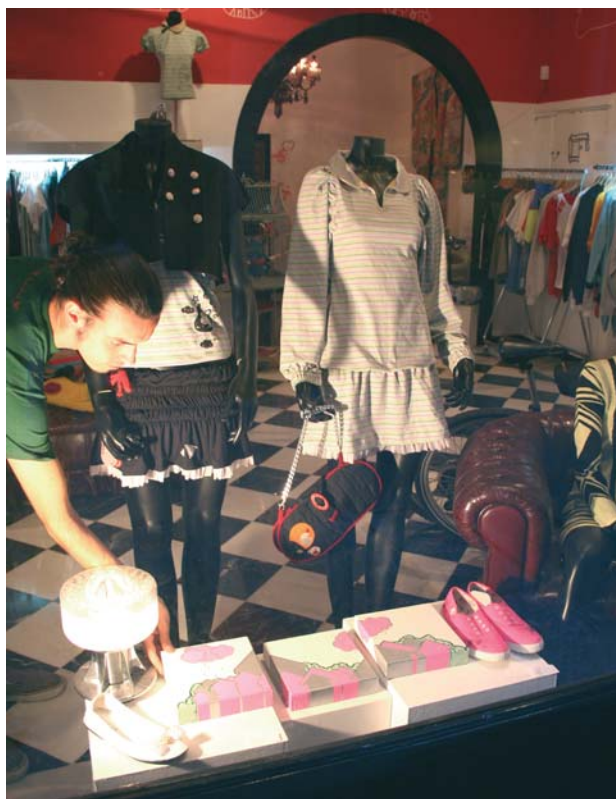
## Suggestions: Discover...



# BCN, THE GREAT SHOPWINDOW

**THE NAME BARCELONA IN ITSELF ATTRACTS TOURISTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. ONE OF THE MANY REASONS FOR ITS SUCCESS IS THE CITY'S QUALITY SHOPPING WITH SOMETHING TO SUIT EVERY TASTE AND STYLE. TOP INTERNATIONAL FASHION HOUSES MIX WITH LEADING LABELS IN INNOVATIVE IN DESIGN. THIS IS BARCELONA, THE CITY OF SHOPPING.**

The city is undeniably famous all over the world. Since 1992, when the city obtained deserved international recognition for its hosting of the Olympic Games, Barcelona has not gone out of fashion. In fact, the number of tourists visiting the city increases year after year. The figures up to August 2006 increased by 17% on the



ABEL UBACH

*Barcelona is a showcase for new designers looking for international recognition.*

previous year, with a total of 4.4 million visitors in the first eight months alone, according to data from Turisme de Barcelona, the city's tourist office. Barcelona is the leader in many areas, such as design, urban planning, architecture and culture. But tourists are also attracted by its "shopping city" status, especially considering its abundant range of fashion items. In other words, Barcelona is like a great shop window that combines tradition with modernity, its own labels with big chains. All of this makes it a shopping hub of international renown.

The city's main shopping areas (Ciutat Vella, Passeig de Gràcia, Rambla de Catalunya and Avinguda Diagonal) have been christened "The Barcelona Shopping Line". This five-kilometre stretch is very much integrated into the city and lives of its inhabitants. While strolling down the prettiest streets and neighbourhoods in the city, you can visit a multitude of shops selling high-quality goods. And to make it even easier, there is a special bus, the Shopping Line Bus, which has a specially planned route to take you to the city centre where you can shop comfortably. With the T-Shopping card, you can get on and off the bus as many times as you like during the day.

### THE CENTRE AND CIUTAT VELLA

In Plaça de Catalunya and its surrounding area, down the Ramblas and into the Raval and Barri Gòtic, you will find a myriad of boutiques and shops. The Plaça de Catalunya is also home to the El Corte Inglés department store, the Triangle shopping centre, and the FNAC megastore. On nearby streets, like Pelai or Portal de l'Àngel, you will find lots of fashion stores, with chains like Mango and Zara, and shops with a lesser international presence (though still much loved by the city's residents and the tourists who discover them) such as Merceria Santa Anna and many others. The Mallorca-based footwear company Camper is one of the main shops on carrer d'Elisabets, but visitors will no doubt wish to wander around the other boutiques in this concentrated fashion spot of the Raval.

