

Barcelona: Gaudí is waiting for you



Antoni Gaudí, the man

Antoni Gaudí i Cornet, son of a family of coppersmiths, was born in 1852 in Reus, in the province of Tarragona. As a child, he observed how his father and his grandfather, whose workshop was in the nearby town of Riudoms, managed to create the most subtle and delicate rounded shapes of everyday objects with a hammer, a few copper sheets and skillful hands.

When he was seventeen, his family sent him to Barcelona to study architecture. Skillful with his hands, creative and observant, with a good sense for mathematical calculations, he soon excelled among the students of the School of Architecture, but at the same time he aroused suspicion and distrust among his teachers because of his not very orthodox ways of treating structural shapes.

Reserved in character, elegant, and convinced of his capabilities, he applied his ideas and skills, soon attracting the interest of the Catalan bourgeoisie which entrusted him immediately to carry out creative and original works. Among them, the closest to Gaudí was Eusebi Güell, for whom the architect worked until he threw himself, after a spiritual crisis, into his posthumous work, the temple of the Sagrada Família, now a basilica, having been consecrated by Pope Benedict XVI in November 2010.

He died in Barcelona in 1926, run over by a trolley.



Antoni Gaudí y Cornet
Ca

The works

Gaudí had an innate sense of volume which probably came from his practice as a coppersmith in his childhood or from his attentive observation of nature, which he considered a source of inspiration. His curved walls and roofs, his parabolic arches, his twisted columns, his spiral chimneys... are geometrical shapes which we find abundantly in architecture and that come from natural structures, like the bones of the animal kingdom or the trunk and branches of the trees of the plant kingdom.

The work of Gaudí is not the result of rampant fantasy, but rather the result of extraordinary imaginative ability, as the calculations of the contemporary computer have confirmed. Architecture and furnishings, created with the local materials and decorated with the forms and colors of their surroundings, comprise a solution which the passage of years has proved to be unique.



The *trencadís* technique (composition of broken ceramic elements), reaches the highest possible level of decorative and chromatic expression in the surface treatment of the bench of the Park Güell



Gaudí reformed the Casa Batlló completely, and converted its façade into a symbolic battle between Saint George and the dragon



The extraordinary use of the applied arts (such as the forge) in architecture is one of the main traits of Gaudí's work, son of craftsman coppersmiths



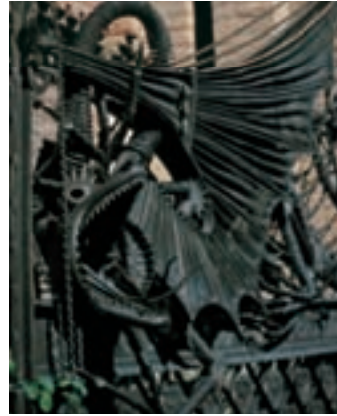
The stained glass window of the Colònia Güell crypt reminds us of the petals of a flower or the wings of a butterfly. Nature is the main source of inspiration of Gaudí's work



Central nave of Sagrada Família



The Casa Vicens was the first important work of Gaudí. It was inspired by the historicist Mudejar style, and it combines stone, brick and colored tiles



The entrance railing to the Finca Güell is a great forged sculpture where the menacing dragon evokes the heroic deed of Heracles in the Garden of the Hesperides



On the flat roof of the magnificent Palau Güell there are about twenty chimneys comprising a garden of sculptures, where the shapes and colors create a magical character

Gaudí and Barcelona

14 basic works of Gaudí can be seen in Barcelona, giving us an idea of the evolution his architecture followed.