The Barri Gòtic is a criss-cross of narrow streets that are home to smaller boutiques. Plaça del Pi is famous for its market that sells cheeses, herbs, and honey, while the adjacent streets house art galleries and antiques shops. If you are heading towards the Ribera district,

you will find the Born alongside it - this neighbourhood is seen by many as the Soho of Barcelona, with restaurants and design boutiques that showcase the latest trends. Some sell clothes produced by unknown young fashion designers, a characteristic Barcelona phenomenon. The city's fame as the leader in all manner of design reached the heights of fashion some years ago, meaning that these new designers (Naifa, Agua del Carmen, Menchen Tomàs, Anna Povo, etc.) can create almost unique pieces at reasonable prices. Many clients buy clothes here with the satisfaction of knowing that they will be dressing in a unique style. In the Gràcia neighbourhood, further north, you can also visit boutiques selling personal creations: Ramon Marquina, Rebeca Damasco, along with many others.

Numerous Catalan and Barcelona-based labels have crossed our borders, though Custo Barcelona is probably one of the most emblematic. Its store on carrer de Ferran, near the Plaça de Sant Jaume, draws countless visitors - both tourists and residents - every day.

**THE BORN NEIGHBOURHOOD IS SEEN BY MANY AS THE SOHO OF BARCELONA, WITH RESTAURANTS AND DESIGN BOUTIQUES THAT SHOWCASE THE LATEST TRENDS. SOME SELL CLOTHES PRODUCED BY UNKNOWN YOUNG FASHION DESIGNERS, A CHARACTERISTIC BARCELONA PHENOMENON**



*Numerous Catalan and Barcelona-based labels have crossed our borders.*

ABEL UBACH



## PASSEIG DE GRÀCIA AND AVINGUDA DIAGONAL

Those looking for the most sophisticated, top international fashion houses should head for Passeig de Gràcia and Rambla de Catalunya. Here, they will find labels such as Armani, Loewe, Vogue, Hugo Boss, Louis Vuitton, and Mandarin Duck, not to mention other famous Catalan and Spanish designers such as Adolfo Domínguez, Armand Basi, Josep Font, Antoni Miró, Roberto Verino, and Pedro del Hierro. This is also the site of Vinçon, a store selling decorative items for the home that symbolises the city's sophistication in the field of design. At the top of Passeig de Gràcia, compared by many with New York's Fifth Avenue or the Champs-Élysées in Paris, Avinguda Diagonal offers visitors an excellent choice of shops, boutiques, and services, especially in the stretch leading up to Plaça de Francesc Macià, though not too far ahead, where the road meets carrer de Numància, there is another shopping centre called l'Illa Diagonal (Diagonal Block). It is so called because it takes up an entire block and contains over one hundred shops. Like everywhere else in the city, it is ideal for rummaging and finding gems.

*Abel Ubach*

### Tax-free shopping for tourists

If you live outside the European Union, you are entitled to claim back VAT, a tax paid on purchases, at a rate of 16% for amounts over 90 euros. You must ask at the shop for your tax-free cheque and then declare it at customs, where you will be refunded the tax.



ABEL UBACH

*Renowned international labels are found alongside smaller shops much loved by the city's residents.*

## Suggestions: Visit... Priorat



# SILENT SUCCESS

**THE PRIORAT IS GAINING A GROWING REPUTATION AROUND THE WORLD FOR THE QUALITY OF ITS WINES. HOWEVER, THE DISTRICT HAS NOT LOST ITS CALM AND THE SMALL VILLAGES, DECIMATED BY THE CRISIS OF THE PAST CENTURY, STILL CONSERVE THE RURAL CUSTOMS MANY THOUGHT WERE LOST.**

The twentieth century transformed the Priorat district into a sort of land of the poor, a territory in crisis and a place that suffered the devastating effects of emigration to the city. Over one hundred years, it lost almost half of its population and, even today, the 23 towns of the district have just under 10 thousand inhabitants between them. Make no mistake about it: ten thousand people distributed across 23 villages.

The Priorat is still a rural area today, with little villages and a population which moved away. Nonetheless, over the last fifteen years, it has come to be the apple of the eye of wine connoisseurs around the world. Some US critics have gone so far as to confirm what the natives have always said: the Priorat makes some of the best wines in the world, as good as the finest French wines. What is more, Priorat wines have started a revolution that, to a certain degree, has led the spectacular



*Siurana has one of the most beautiful village landscapes in Catalonia.*

XAVIER VAQUÉ / CONSELL COMARCAL DEL PRIORAT



PARC NATURAL DEL MONTSANT

*The Serra del Montsant mountain range is a well-conserved, unique area.*

transformation of Spanish and Catalan wines over the last few years.

Wine has become the main economic driving force, producing some rather surprising statistics. The district (which has two denominations of origin for wine: Priorat and Montsant) has grown from having ten or so wineries to over a hundred in less than ten years. The winemakers who have come to live in the district's villages hail from La Rioja, El Penedès, France, the Osborne family, and the Codorniu empire. The new arrivals who have come to make wine and have their own wineries include the singer-songwriters Lluís Llach and Joan Manuel Serrat, and even the French actor Gerard Dépardieu, partner in a winery named - and listen to this - 'El tros del padri' (The Godfather's Portion).

So the Priorat district is becoming famous through the international recognition of its wines. Tourists are coming to the district and its inhabitants are slowly setting up businesses and rural accommodation designed especially for travellers who are fanatics of wine, culture and the countryside. Because a century of crisis, in which economic progress seemed to all but pass the Priorat by, has paradoxically left a landscape in reasonably good condition, the Serra del Montsant being its admired and respected watchtower. A few years back, even government institutions got involved and drew up the 'Carta del paisatge' ('The Landscape Charter'), a document

determining how the landscape of the Priorat should be conserved, what could and could not be done to ensure that the beauty accumulated over so many centuries was not lost in a matter of days.

However, do not be fooled into thinking that this is a vibrant district now. It isn't. Although there are more tourists now and although people are choosing the area to settle in and the young people are returning to the villages (to work in the vineyards), the Priorat still has something of that slow village rhythm. Its villages are small (Falset, the capital, is the largest with fewer than 3,000 inhabitants), and some still have a town crier who parades up and down the streets with a cornet, as they have always had. Wine shops and high-class restaurants have opened in many villages, but there is not one shopping centre in the entire district or a single traffic light (well, there is one at the moment, but it is only temporary).

And Siurana, one of the most beautiful postcard images of all Catalonia, is the same as ever: spectacular, standing on the top of the mountain. With its stone cottages, little Romanesque church, its dozen inhabitants, and countless mediaeval legends. Though it does now have an asphalted road that was constructed at the end of the twentieth century, so that driving up to Siurana is no longer a feat akin to climbing Kilimanjaro. However, Siurana is still a rock-climber's paradise, and sportsmen from around the world visit the village to cling to its rocks.



*Some US critics have said that the Priorat makes some of the finest wines in the world.*

Fortunately, one thing that is no longer the same is the Carthusian Monastery, Scaladei, whose prior used to control day-to-day life to such an extent that he gave the district its name: Priorat. The roots of this district lie in Scaladei but, in 1835, the desperate settlers of the Priorat set fire to it and it has only been a pile of rubble since. It has now been partly restored, so visitors can even enter a monk's cell to see how they lived. These were the monks who brought the winemaking tradition back to the area. The Carthusian Monastery, Scaladei, like the rest of the Priorat, is being restored. It is one of the symbols of the Priorat.