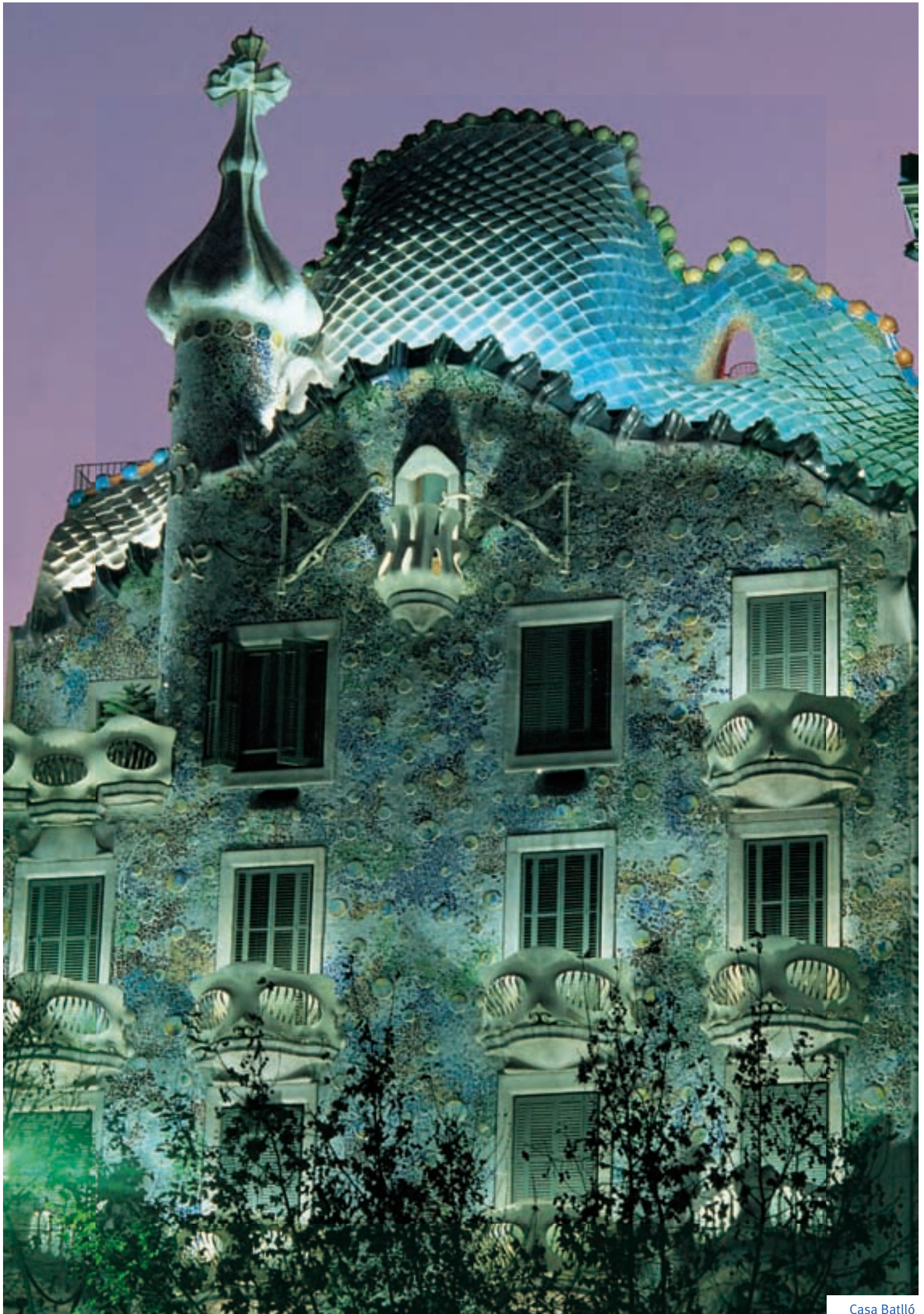
Streetlamps of the Plaça Reial, 1878. Early work, with a stone base, cast iron columns, chroming, and at the top, the symbolic helmet of Mercury with wings and caduceus.

Casa Vicens, 1883-88, with a historicist Mudejar style crafted in stone and brick and with a rich ceramic application. Here, the parabolic arch appears for the first time. 🏠

Pavilions for the stables of the Finca Güell, 1884-87. They constitute the first synthesis between technological innovation and decorative craftsmanship. The mobile and dynamic cast iron dragon of the railing that closes the entrance to the utopian Garden of the Hesperides stands out.