*Toni Orensanz*

## AN INCREASINGLY RECOGNISED WINE

Winemaking was introduced by the Carthusian monks of the Order of Saint Bruno in 1162 when King Alfons I The Chaste asked them to settle in the district after he had retaken it from the Muslim Governor of Siurana. The construction of the Scala Dei Carthusian Monastery at the foot of Montsant led to seven villages being subject to the feudal rule of the prior of the abbey, and the district began to be known as the Priorat. The monks busied themselves with planting a vineyard, improving the crop, and making wines, which gained fame and public recognition as VINS DEL PRIORAT (WINES OF THE PRIORAT). The onset of phylloxera at the turn of the

century required the vineyards to be pulled up and replanted with American root stock.

This variety is only found in old vineyards now, the dominant type being R-110. The varietal composition of the vineyard combined its own proportions. Today there is more Carignan, followed closely by Black Grenache. For some years now, Cabernet Sauvignon has been planted with very good results. This has led the Wine Regulatory Board to ask for it to be added to the authorised varieties, as recently happened with Merlot and Syrah.

Because of the recent importance of the denomination of origin, old vineyards that were no longer in use are now being recovered. Modern plantations are generally carried out on land that has been replanted to allow mechanical work. Some crops have two or three vines plaited together in order to increase production in some varieties. The district produces mainly reds, though 10% are white wines, and there is a small rosé production.

The winemaking area of the Priorat Denomination of Origin is located in the central part of the province of Tarragona, in a depression in the Priorat district created by the split of the southern part of the Serra del Montsant. Vines are tended at altitudes of 100 to 700 metres above sea level.

The quality of Priorat wine is largely due to the geological features of the soil. The area has a Mediterranean climate: sheltered, with dry winds mainly from the north-east quadrant; the average annual temperature is 15°C. The average annual rainfall is 600 millimetres. Very high sun exposure combined with a dry climate and very low summer rainfall make the ideal conditions for maturing grapes with a high sugar content. Recently, vines have been replanted in plots that allow machinery to be used.

The variability of the factors determining the climate and the low risk of disease in the ripening period produce a very long harvest, which begins in Bellmunt del Priorat and Lloar in mid-September and ends in Morera de Montsant and Porrera in mid-October.



*The roots of the Priorat lie in Scaladei.*

## Suggestions: Taste...



# THE COASTAL ROUTE

**FISH AND SEAFOOD ARE KEY INGREDIENTS USED IN CATALAN CUISINE AND THE BASIS OF THE TRADITIONAL CATALAN DIET. CATALUNYA HAS A SEAFARING CULTURE AND HAS ALWAYS USED THE RESOURCES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN. FISHING PORTS AND FISH MARKETS LINE AN ATTRACTIVE AND COLOURFUL ITINERARY FOR VISITORS WHO WANT TO DISCOVER SOME OF THE FINEST MEDITERRANEAN FRESH FISH AND SEE CATALUNYA'S PRETTIEST COASTAL VILLAGES.**

### TERRES DE L'EBRE

Cases d'Alcanar has a long fishing tradition. The colourful fishing boats are part of the landscape of Cases, together with its seafront promenade, fish market and variety of beachfront restaurants. Very near to Cases d'Alcanar lies the delta of the River Ebre, the country's main shellfish centre, where mussels, coquina clams, and oysters are easy to find. Because of this production, the area hosts the *Jornades Gastronòmiques de l'Ostró del Delta* (Food Festival of the Pacific Oyster of the Delta). The auction house at Sant Carles de la Ràpita is interesting because visitors can see the trawler-boat fishermen rushing to

unload the boxes containing the day's catch. As you head up the coast, make sure you stop at Ampolla and Ametlla de Mar.

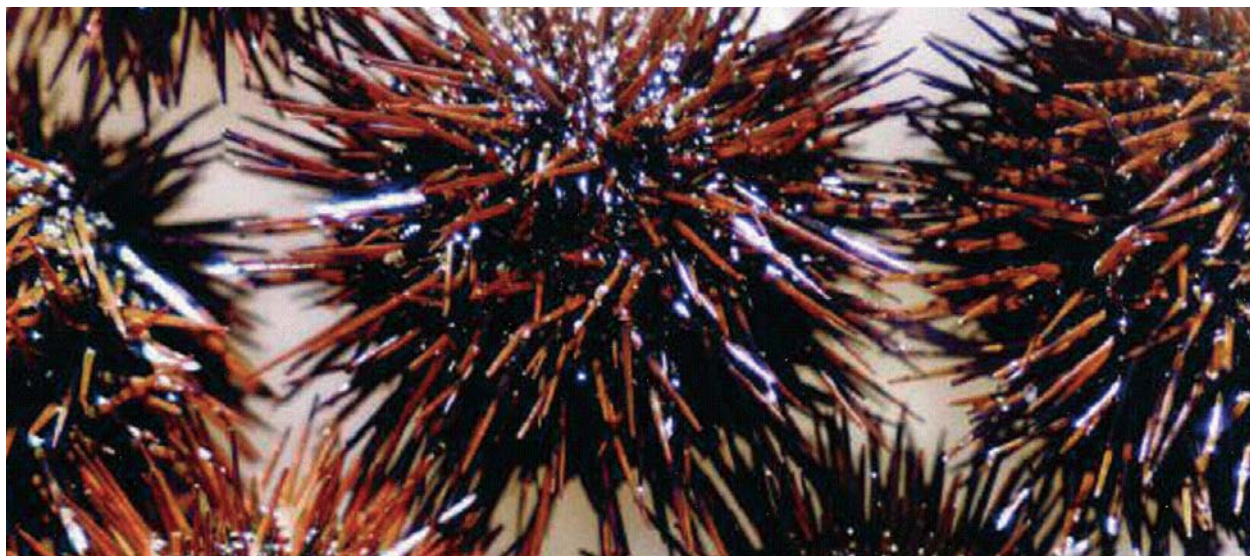
The hectic activity on the fishing wharf at Ametlla and the seafood dishes served at its restaurants are the certificate of authenticity of the town's coastal spirit. The *Jornades Gastronòmiques de la Tonyina* (Tuna Food Festival) is held at Hospitalet de l'Infant, and you can try its excellent prawns at restaurants in the town or buy them fresh from the market.

### COSTA DAURADA

Further north, we found Cambrils with its picturesque seafront and, in the area surrounding the great port of Tarragona, el Serrallo, which is the city's fishing neighbourhood par excellence. El Serrallo is filled to bursting with bars and restaurants where you can sample the finest maritime cooking using the freshest fish. Other towns do not have a port but the lives of their inhabitants are very much influenced by the sea, like Vendrell, which has a gastronomy more suited to the coast than inland regions.

### COSTA DEL GARRAF

Vilanova i la Geltrú and Sitges are the only towns in the Garraf with a fishermen's guild. The fishing boats return to the port of Vilanova in the early hours of the morning,



You can try sea urchins during February and March at many towns along the Catalan coast.



piled high with oily fish (sardines, anchovies, and Atlantic mackerel), a type of fish that has its own seal of quality. They fish during the night and need to return to the port before eight, when the first market of the day is held. The trawler boats return to the port after three in the afternoon with the fish neatly classified; make sure you are on the western wharf if you want to catch them. We then suggest you visit the Museu de Curiositats Marineres Roig i Toqués, a museum of seafaring curiosities.