Palau Güell, 1886-88, home of his patron. Gaudí transformed this palace into a habitable, warm, elegant and majestic space. First example of what his architectural practice would be: strength of materials, play of columns, dome, interior circularity and heating, wood work and furniture, cast iron, all with a great decorative exuberance topped by the use of the *trencadís* (broken ceramic elements) and glass. 🏠

School of the Teresianes, 1888-89, example of how with a closely spaced succession of parabolic arches the use of beams in the construction of floors and ceilings can be avoided.



Casa Batlló



The external austerity of the School of the Teresianas contrasts with the warmth of the interior atmosphere, where a masterly distribution of light is achieved



The structure of the Casa Calvet, although it shows a certain general restraint, incorporates decorative elements characteristic of the aesthetics of Gaudí



The architectural complexity of the hyperboloid roof and the inclined columns of the Colònia Güell crypt, paradoxically invites withdrawal



The gothic appearance of the Casa Bellesguard hides an interior with a great environmental richness, where Gaudí applies innovative building and structural solutions



Park Güell



The mouth of the dragon in the entrance staircase of the Park Güell is the spout of the waters collected in the tank under the columned room



The door of the Finca Miralles clearly demonstrates the capacity of Gaudí to transform any stone structure into organic movement



From the flat roof of La Pedrera, where Gaudí transforms the chimneys and ventilation pipes into anthropomorphic sculptures, the Sagrada Família can be seen



The interior decoration of the Casa Batlló reveals Gaudí's interest in combining architecture and ornamentation



Casa Calvet, 1898-99. Apartment building between party walls in which a new concept in using materials, decoration and furniture is developed.

Church of the Colònia Güell, located 12 km from Barcelona. The project started in 1898, and was continued in different stages until 1917, when it was interrupted permanently. Here Gaudí experimented with funicular, tensors from the inverted models, to obtain the final image of the form. He built the church using parabolic hyperbolic Catalan style brick vaults with ribs and columns of multifunctional discharge. The atmosphere of withdrawal comes from the spatial volume created by the materials and the chromatics of the windows. 🏛️

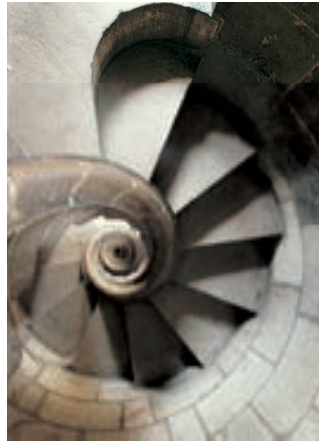
Casa Bellesguard, 1900-09. Here, under the guise of a gothic structure, he experiments with systems to create ceilings and terraces without tie-beams, through the use of very low arches of voladizo brick.

The Park Güell, 1900-14, was an attempt to create an urban development in the country. Gaudí applied all of his knowledge to this park and incorporated in it all of his preoccupations in urban planning. There is not a single straight line; everything is curved or twisted. The columned room, space originally intended for a market, supports an impressive open terrace. Here it's important to remember the significant contribution of Jujol in the creation of the bench-rail of the park. 🏡

Miralles Door, 1901-02. Curved wall crowned with turtle shell tiles.



Gaudí devoted the last years of his life exclusively to the temple of the Sagrada Família. He only lived to see one of the bell towers completed



The interior of the Sagrada Família towers transports us, through a giddy spiral, to the interior of a gigantic stone snail



The hyperboloids of the arches of the Sagrada Família will spread the light as if they were the leaves of the trees in a forest

Casa Batlló, 1904-06. The remodeling of the pre-existing building implied a new decorative concept that favors color to light. 🏠

Casa Milà, 1906-12. “La Pedrera” is a series of stone curtain walls calcareous on the exterior and painted on the interior. They enclose an architectural structure of pillars and girders which permit the large windows and balconies of recycled iron. The loft, with parabolic arches of different heights, culminates in an off-level roof terrace with stair enclosures and chimneys, stuccoed or covered with *trencadís* and glass. 🏠