## COSTA BRAVA

The Palamós shrimp, the sea urchins of Palafrugell, the anchovies of L'Escala, the rockfish of Begur... these are just some of the many products of the sea to which numerous towns on the Costa Brava owe their fame. In the Selva district, you will find fishing ports in Blanes, Lloret de Mar, and Tossa de Mar. In Baix Empordà, we find the towns of Sant Feliu de Guíxols, Estartit and Palamós, where the fish is unloaded and then auctioned at half past four in the afternoon. Afterwards, the fishmongers set up their striking stalls at the port to sell their fish. You must not leave Palamós without tasting its shrimp at one of its restaurants or during the *Jornades Gastronòmiques de la Gamba de Palamós* (Palamós Shrimp Food Festival), and visiting its Museu de la Pesca (a fishing museum). You can try sea urchins (from January to March, in Palafrugell), rockfish (in Begur, which holds its own *Jornades Gastronòmiques del Peix de Roca* - Rockfish Food Festival - from mid-April to mid-June), oily fish (in Sant Feliu de Guíxols, Castell-Platja d'Aro, and Santa Cristina d'Aro, which organises the oily fish festival *La Cuina del Peix Blau Ganxó* from mid-May to mid-June) and langoustines (in Calonge-Sant Antoni), all without moving from Baix Empordà. To finish off the itinerary, the ports of L'Escala, Roses, Cadaqués, Port de la Selva and Llançà, all in Alt Empordà, offer picture-postcards of towns with a long fishing tradition. The forefathers of today's inhabitants of Empordà handed down the art of salting fish, such as the anchovies of L'Escala.

## AUCTIONS

Traditional market trading has been replaced by electronic monitors in Catalan ports that display the rapidly falling prices of batches of fish. The fishmongers and wholesalers press the buttons on their remote controls to buy batches at the price shown on the screen at that moment. Auctions are held at more or less the same times across Catalonia. Oily fish is usually sold off at around eight in the morning. The afternoon auction is held between three (at L'Escala) and half three (at Palamós). The auction houses are closed on weekends.



*Shrimp is sold fresh and frozen.*

TURISME I COMERÇ



*The port at Arenys de Mar.*

CONSORCI COSTA DEL MARESME

## FISHERMEN'S GUILDS AND AUCTION HOUSES

In the Barcelonès province, both Barcelona and Badalona have a port and a fishermen's guild. Not too far away, on the Maresme coast, there are another seven ports, all of which have long fishing traditions and are well worth a visit: Montgat, Mataró, Arenys de Mar, Sant Pol de Mar, Calella, Pineda de Mar, and Malgrat de Mar. The fact that these towns hold fish markets is your guarantee that you can eat fresh fish every day of the year.

# Marta Carnicero's recipe



## SHARING AN APERITIF

With the summer holidays now a distant memory, it may seem that this very Catalan custom of enjoying an aperitif before our meal has lost its appeal. The long, lazy days falter under a pile of dead leaves, together with the little indulgence that brought on a sweet hazy slumber after the meal, like a spider's web of improbable stories murmured into one's ear.

Although the climate and carefree ways of the summer were ideal for chatting around the table, luckily for us, the shellfish season has just started. And I think that, faced with such quality raw materials, no excuses are needed to embark on the adventure of preparing a memorable aperitif.

A lot has been written about the best way to cook shellfish. Josep Pla, convinced that the success of the crustaceans was basically down to the fact that they had no bones, was a fan of cooking them on coals, never on a griddle, "because the toasting of the shell is decisive in elevating the flavours of its contents". No comment. He also declared himself the sworn enemy of the use of lemon, with this firm statement: "if the fish is fresh, never put lemon on it if you are actually planning on eating fish". It is not without some measure of trepidation that I would say, in my humble opinion, that a little squeeze of lemon juice won't do any harm - on the contrary. It is true though that shellfish must be cooked with respect, in a way that does not mask the pure flavours. So we must use only the freshest raw materials and give them our absolute respect, using simple procedures, short cooking times, few adornments, and only a limited number of condiments.

There is a popular Catalan saying that shellfish should be eaten in months with the letter 'r' in their name. So, grab your shopping baskets and head down to your most trusted fishmonger (this is vital, otherwise you're fighting a losing battle) to buy some good raw materials. You do not need to blow the budget, though you will be fully rewarded for a little effort: for a special meal like the one we are going to prepare, it is best to fill the table with a variety, even if there are only a few of each type of shellfish.