Basilica of the Sagrada Família, 1883-1926. A synthesis of Gaudí’s architectural theory and practice. The initial Neogothic in the crypt and apse evolves toward the parabolic shapes of the towers and the hyperbolic shapes of the vaults, foreseeing that sound has great importance. Gaudí began the four towers of the Birth facade, authentic gospel in stone and ceramics. The models and drawings that have been preserved allow the work to be continued by computer. Upon completion, it will have eighteen towers, the highest reaching 170 meters. In 2010, the nave of the basilica was covered, which had been one of the most eagerly awaited initiatives, and it can now be used as a place of worship. Known from its beginnings as the “Cathedral of the Poor”, because it is an expiatory temple, the ongoing work is financed by anonymous donations. 🏠

Temporary **schools** for the children of the neighborhood, next to the temple of the Sagrada Família, 1909. A combination of curved supporting and supported surfaces of flat and vertical brick, following the principle of conoids (regulated geometry).





Palau de la Música Catalana

Modernisme

Modernisme in Barcelona, and in Catalonia in general, comes close to being a Catalan national style that was adopted by the bourgeois. The medieval revivals, which were understood as the historical origins of Catalonia, and which insisted on the identification between the work and the intention of its builder, led to this style. This identification between Modernisme and the bourgeois was also produced with very distinctive traits in other parts of Europe where the industrial revolution had triumphed and the internationalization of trade had been adopted. In Catalonia, this trend began with the architect Elies Rogent around 1885 in the recuperation of Catalan Romanesque (University of Barcelona and restoration of the Monastery of Ripoll) and Pere Falqués (Triumphal Arch and streetlamp-benches of the Passeig de Gràcia). It continued with the work of Lluís Domènech i Montaner (Hospital de Sant Pau i la Santa Creu, Palau de la Música Catalana) and culminated, among many other innovative architects, with the work of Puig i Cadafalch (Casa Amatller, Casaramona). In painting Rusiñol and Casas stand out, and Nonell and Mir approach the limits of a new concept of art. From this amalgam of people that met and discussed art and culture in Els 4 Gats tavern, appeared Picasso. All of this was centered in the Barcelona of 1885 to 1910.



Casaramona. CaixaForum. Puig i Cadafalch created a paradigm of industrial art nouveau with this factory



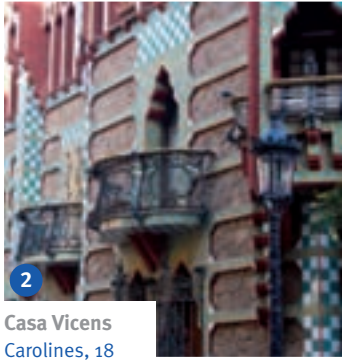
The municipal architect Pere Falqués designed the streetlights of the Passeig de Gràcia, an iron structure whose base is an original white marble *trencadís* bench



The decoration of the Modernista façades is exuberant, like that of the Casa Amatller, in which the staggered top is highlighted by the application of ceramic elements



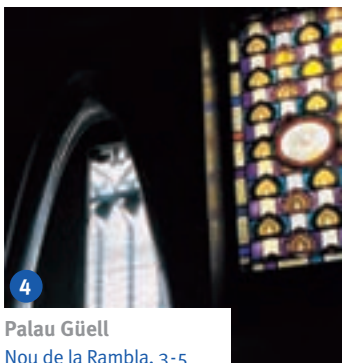
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Streetlamps of the Plaça Reial
Pl. Reial, s/n



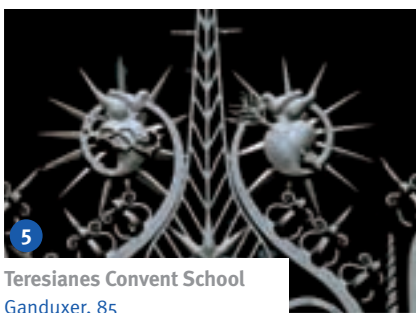
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Casa Vicens
Carolines, 18



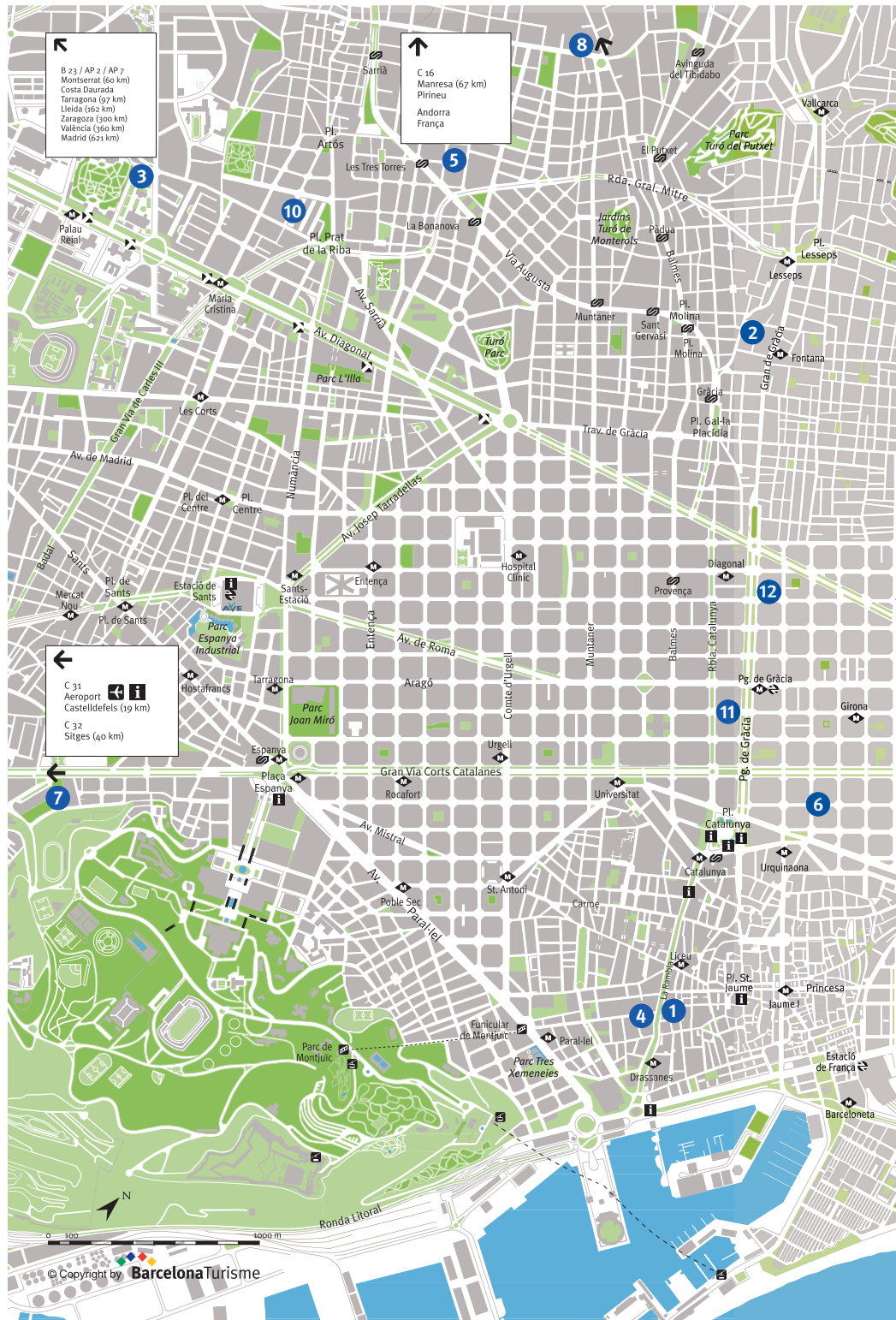
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Pavilions of the Finca Güell
Av. de Pedralbes, 7