I suggest you start with some small langoustines prepared like Quim Marquès does at Suquet de l'Almirall, in the Barceloneta neighbourhood: lightly fried in oil used to

make onion confit, accompanied by this same onion confit, and flambéed with a good glug of whisky. This, followed by coquina clams, simply fried lightly in olive oil, a little garlic, and a pinch of spice, or cockles steamed open with a squeeze of lemon over. Those red shrimps with the purplish heads, bursting with tasty juices, would also go down a treat griddled and accompanied by a colourful vinaigrette with tiny pieces of carrot, onion, green pepper, a generous glug of extra virgin olive oil, and a drop of sweet-and-sour vinegar. To finish off, a speciality of Casa Leopoldo, that classic Barcelona restaurant hidden away in the centre of the Raval: griddled baby squid and clams, simply dressed and seasoned with salt, pepper, extra virgin olive oil, and chopped parsley.

If the occasion - and the wallet - permits, you can also add a few oysters. Live, with a squeeze of lemon - like a breath of salty sea hitting the palate. Or, if it is the start of the year, sea urchins, the seasonal raw food that Dalí adored and which brings us closer to the Japanese way of doing things. Or, if you can find them, sea cucumbers straight out of the water. Whatever you choose, the important thing is to find an excuse for giving in to the pleasures of gastronomy in the best possible company. More often than not, the best moments are shared around a table.



Marta Carnicero, choosing shellfish.

SARA BOSCH

# Catalonia in brief



## POLITICAL STRUCTURE

In accordance with the Spanish Constitution, the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia of 2006 contains the basic rules and regulations of this Autonomous Community. It establishes a legislative autonomy and executive powers. The Generalitat of Catalonia is a political institution consisting of the Parliament, the Government, and the president, the highest Catalan authority and State representative in Catalonia.

## LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Catalonia has produced important figures in the arts, humanities, and scientific research. Its language, Catalan, is the official language alongside that of the official language of the State, Spanish. In accordance with the Statute passed by the Spanish parliament, the Cortes, the Generalitat promotes its own language, persecuted for the most part of the last three centuries, and ensures that both languages have the same rights. Catalan, spoken by 75% of the population, is very much a literary language - with 10,000 books published a year and translations into other languages - and has a presence on the Internet, where it has its own domain.

## HISTORY

It was settled in prehistoric times by the Iberians, who were influenced by the Greeks, Phoenicians, and Carthaginians. In the first century BC, Rome took over, setting up the provincial capital at Tarraco. In 714, after the Visigothic period, the Arab Muslims entered, although the region was progressively conquered by the Franks. The Hispanic March counties, however, ended up as sovereignties. In the twelfth century, this constantly expanding region began to be known as Catalonia.

The marriage of Count Ramon Berenguer IV with the daughter of the King of Aragon, in 1137, led to the creation of the Crown of Aragon and further expansion, especially under Jaume I, to the south and into the Mediterranean. A pact-based political system was set up in the Diputació del General (Generalitat) at the end of the thirteenth century. In 1469, the Spanish monarchy was formed when King Ferdinand II of Aragon was married to Isabella of Castile, though Catalonia maintained its condition as a state with institutions, constitutions, and its own rights. At the end of the War of Succession (a European conflict), Barcelona surrendered to the Bourbon troops on 11th September, 1714. The new king, Phillip V, set up an absolutist system, replaced the use of Catalan in public for Spanish, and abolished the institutions and constitutional system.

In the nineteenth century, Catalonia became the most industrialised region and the Catalan culture and language began to revive. In 1924, it recovered a small self-governing institution, the Mancomunitat, abolished by the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera (1923). The Republic (1931) returned Catalonia its autonomy with a new Statute that set up the Generalitat, and the return to democratic and cultural normality began.

In 1936, the Spanish Civil War broke out. In 1939, Catalonia was occupied by the army of General Franco and the dictatorship brought exile, death, and repression. The Statute was abolished and public use of Catalan forbidden. On the death of Franco (1975), Catalonia began to evolve towards a democratic and autonomous state, defined in the 1978 Constitution. The Generalitat was temporarily reinstated in 1977 in the figure of the exiled president, Josep Tarradellas. In 1979, the Catalan Statute was passed, which restored self-government. In 1986, Spain joined the EU. From 1980 to 2003, the president of the Generalitat was Jordi Pujol, who was later succeeded by Pasqual Maragall. In early 2006, Catalonia reworked its Statute to increase its powers.