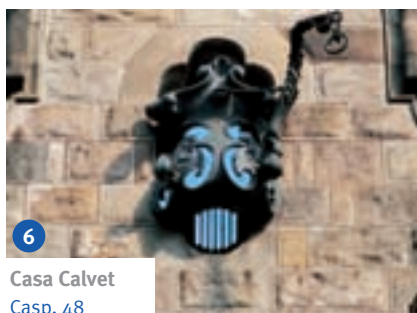
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Palau Güell
Nou de la Rambla, 3-5



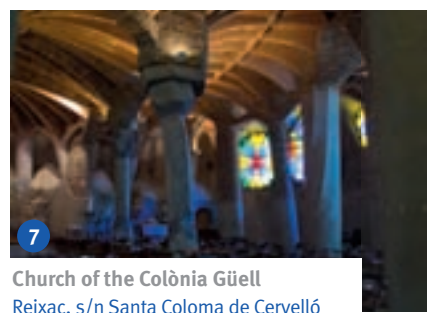
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Teresianes Convent School
Ganduxer, 85



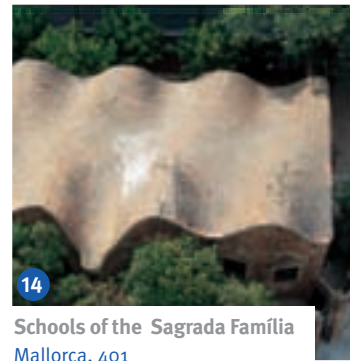
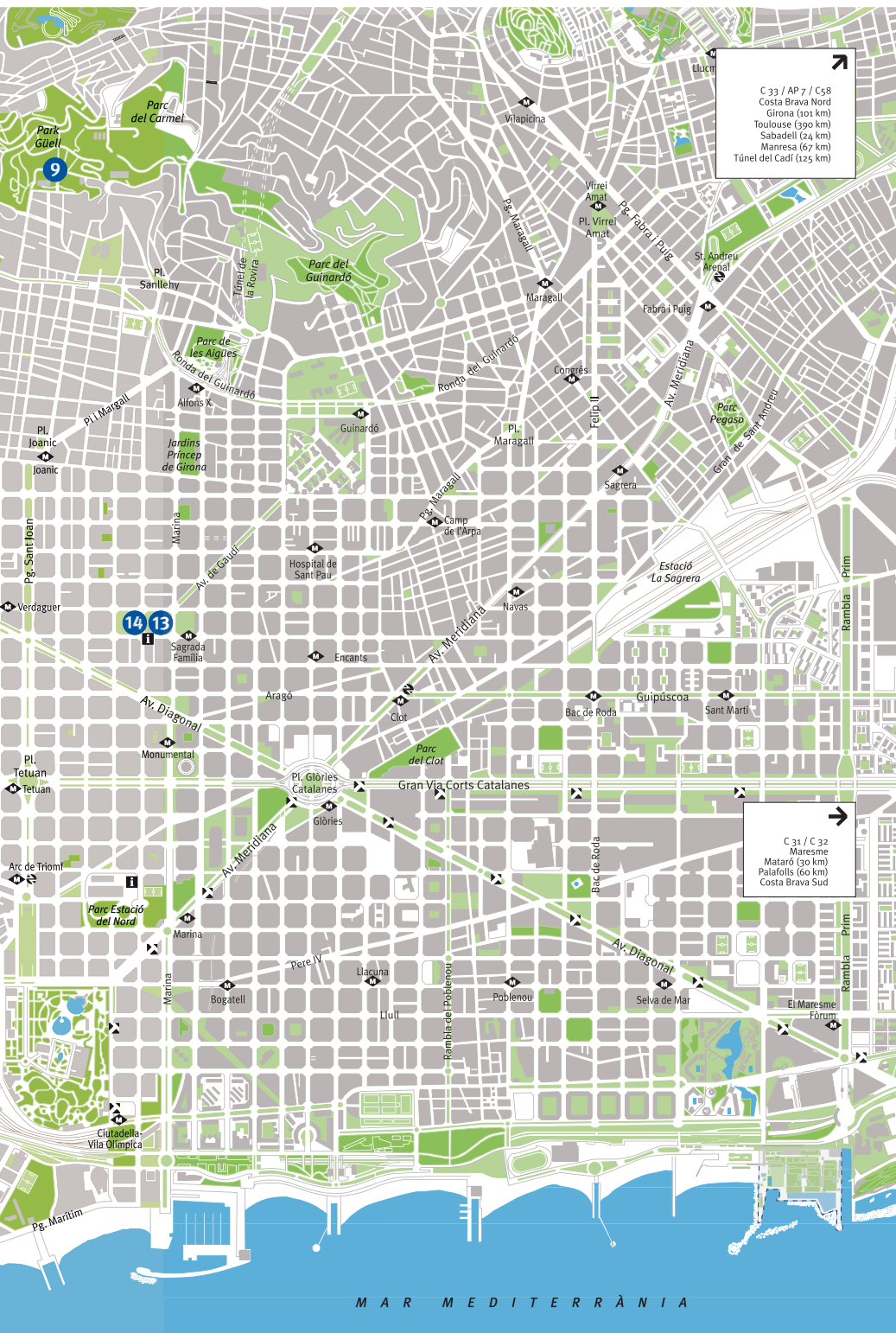
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Casa Calvet
Casp, 48



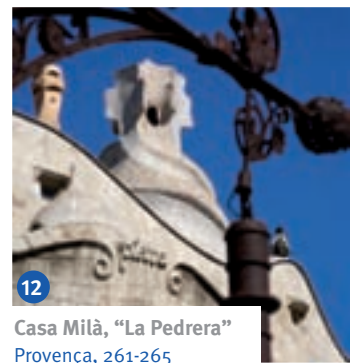
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Church of the Colònia Güell
Reixac, s/n Santa Coloma de Cervelló



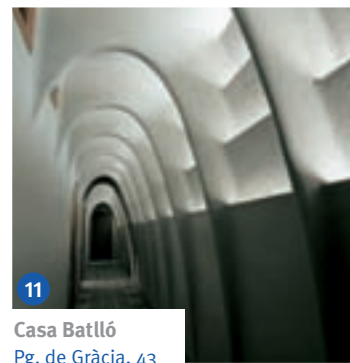
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Schools of the Sagrada Família
Mallorca, 401



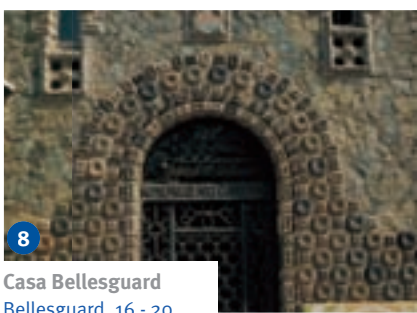
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Sagrada Família
Mallorca, 401



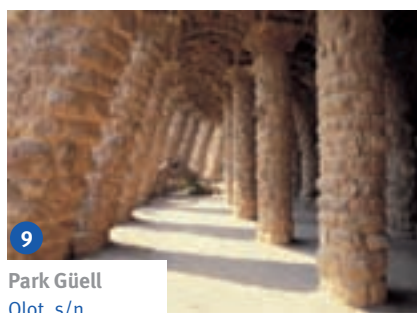
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Casa Milà, "La Pedrera"
Provença, 261-265



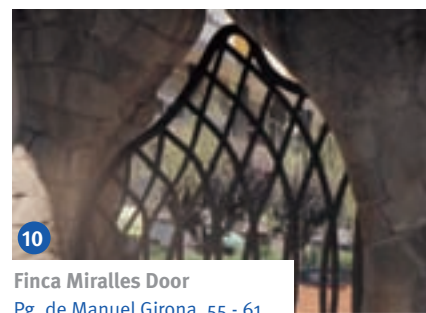
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Casa Batlló
Pg. de Gràcia, 43