*Additional information:* [www.gencat.cat](http://www.gencat.cat)

### LAND AND POPULATION

Area: 31,895 km<sup>2</sup>  
Inhabitants (number): 6,704,146

### MACRO MAGNITUDES

GDP (EUR million): 152,704  
GDP per head (EUR): 22,013  
Gross household income per head (EUR): 16,370  
Gross Domestic Product (% annual variation): 2%

### COMPANIES AND UNIVERSITIES

Number of companies: 543,719  
Creation of trading companies: 3.7%  
Annual number of ERASMUS students  
Catalonia 03: 4,300  
Spain 03: 25,000 %CAT/EU: 144,000

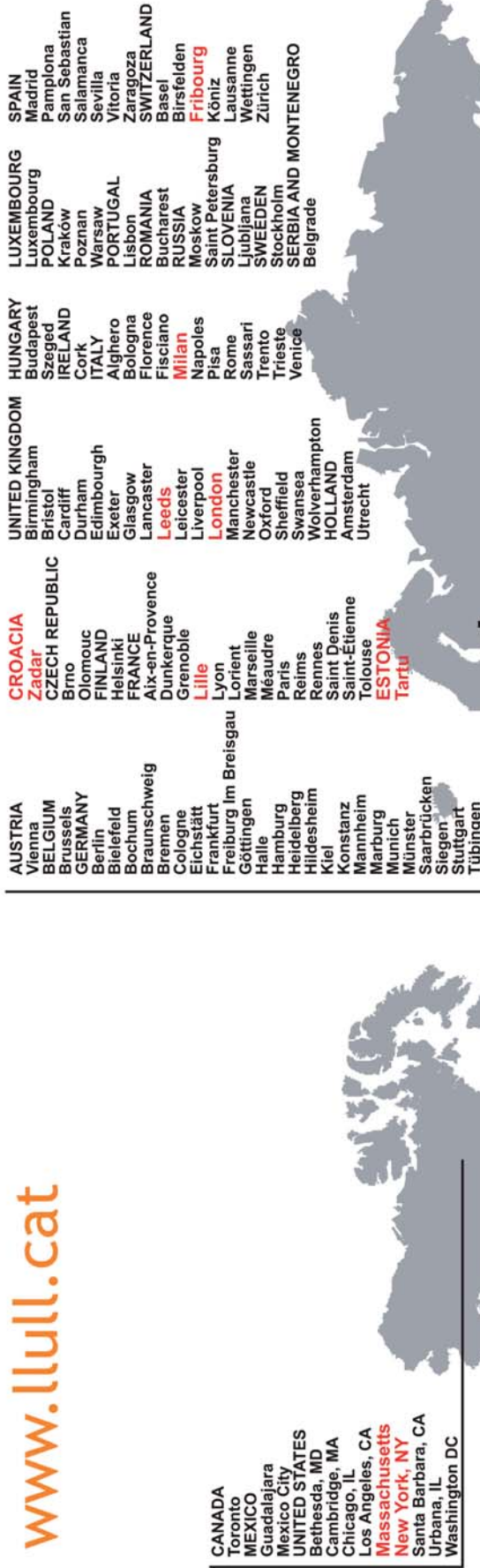
### FOREIGN TRADE

Exports (EUR million):  
Catalonia 03: 37,278  
Spain 03: 137,815  
EU 03: 972,920  
Imports (EUR million)  
Catalonia 03: 53,697  
Spain 03: 184,095  
EU 03: 987,730

### INVESTMENTS

Foreign investments (EUR million)  
Catalonia 03: 1,444  
Spain 03: 16,641  
%CAT/SPAIN: 8.7  
Foreign investments (EUR million)  
Catalonia 03: 3,643  
Spain 03: 24,341  
%CAT/EU: 15

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