8
Casa Bellesguard
Bellesguard, 16 - 20

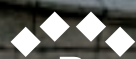
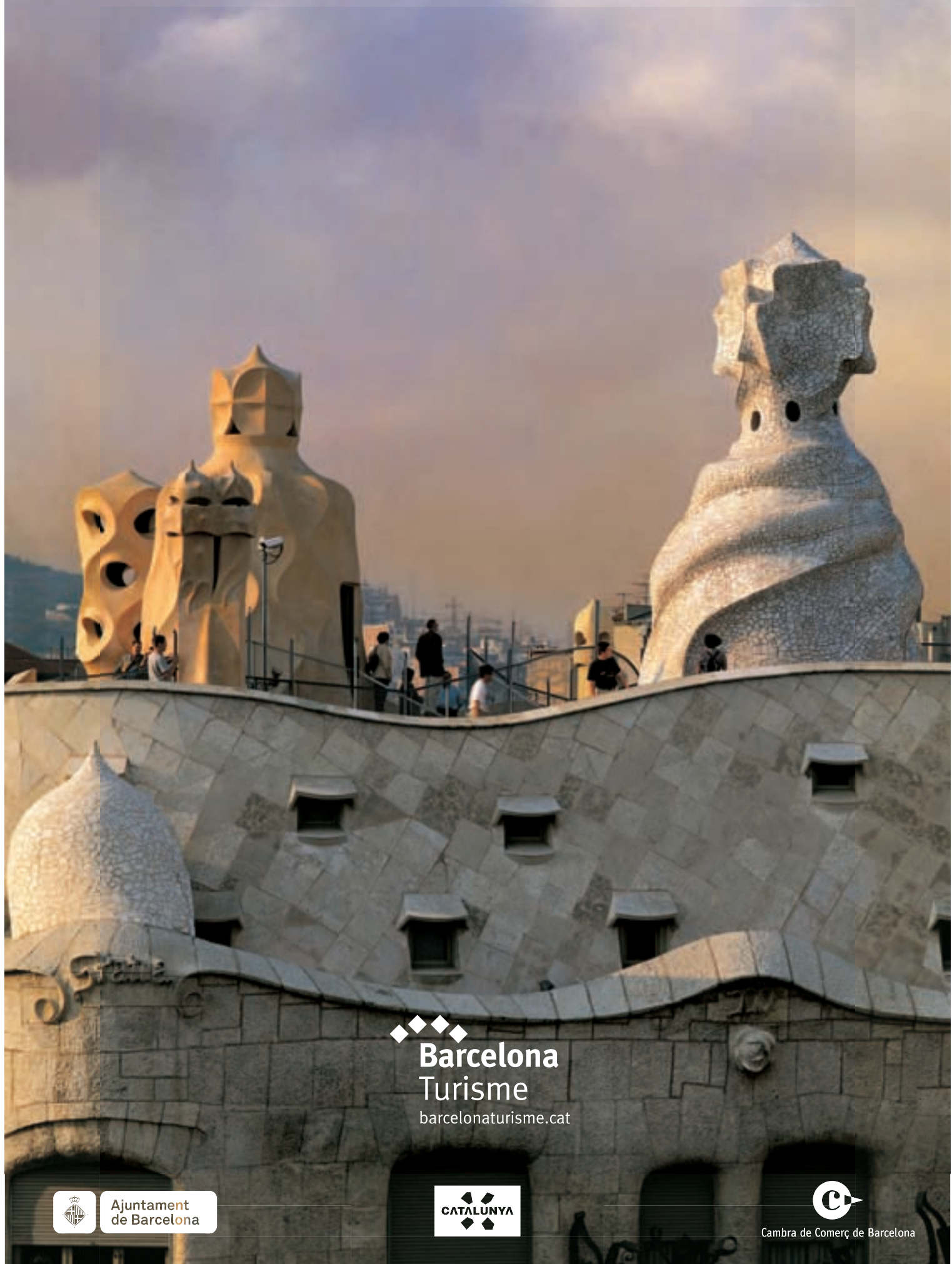


9
Park Güell
Olot, s/n



10
Finca Miralles Door
Pg. de Manuel Girona, 55 - 61

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